

CHOMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD AT ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL ON MONDAY THE
20th JULY 2009.**

CATHAOIRLEACH:

Cllr. T. McHugh

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

Bail:

Cllrs. T. Broderick, S. Canney, L. Carroll, P. Connaughton, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, Comh S. Ó Cuaig, Cllrs. J. Cuddy, Comh T. Ó Curraoin, Cllrs. M. Fahy, P. Feeney, G. Finnerty, M. Hoade, P. Hynes, C. Keaveney, S. Kyne, M. Maher, E Mannion, T. Mannion, J. McClearn, J McDonagh, M. Noone, P. Roche, Comh S. Ó Tuairisg, Cllrs. S. Walsh, T. Walsh, T. Welby, B. Willers.

Oifigigh:

Ms. M. Moloney, County Manager; Messrs. J. Cullen, F. Gilmore, P. Ridge, Directors of Service; G. Mullarkey, Head of Finance; E Molloy, M. Dolly, M Lavelle, Senior Engineers; B. McDermott, County Secretary; M. Owens, A Comer, Senior Executive Officers; M McGrath, Senior Staff Officer, J Keane, Staff Officer.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

33

A Resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:-

Michael & Kathleen Forde, Castle Ellen, Athenry, Co. Galway
Mary Jo Raftery, Ard Mhuire, Ballinasloe, Co Galway
Michael & Maureen O'Neill, Glencroft, Leenane, Co. Galway.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETINGS

34

The Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on the 25th May 2009 were approved by the Council and signed by the Mayor on the proposal of Cllr Keaveney, and seconded by Cllr. McDonagh.

The Minutes of Annual Meeting held on 19th June 2009 were approved by the Council and signed by the Mayor on the proposal of Cllr. Keaveney and seconded by Cllr S Walsh.

Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 20th July 2009

The Minutes of Special Meeting held on 30th June 2009 were approved by the Council and signed by the Mayor on the proposal of Cllr. McDonagh and seconded by Comh Ó Cuaig.

Arising from the minutes, the following issues were raised:

It was proposed by Cllr T Walsh, seconded by Cllr T Mannion and agreed that the Council communicate immediately with The Taoiseach Mr. Brian Cowen and Mr. John Gormley Minister for Environment, Heritage & Local Government to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that householders can continue to cut turf for their own needs and remove the threat that currently exists.

In response to queries raised by the members, Mr Ridge said that the Council has in place a rural house design guidelines document. He said that this would be supplemented later in the year by a new document which would come before the SPC.

Cllr Fahy proposed that a special meeting of the Council take place on the first Monday in September (7th September) to discuss the recommendations of "An Bord Snip". This was seconded by Cllr Keaveney and agreed.

Replying to the members, the Manager said that she welcomed the recommendations of the Labour Court in relation to the dispute with the outdoor workers. She said that it had arrived late on Friday and that management had not had time to consider its content before today's meeting.

In response to a query regarding the revised bus routes, the County Manager said that she had nothing further to report on the decision by Bus Eireann to cut bus routes as internal industrial relation talks in the company were ongoing.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

35

The Report of the Conamara Area Committee Meeting held on 19th December 2008 was considered. It was adopted by the Council on the proposal of Cllr S Walsh. and seconded by Comh O Tuairisg.

The Report of the Conamara Area Committee Meeting held on 9th January 2009 was considered. It was adopted by the Council on the proposal of Cllr S Walsh. and seconded by Comh O Tuairisg.

The Report of the Conamara Area Committee Meeting held on 26th January 2009 was considered. It was adopted by the Council on the proposal of Cllr S Walsh. and seconded by Comh O Tuairisg.

The Report of the Conamara Area Committee Meeting held on 19th February 2009 was considered. It was adopted by the Council on the proposal of Comh O Tuairisg and seconded by Cllr S Walsh.

Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 20th July 2009

The Report of the Conamara Area Committee Meeting held on 19th March 2009 was considered. It was adopted by the Council on the proposal of Cllr Kyne and seconded by Cllr S Walsh.

DECLARATION OF ROADS TO BE PUBLIC ROADS – SECTION 11 OF ROADS ACT 1993 36

On the proposal of Cllr. Connaughton and seconded by Cllr. D Connolly the Council approved the declaration of the following road to be a public road, the statutory procedure having been complied with:-

Road commencing at its junction with the L-7145 in the townland of Monivea Demesne and extending in a North Easterly direction for a distance of 101 meters in the townland of Monivea Demesne and finishing at the entrance to Mrs. Siobhan Feeney' house (No. 5 the Demesne) in the townland of Monivea Demesne.

Electoral Area: Ballinasloe

DECLARATION OF ROADS TO BE PUBLIC ROADS – SECTION 11 OF ROADS ACT 1993 37

On the proposal of Cllr. Finnerty and seconded by Cllr. Fahy the Council approved the declaration of the following road to be a public road, the statutory procedure having been complied with:-

Road commencing at Local Road L85196-0 (Kilbeacanty to Beagh Road) from a point, grid reference 147874,200798 in the townland of Beagh, and including the bridge/structure thereon.

Electoral Area: Loughrea

DECLARATION OF ROADS TO BE PUBLIC ROADS – SECTION 11 OF ROADS ACT 1993 38

On the proposal of Cllr. E Mannion and seconded by Comh Ó Tuairisg the Council approved the declaration of the following road to be a public road, the statutory procedure having been complied with:-

Road commencing at Paraic Joyce's house in the townland of An Chorr, An Mám and extending north for a distance of 160 metres in the townland of An Chorr, An Mám and finishing at Marcus Keane's House in the townland of An Chorr, An Mám

Electoral Area: Conamara

TO CONSIDER REPORT UNDER PART 8 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 – DEVELOPMENT OF PERMANENT BRIDGE ALONG THE L4310 KILBRIDE & LISCOYLE, LOUGHREA (KNOWN AS CASTLETOWN BRIDGE) 39

Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 20th July 2009

Report was already circulated to each member

It was proposed by Cllr. Maher, seconded by Cllr. Finnerty, and agreed, that the development of Permanent Bridge along the L4310 Kilbride & Liscoyle, Loughrea (known as Castletown Bridge) be approved

ROADS

40

Report dated the 20th July 2009 was circulated to each member.

Acting Director of Services Mr. Molloy responded to issues raised by the members as follows:

- Funding available for verge trimming and hedge cutting is 40% less than in 2008.
- Available funding this year will target areas that vitally require same. If landowner engages someone to cut hedges, the onus is on them to have insurance cover and the expertise.
- Repairing roads during bad weather was not ideal but was required to be carried out for safety purposes. Pothole repair methods suggested not possible due to lack of funding.
- NRA determine what projects go ahead on the National Primary Routes.
- The emptying of skips in cemeteries will be followed up as soon as possible.
- It is intended to include for a pedestrian light in Bearna.
- There is an ongoing bridge inspection programme and works are carried out on those that are structurally deficit subject to funding.
- Until planning is granted for the specific route in relation to the R336 all other alternative routes will have to remain frozen
- The roads repair programme is based on needs determined by the Area Offices and resources available
- The Council uses the Local Authority Quotes System in relation to tenders and had retendered in May 09 for the prices agreed last September in order to maximize value for money.

It was proposed by Cllr. Cuddy and seconded by Cllr Mannion and agreed that the standing orders be suspended in order to allow the meeting to continue after six o'clock

Regarding road conditions due to M6 construction, Mr. Dolly advised that the contractors must maintain the roads and haulage routes. The Council is seeking funding to restore the routes around the M6. The Manager said that this was a PPP project and Galway County Council was not a party to same. The Council cannot withhold payments to the contracting company, the contract was between the NRA and the construction company. She advised that Mr. Morgan had attended a meeting with the NRA who had given a commitment that the roads will be repaired.

It was proposed by Cllr. D Connolly, seconded by Cllr. Willers and agreed that Galway County Council meet with the Minister for Transport, Mr. Noel Dempsey to ensure that all outstanding damage and the need for all remediation on the new N6 project is dealt with as a matter of priority.

Referring to the circular letter RLR 16/2009 from the Department of Transport dated 14th July 2009 regarding the Restoration Maintenance Programme 2009 it was proposed by Cllr. Cuddy and seconded by Cllr. Maher and agreed that the reassignment of the 20% of the funding made available for surface dressing under the restoration maintenance grant to the discretionary maintenance grant be approved.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CORPORATE PLAN 41

Report dated the 9th July was already circulated to each member.

Ms. McDermott informed the members that the Corporate Plan will be prepared in consultation with the CPG and shall be submitted to the elected members for approval within the specified period.

DRAFT STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE SCHEME 42

Report dated the 14th July was already circulated to each member.

Ms McDermott referred to the draft SPC Scheme which had been circulated to the members. She advised of the contents of a circular letter LG12/09 received on the 14th July 2009 from Dept of Environment, Heritage and Local Government which specified new arrangements for the nominations of representatives of the environment sector to SPC's and which had been received after the Draft SPC scheme was circulated to the members. The circular specified that the Environmental sector has now been accorded recognition under the National Partnership arrangements and a new Environmental Pillar will be set up.

On the proposal of Cllr T, Mannion and seconded by Cllr Feeney the Draft Strategic Policy Committee Scheme with the amendments proposed per Circular letter LG12/09 regarding the Environment Sector was approved.

REMEDIAL ACTION PROGRAMME UPDATE 43

Mr. Cullen presented the following update on the Remedial Action Programme for public drinking water supplies in County Galway to the members.

Towards the end of 2007 and into 2008 the Council undertook an assessment of all its public water supplies to determine what works were needed to minimise risk of water supply contamination. Arising from this a Remedial Action Programme was developed to address the deficiencies at 29 water supplies.

The Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government requested local authorities to make submissions for funding for remedial works. It indicated that remedial works would be classified into two groups, the first being small scale works where funding of up to 75% would be provided and the second being advance works for schemes included in the Water Services Investment Programme.

Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 20th July 2009

On the basis of the Council's initial submission the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government made an allocation of €3.523m, although some schemes received no allocation whatsoever.

In order to advance the process in an efficient and cost effective way the Council decided to proceed from initial assessment and estimate to actual tender. The Remedial Action Programme incorporating the 29 schemes was grouped into 4 bundles. Tenders were invited over a period of time and all have now been received and assessed. Based on the tenders the overall estimated cost of the remedial action programme is €10.76m, together with a further €1.74m for fees, land acquisition and other costs. The tendered costs are in many cases significantly less than what had been estimated initially.

The Council will now make a further formal submission to the Department outlining the cost of the Remedial Action Programme for the county and seek confirmation of the funding that will be made available in respect of each scheme. When the Department issues confirmation of the funding allocation then the amount to be contributed by Galway County Council towards the Remedial Action Programme will be clear. It will be necessary for the Council to borrow for this and the Council has previously sanctioned a loan for this purpose.

In the event of a positive response from the DOE to the Council's funding request it would be intended to proceed as quickly as possible to contract stage and construction and implement the Remedial Action Programme.

PRESENTATION BY THE IT DEPARTMENT REGARDING EMAIL FOR THE ELECTED MEMBERS

44

Mr. Martyn IT Section gave a presentation to the members on the new email access and security policy for the elected members.

DRAFT ROAD TRAFFIC (SPECIAL SPEED LIMITS) COUNTY GALWAY BYE-LAWS 2009

45

Report dated the 20th July 2009 was circulated to each member.

It was proposed by Cllr Fahy, seconded by Cllr Carroll and agreed that the Draft Road Traffic (Special Speed Limits) County Galway Bye Laws 2009 be deferred until the special meeting of the Council on the 7th September. It was also agreed that in the interim that this item be discussed at Area Committee meetings for the benefit of the new members.

MANAGERS BUSINESS

46

The Manager referred to the special meeting on the 30th June when the situation regarding funding on the capital account and the approval request to the members to seek additional borrowings was outlined. She said that a letter had been received from the Department approving the additional borrowing to cover the Water Services Programmes where there remains additional borrowings. She said this will increase the Councils liability for loan charges.

Planning

Mr. Ridge referred to the Amendments and Material Alterations to the Craughwell Local Area Plan and alerted the Members to the need for a Special Meeting prior to the 16th of September 2009 to consider the Manager's Report on the submissions received on the Amendments and material alterations to the plan which was on public display from 12/6/2009 to 10/7/2009. It was agreed that this item would be dealt with at the Special Meeting to be held on 7th September.

Mr. Ridge explained to the newly elected Councillors that the process was at an advanced stage but that once the process had commenced it was not possible to defer it. He added that the process could be abandoned and restarted.

Cllr. Willers suggested that the new Councillors should get copies of the documentation in relation to the Craughwell LAP process to date. Mr Ridge stated that this would be done but added that only the published amendments to the Craughwell Local Area Plan could be considered at this stage of the process.

Cllr. Feeney stated that the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) were dictating how towns and villages in the County develop. He added that in relation to the Craughwell Local Area Plan, the imprint of the Councillors wishes and that of the local residents for the future of their village would be completely set aside at the next Council meeting in September due to the threat of the NPWS.

Cllr. Welby referred to the following item, in the document titled "Issues for consideration by the Elected Members in relation to the Amended Craughwell Local Area Plan"

"The Council is obliged to consider the implications of the proposed amendments to the draft LAP on the integrity of adjoining Natura 2000 sites in accordance with the Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92 / 43 / EEC before any such LAP is adopted. Article 6 (3) states that "*...the competent national authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned...*"

Cllr. Welby added that in reference to the Clifden Local Area Plan, the Elected Members were not furnished with the scientific information that formed the basis for the designation of particular sites and stated that all relevant information should be given to the Elected Members in relation to designated sites in order that informed decisions can be made by them. Mr. Ridge stated that all necessary environmental information had been made available to enable the members to make a decision.

Cllr. Welby also referred to the Oughterard Local Area Plan 2006-2012 in relation to a site for the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

It was proposed by Cllr Welby and seconded by Cllr. Kyne that Galway County Council amend the Oughterard Local Area Plan to zone a buffer zone around the selected site for the Waste Water Treatment Plant which differs from that included in the adopted plan and further, to remove the buffer zoning from around the currently selected site and replace it with zoning similar to the surrounding area namely residential zoning.

Mr. Ridge stated that he would take Cllr. Welby's proposal and examine what the implications of it would be for the town of Oughterard and also what the implications would be for the Strategic Environment Assessment by moving a zoning from one spot to another. He also added that appropriate legislation must be in place to deal with this proposal. He added that he would examine all the issues and prepare a report outlining what would be required.

Mr. Ridge referred to Cllr Feeney's issues on the Craughwell LAP and stated that all EU legislation must be complied with and added that the interpretation of the legislation was a separate issue. He also added that the power of the Elected Members to zone land was not being diminished but added that decisions must comply with current legislation and in particular consider the impact on the environment.

Cllr. Cuddy referred to the Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2009 and the changes relating to extending the appropriate period of a planning permission. Mr. Ridge stated that this legislation had not yet come into effect.

MAYORS BUSINESS

47

In response to a query raised Mr. Cullen said that the public convenience at Tracht Beach was closed recently as a result of industrial action. He thanked the local people for their assistance during this period and said that he was now hopeful that the industrial action was over.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 15 – CLLR. B. WILLERS

48

The following reply was given:-

"There is currently no funding available to facilitate the Council in undertaking the works as outlined. Galway County Council have made a submission to the National Roads Authority for consideration and a response to this submission is awaited."

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 16 – CLLR. B. WILLERS

49

The following reply was given:-

"Galway County Council are in discussions with the National Roads Authority with a view to advancing these works following the laying of services including the gas mains and water mains. In the interim, maintenance works shall continue to be undertaken as necessary within the limits of available resources."

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 17 – CLLR. B. WILLERS

50

The following reply was given:-

“While it would not be possible to carry out a full countywide survey, there are various initiatives in operation to address instances of illegal dumping as they arise, such as on the spot fines, issue of Section 18 notices under the Waste Management Act requiring information from individuals on how they dispose of their waste and working with the private sector to increase the refuse service provision throughout the County. The Annual Environment returns to the EPA show that there is a 75% take up of the household waste collection service and the remaining 25% are not necessarily illegal, as they use alternative legal methods of disposal of waste, such as recycling centres, direct delivery of waste to private transfer stations and bin sharing.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 18 – CLLR. J. MCDONAGH 51

The following reply was given:-

“An assessment to determine the suitability of the road for taking in charge and the associated costs is being undertaken and a report addressing these matters shall issue in the near future.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 19 – CLLR. J. MCDONAGH 52

The following reply was given:-

“The erection of townland signage is considered inappropriate in this instance as it may give rise to a proliferation of such signs. There are a total of eight townlands directly accessible from this particular junction.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 20 – CLLR. J. MCDONAGH 53

The following reply was given:-

“Lackagh Sewerage Scheme is included on the Water Services Assessment of Needs List (Schedule J). However, it is not currently included in the Water Services Investment Programme 2007 – 2009. The Water Services Investment Programme is scheduled for review in the coming months and Lackagh will be considered in the context of this review.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 21 – CLLR. M. FAHY 54

The following reply was given:-

“In response to the submission made by Galway County Council the Department of Transport have granted the Council the additional discretion requested in the allocation of existing grant allocations and in particular the allocation of the Restoration Maintenance Grant (Surface Dressing Grant). It is intended to avail of this additional discretion to transfer €1.1 million of existing funding to address maintenance works including pothole repairs and verge trimming on a priority basis.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 22 – CLLR. M. FAHY

55

The following reply was given:-

“The N18 Gort to Crusheen Scheme, currently under construction provides for one junction to serve Gort. It is considered that one junction is sufficient both at present and for the foreseeable future. As such, the Compulsory Purchase Order, Environmental Impact Assessment and Contract provides for one junction.

Notwithstanding same, in view of the stated intention to seek to upgrade the N18 Gort to Crusheen Scheme to Motorway status and the motorway design standard requirement of minimum of a 2km weaving length between junctions, a junction cannot be provided at this location as the distance between the junction of the R460 Corofin Road and the Gort junction is approximately 1km.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 23 – CLLR. M. FAHY

56

The following reply was given:-

“Due to current restrictions on staffing, coupled with recent industrial relations issues, Galway County Council is not yet in a position to provide staff to operate the public toilets at Traught Beach. However, should the staffing issues be resolved in the near future, Galway County Council will proceed to resume services at this location.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 24 – CLLR. P. CONNAUGHTON

57

The following reply was given:-

“The Ballymoney Road, Dunmore is not included in the 2009 Revised Roads Programme for improvement works, however necessary routine maintenance shall be undertaken on the road in the near future.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 25 – CLLR. P. CONNAUGHTON

58

The following reply was given:-

“The LS6348 Rookwood Road is included in the 2009 Revised Roads Programme and improvement works as detailed in the Revised Roads Programme were undertaken recently.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 26 – COMH S. O'TUAIRISG

59

The following reply was given:-

“Tá soláthar áiseanna/ceantar stórála ag Céibh Chill Chiaráin ina ábhar machnaimh ag an gComhairle agus tá measúnú tosaigh chun suíomh oiriúnach a aithint curtha i gcrích. Beidh sé riachtanach, áfach, machnamh a dhéanamh ar sholáthar a leithéid d’áiseanna i gcomhthéacs an choimhlint idir éilimh éagsúla ar na hacmhainní atá ar fáil.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 27 – COMH S. O’TUAIRISG

60

The following reply was given:-

“Níl aon mhaoiniú ar fáil faoi láthair chun tógáil ar láimh an bhóthair nó oibreacha feabhsúcháin gaolmhara a áisiú.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 28 – COMH S. O’TUAIRISG

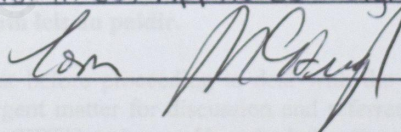
61

The following reply was given:-

“The development in question was very recently inspected by the Planning Enforcement Section of the Council and it was established that a number of items of work remain outstanding. It is proposed to contact the Developer to secure the completion of these works as soon as possible.”

Criochnaigh an Cruinniu Ansin

SUBMITTED, APPROVED + SIGNED



22th September 2009

DATE

CHOMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD AT ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL ON TUESDAY 30TH
JUNE, 2009.**

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. T. McHugh

ILATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill: Cllrs. T. Broderick, S. Canney, L. Carroll, P. Connaughton, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, Comh S. Ó Cuaig, Cllrs. J. Cuddy, Comh T. Ó Curraoin, Cllrs. M. Fahy, P. Feeney, G. Finnerty, M. Hoade, P. Hynes, C. Keaveney, S. Kyne, M. Maher, T. Mannion, J. Mc Clearn, M. Mullins, M. Noone, P. Roche, An Comh S. Ó Tuairisg, Cllrs. S. Walsh, T. Walsh, T. Welby, B. Willers.

Oifigigh: Ms. M. Moloney, County Manager; Messrs. J. Cullen, K. Kelly, F. Gilmore, J. Morgan, P. Ridge, Directors of Service; G. Mullarkey, Head of Finance; M. Dolly, Senior Engineer; B. McDermott, County Secretary; M. Owens, Senior Executive Officer; G. Healy, Staff Officer.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

The Mayor stated that before proceeding to deal with the items on the agenda, he wished to raise an urgent matter for discussion and referred to the picket placed on Áras an Chontae by SIPTU today. He asked the County Manager to give the background to the dispute.

The County Manager said that it is regrettable that this all-out strike has taken place. There is a significant history to the dispute which has resulted in ongoing industrial action due to cuts in overtime, allowances and laying off of staff on temporary contracts. To date the Councils staff resources has reduced by approximately 100 between indoor and outdoor staff. The Council has already been served with strike notice and as a result a conciliation conference took place with the Labour Relations Commission (LRC) at the end of May; no agreement was reached and it was agreed to refer it to the Labour Court. A date for the Labour Court hearing has been set for the end of July. An earlier date may be possible provided both sides have submissions lodged. Galway County Council has lodged a submission, however, it is understood that SIPTU has not yet lodged a submission. Today's all out strike action is as a consequence of the failure of a number of road workers to allow the roads programme to be carried out in the Portumna area. 15 outdoor workers refused to work with hired

plant and as a consequence the Council was forced to remove them from the payroll. The industrial action taken puts the Council's financial position in jeopardy as there will be difficulty in completing the Road Works Programme and consequently drawing down grant allocations which will impact on the Council's capacity to pay wages. The principal aim of the Council is to maintain the permanent workforce and every week that the industrial action continues puts this in jeopardy.

The Mayor asked what mechanism is available to resolve today's strike and ensure services are restored. Mr. Kelly advised that Galway County Council has a submission lodged with the Labour Court who will facilitate a hearing. He also said that Galway County Council contacted SIPTU and a meeting will take place at 2.30pm today between SIPTU representatives and representatives of Council Management in order to find a resolution to the current impasse.

A discussion then took place and the Members raised the following points:

The Members expressed their concerns regarding the provision of essential services such as water and sewerage services and stated that it is important that an interim solution is found between SIPTU and Management.

The Members asked that they be informed of the outcome of the Meeting as it is important that the public are kept informed regarding the provision of essential services.

The County Manager responded to the Members as follows:

She stated that it is the aim of Management to preserve as far as resources allow the employment of permanent staff but the co-operation and flexibility of staff is required if this is to be achieved as staff may be required to redeploy to areas where funding is available so that works can be carried out.

She said that Management intends to approach this afternoon's meeting with SIPTU with a view to finding a resolution.

Ms. McDermott read out a letter received from the Department of Transport which indicated that the Department regretted the reduction in the roads allocation.

The County Manager concluded by saying that the Members will be informed of the outcome of the Meeting with SIPTU.

FINANCIAL POSITION

32

The County Manager presented her report dated 29th June, 2009 which was circulated to the Members.

The original budget adopted by the Council for 2009 had assumed that the income available to the Council would amount to €155,590,662 and the proposed expenditure programme reflected this position. The contribution from the local government fund included in this income amounted to €38,114,833 which was a reduction of €2,517,234 on our 2008 allocation of €40,632,067. The adopted budget also included

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an estimated allocation (based on prior year allocations) from the Department of Transport / NRA towards the cost of running the roads programme of €31.6M. Following the supplementary budget introduced in April 2009, both of the above income sources, which account for almost 45% of the Councils income, were substantially reduced. In the case of the local government fund, the Council was notified on the 24th June 2009 that it has been further reduced to €36,888,227, a reduction of €1,226,606 (3.2%). Our roads grant allocation has been reduced to €23.3M a reduction of €8.4M (27%) with additional reductions of €1.6M in capital funding.

The Members expressed their concerns regarding the financial position of the Council and stated that the report issued to them makes very depressing reading.

The Members stated that the fundamental problem regarding the Council's financial position is the shortfall in funding received from central Government and they stated that it is imperative that the Council focus on the collection of income owing to the Council.

The Members stated that progress on a host of projects will be curtailed due to lack of funding and they expressed concern that vulnerable people such as the elderly would not get grants which are necessary in order to allow them reside in their homes. They expressed the view that group water supply schemes should be advanced and that the provision of grants towards the upkeep of houses should be maintained.

The new Members expressed their disappointment at the level of funding available to them in relation to Notice of Motion money.

In reply to a query by the Members regarding the Non-Principal Private Residences Charge, the County Manager stated that a national system is being put in place to administer the scheme. She said that the obligation will be on the owner to pay the charge and therefore self-declaration will be necessary. She said that although the intention is that the scheme will be dealt with nationally, it will have to be followed up by the local authority. She said that monies collected in this regard will be retained by the local authority and she indicated that it is hoped that an income of approximately €1.8m could be realized from this levy.

In reply to the query regarding outstanding recoupments from central government, she stated that this is being actively pursued by the Council.

She indicated that the capacity of Galway County Council to deliver on the Water Services Investment Programme based on the current resourcing model is questionable. The National Water Pricing Policy approach is in urgent need of review in light of the changed economic climate.

The County Manager indicated a series of Revenue expenditure reductions which will be implemented in 2009 in an effort to minimise the deterioration in the Council's financial position.

Difficulties are being encountered in the Library service due to the moratorium on recruitment, which is impacting negatively, particularly on remote rural branches.

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In relation to rented properties, she said that the Council has incorporated the Community & Enterprise Unit into existing buildings and therefore this has reduced rental costs.

In reply to queries regarding Disabled Persons Grants and Essential Repairs Grants, Mr. Gilmore stated that the Council has a priority system in place to deal with applicants for these grants. In reply to the query regarding the sale of local authority houses under the Tenant Purchase Scheme, he stated that the Council has an active programme in place in this regard in order to maximize participation in the Scheme.

In reply to a query regarding the level of recoupmets outstanding from Central Government, Mr. Mullarkey stated that at present an amount of €24m is outstanding in this regard.

In reply to a query regarding hedge trimming, Mr. Morgan stated that the landowner is responsible for cutting hedges on their land and the Council cuts verges for safety reasons. However, he stated that the Council has no funds available for grass cutting.

In reply to queries regarding the collection of water charges by Celtic Anglian, Mr. Cullen stated that the meter installation commenced in 2006. He said that at the time of installation and afterwards there were many queries from the public, Councillors and interest groups such as the IFA and these had to be attended to before the bills could issue. This together with the outbreak of cryptosporidium meant that it was late in 2007 before the water bills were sent out thus causing delays in the initial stage of the project, however he said that collection has improved and there are regular meetings with Celtic Anglian in relation to the water charges collection.

In reply to queries regarding progress on water and sewerage schemes, he stated that the Council will continue to progress proposed schemes through the planning process. However, he stated that contracts cannot be signed unless the Council is satisfied that funding will be available to carry out the works.

In relation to the Gort Water Supply he said that the Council has forwarded tenders to the Department of the Environment for approval, which is awaited.

It was agreed that the Information Meeting for the Councillors which is due to be held at 2.30 p.m. in the afternoon will be deferred to a later date.

It was agreed that the item regarding Roads be deferred to the July Monthly Meeting.

Criochnaigh and Cruinniú Ansin.

SUBMITTED, APPROVED + SIGNED

Tom McLaughlin

20th July 2009

Date