

of City/County Councils with the revenues generated for the Local Government Fund for distribution/funding for the provision of local services. Mr. Mullarkey noted that the current role of the Council is to assist in the collection of the charge, respond to queries and to distribute registration/declaration forms to owners who do not have access to online facilities.

Mr. Mullarkey advised of the major consequences for the funding of local services if the majority of households in the State fail to register/pay the charge and there is significant evasion. He stated that this would lead to reduced funding for local authorities and cutbacks in the provision of services. He confirmed that it is in the Council's vital interest to promote his charge and encourage residents in its functional area to register/pay as soon as possible.

Mr. Mullarkey referred to recent reports in the media in relation to the Council's financial position as of the 31st December 2010. He advised that on a turnover of approximately €350 million the Council recorded a small loss of €111,000, in a year when the Council dealt with two severe weather events, there was a reduction in the local government fund and a cut in road grant funding. In addition, he advised that 2010 saw the introduction of the ISER Scheme resulting in a number of senior staff leaving the Council at a significant cost. He confirmed that one of the main late costs incurred in 2010 related to the late submission of some coroners bills which the Council were obliged to pay and which could not be recouped.

Mr. Mullarkey confirmed that in the circumstances he was happy that the financial performance of the Council for 2010 reflected the prudent management of the available resources and that this monitoring continues on a monthly basis. Mr. Mullarkey advised that the overall revenue surplus for the Council was in excess of €600,000 at the end of 2010.

In relation to media reports relating to pay parking, Mr. Mullarkey advised that as outlined at the Budget Meeting the pay parking heading reflects the day to day operational costs of the pay parking activity and in addition, as with all services, includes a portion of the central management costs. Mr. Mullarkey advised that the central management costs were excluded the operation of pay parking generates a surplus of approximately €200,000.

MAYORS BUSINESS

939

It was proposed by Cllr. D. Connolly, seconded by Cllr. Canney and agreed that Galway County Council call on Minister for Agriculture, Simon Coveney, TD to upgrade the BVD calf positive cull payment from €100 to the real market value for calves that would prove positive.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 16 – CLLR. G. FINNERTY

940

The following reply was given:-

“The National Roads Authority will be consulted about this matter in the coming weeks.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 17 – CLLR. G. FINNERTY 941

The following reply was given:-

“The cleaning of signage is part of road maintenance and will be carried out by Galway County Council. The replacement of signs will be costed and submitted to the National Roads Authority for funding.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 18 – CLLR. G. FINNERTY 942

The following reply was given:-

“Noted.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 19 – CLLR. J. CUDDY 943

The following reply was given:-

“Noted.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 20 – CLLR. J. CUDDY 944

The following reply was given:-

“Noted.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 21 – CLLR. J. CUDDY 945

The following reply was given:-

“The overall road maintenance funding in 2012 has increased from the 2011 allocation by approximately 10% and this is inadequate for overall maintenance of roads. Galway County Council will endeavour to respond as efficiently and effectively as possible within existing resources to all issues in regards to road maintenance.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 22 – CLLR. J. MCCLEARN 946

The following reply was given:-

“Works were completed on this project in 2010 which included remedial works to the existing bridge at Castletown, Gurtymadden.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 23 – CLLR. J. MCCLEARN

947

The following reply was given:-

“The flooding at Coolagh, Killimor on the N65 occurs following periods of heavy rainfall. The existing road gully and pipeline was jetted recently and appears to be functioning satisfactorily. The situation will be kept under observation.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 24 – CLLR. M. FAHY

948

The following reply was given:-

“Galway County Council does not have any allocation for the provision of additional public lighting.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 25 – CLLR. M. FAHY

949

The following reply was given:-

“The National Road Authority are currently designing the layout for the footpaths and Island in Ballinderreen and hope to have a scheme completed by the end of February for which funding has been provided. A proposal to include approximately 150m of a 60kph zone each side of the village will be included for consideration in the revision of Special Speed Limit Bye-Laws.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 26 – CLLR. M. FAHY

950

The following reply was given:-

“It is intended to commence works on the Pollagh Section in 2012. Advance Planning for the remaining section of road to Kinvara is ongoing.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 27 – COMH. Ó TUAIRISG

951

The following reply was given:-

“Galway County Council will liaise with the Ballyconneely residents and Comh. Ó Tuairisg in relation to traffic calming measures.”

Criochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Submitted, Approved + Signed

Michael Mahee

26th March 2012

Date

CHOMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD AT ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL ON MONDAY 23rd
JANUARY, 2012.**

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. M. Maher

ILATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill: Cllrs. T. Broderick, S. Canney, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, S. Cunniffée, Comh S O’Cuaig, Comh T. Ó Curraoin, Cllrs. M. Fahy, P. Feeney, G. Finnerty, M. Finnerty, P. Hynes, Comh. S. Ó Laoi, E Mannion, T. Mc Hugh, J McDonagh, J. Mc Clearn, M. Noone, P. Roche, K. Ryan, Comh S. Ó Tuairisg, Cllrs. S. Walsh, T. Walsh, T. Welby, B. Willers.

Oifigigh: Ms. M. Moloney, County Manager; Messrs. F. Gilmore, K. Kelly, E. Cummins, J. Cullen, Directors of Service; G. Mullarkey, Head of Finance; M. Owens, County Secretary & Meetings Administrator; E. Molloy, L. Gavin, Senior Engineers; A. Comer, Senior Executive Officer; P. Carroll, Administrative Officer; P. O’Neachtain, Oifigeach Gaeilge; G. Healy, Staff Officer.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

Resolutions of Sympathy

903

The Mayor, Members and County Manager expressed their sympathy to Cllr. Willers, on the death of her mother and to Maura Kearns and the family of the late Mr. Peter Kearns, former Assistant County Manager. Cllr. Mannion proposed a resolution of sympathy to Micheal Martin, TD on the death of his father.

A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:

- Mr. Pat Turley, Loughenbeg, Inverin, Co. Galway.
- Mr. Páraic Joyce, Glenisk, Cashel, Co. Galway.
- Mr. Tom Mc Gaugh, Headford, Co. Galway.
- Mr. John Joe Steede, Knocknacarrigeen, Belclare, Co. Galway.
- Mr. Paul Whelan, Carnamadra, Kinvara, Co. Galway.
- Dr. Richard Joyce, Galway Road, Gort, Co. Galway.
- Mr & Mrs Joe Cooney & Family, Ballinabucky, Peterswell, Co. Galway.
- Mr. Pádraigh Folan, Knock, Lettermullen, Co. Galway.

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Mr. Eoin Durkin, Baile na hAbhainn, Rosamhil, Connamara, Co. Galway.

Mr. Michael Fox, Clochmhaoil, Carnmore, Oranmore, Co. Galway

Mrs. Mary Monaghan, Cahir, Cross, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.

The Mayor, as a mark of respect, adjourned the Meeting for 5 Minutes.

On the resumption of the Meeting, the Mayor advised that arising from the disruption to the December Monthly Meeting by members of the public in attendance in the Council Chamber, the Corporate Policy Group had met and a protocol for public attendance at Council Meetings had been agreed. He confirmed that the protocol was being implemented in order to assist the Mayor and Council staff in maintaining order and decorum in and about the Chamber. The Mayor acknowledged that the unfortunate scences at the December Monthly Meeting of Council were the actions of a small minority and emphasised that members of the public remained welcome and were encouraged to attend at Meetings of the Council. The Mayor stated that the protocol now in place would facilitate, within the space available, the maximum number to avail of the opportunity to attend Council Meetings, whilst allowing the Mayor and the Elected Members to conduct the business of the Council in an appropriate, efficient and orderly manner.

The Mayor confirmed that a date had been agreed for the Civic Reception to honour President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins and that the Civic Reception would be held on Friday, 24th February 2012 at 4.00 pm in Áras an Chontae.

It was proposed by Cllr. McDonagh, seconded by Cllr. T. Mannion and agreed that the February Monthly Meeting would be held on Friday, 24th February 2012 at 12 noon in Áras an Chontae.

Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting

904

The Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 19th December 2011, were approved by the Council and signed by the Mayor, on the proposal of Cllr. McHugh, seconded by Cllr. Welby.

Mr. Kelly in reply to Cllr. Welby, advised that he did not envisage any liability arising for the Planning Authority due to the failure of those providing septic tanks, to meet the necessary standards.

Mr. Cullen in reply to Comh. O’Cuaig advised that the Water Services (Amendment) Bill remained the subject of consideration by the Oireachtas and that he was not aware of the intentions of the Minister in relation to prescribing performance standards for septic tanks.

The Minutes of Budget Meeting held on 20th December 2011, were approved by the Council and signed by the Mayor, on the proposal of Cllr. McClearn seconded by Cllr. McHugh.

Report of Committee Meetings for consideration and adoption

905

The Report of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on 7th December 2011 was approved by the Council on the proposal of Cllr. Cuddy, seconded by Cllr. McClearn.

Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 23rd January 2012

The Report of the Environment & Water SPC Meeting held on 7th September 2011 was approved by the Council on the proposal of Cllr. Cuddy, seconded by Cllr. Ryan.

The Report of the Loughrea Area Committee Meeting held on 12th September 2011 was approved by the Council on the proposal of Cllr. Feeney, seconded by Cllr. McClearn.

The Report of the Loughrea Area Committee Meeting held on 26th September 2011 was approved by the Council on the proposal of Cllr. Feeney, seconded by Cllr. G. Finnerty.

The Report of the Loughrea Area Committee Meeting held on 25th October 2011 was approved by the Council on the proposal of Cllr. Feeney, seconded by Cllr. Fahy.

The Report of the Roads & Transportation SPC Meeting held on 11th April 2011 was approved by the Council on the proposal of Comh. Ó Curraoin, seconded by Cllr. Cunniffe.

The Report of the Roads & Transportation SPC Meeting held on 26th September 2011 was approved by the Council on the proposal of Comh. Ó Curraoin, seconded by Cllr. Feeney.

The Report of the Roads & Transportation SPC Meeting held on 24th October 2011 was approved by the Council on the proposal of Cllr. McClearn, seconded by Cllr. Roche.

The Report of the Corporate Affairs & Cultural SPC Meeting held on 28th November 2011 was approved by the Council on the proposal of Cllr. McHugh, seconded by Comh. Ó Laoi.

The Oranmore Area Committee Meeting held on 10th November 2011 was approved by the Council on the proposal of Cllr. Cuddy, seconded by Cllr. Noone.

Declaration of roads to be public roads – Section 11 of Roads Act 1993

906

Cllr. McClearn expressed an interest in the item and absented himself from the Meeting for the duration of consideration of the item.

On the proposal of Cllr. Feeney, 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:-

Magheramore Housing Estate, Killimor

Road pavement and footpath commencing at its junction with the L-4308 in the townland of Magheramore and extending in a westerly and northerly direction for a total distance of approximately 193 metres in the townland of Magheramore and ending in the townland of Magheramore.

Electoral Area: Loughrea

To consider report under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – Extension to Cummer Burial Ground

907

Report was already circulated to each Member.

On the proposal of Cllr. McHugh, seconded by Cllr. Canney it was agreed that the proposed extension to Cummer Burial Ground, as set out in the report, be approved.

Litter Management Plan 2011-2014 908

Report dated 13th January, 2012 was circulated to each Member.

Mr. Cullen introduced the Draft Litter Management Plan 2011-2014 to the Members, stating the following:

- Section 10 of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 requires local authorities to review its Litter Management Plan every three years and the review of a Plan is a reserved function of the Council.
- The Plan was discussed by the Environmental and Water Services Strategic Policy Committee and recommended for adoption by the Council.
- The Plan sets out objectives for the prevention and eradication of litter throughout County Galway, recognizing that the problem of litter will not be eradicated unless a multi-dimensional approach is taken.
- It sets out realizable and measurable objectives for the following:
 - Prevention and control of litter
 - Public awareness, participation and education
 - Enforcement.

He said that the Plan sets out five core objectives and outlines the actions that will be taken by the Council to achieve these objectives. These objectives are:

1. To work in partnership with community groups, tidy towns committees, residents associations, local businesses, voluntary sector, schools etc., to play their part in litter prevention
2. To continue to educate and raise awareness of the negative effects of litter on the environment
3. To identify and eradicate litter problem areas
4. To continue to promote best practices in relation to litter prevention and control
5. To promote the use of recycling infrastructure.

He said that the Plan will act as a medium-term strategy based on which an annual Action Plan will be prepared identifying priorities and actions to be carried out each year.

A discussion took place and the following points were raised by the Members:

The Members welcomed the Plan, but some expressed the view that all of the objectives as set out in the Plan, may not be achieved if funding is not available.

Some expressed concern that the on-the-spot fine imposed in respect of litter offences was the same for minor and more serious littering offences and they expressed the view that a graduated system of fines would be preferable.

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Cllr. Roche stated that although funding is limited, investment in more c.c.t.v cameras around the county could reap rewards and save the Council money in the long term by acting as a deterrent to illegal dumping. He also suggested that by erecting barriers, at entrances to bogs, where feasible, the Council could prevent serious dumping at these locations.

Cllr. Canney complimented the Council on its work with the Green Schools Project, stating that educating children is the key to litter prevention into the future.

Cllr. Feeney welcomed the Plan but stated that the great work being done by community volunteers in the area of litter control is not lauded enough. He asked when will the bring bank be reinstated in Athenry.

Cllr. Cunniffe stated that it would be helpful to community groups if they received a more structured form of support from the local authority in their efforts to keep their areas litter free. He also expressed the view that the proposal for private operators to manage the Tuam Amenity Site with an income stream generated from charges may deter people from availing of the facility and accordingly result in an increase in dumping.

Cllr. G. Finnerty said that littering has become a major problem around the county and he suggested that each household should be required to provide information to the Council on how they dispose of their waste.

Many of the Members supported Cllr. Finnerty's suggestion expressing the view that littering is getting out of control despite all the efforts and resources devoted to solving the problem.

Cllr. E. Mannion referred to the need for additional signage include the provision of signage on the N59 to highlight the penalties associated with littering and she also asked when will the bring bank centre be provided in Moycullen. She stated that she wished to acknowledge the work of the Council staff in supporting community effort in combating littering and in supporting communities in related initiatives including tidy towns groups.

It was proposed by Cllr. T. Mannion, seconded by Cllr. Noone and agreed that Galway County Council request the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government bring forward legislation to facilitate a public tendering process for waste collection and improve the service and increase the area serviced.

Cllr. O'Tuairisg asked for an update regarding Casla recycling centre

Cllr. Cuddy stated that the Community Wardens are doing all they can to control illegal dumping, but a lot of illegal dumping is carried out in the evening and at night when the Wardens are off duty.

Cllr. D. Connolly referred to the problem being experienced by some landowners where rubbish is dumped on their land by third parties and requested clarification on who is responsible for the disposal of such rubbish.

Cllr. Noone stated that the instance of illegal dumping can increase at certain times of the year, such as after Christmas and he suggested that if the Council provided sites once or twice a year where the public could dispose of their rubbish free of charge, this would help alleviate the problem. Cllr. Ryan agreed with Cllr. Noone but he felt that those who pay for waste collection might feel aggrieved if the Council were to provide a free service for those who do not avail of a refuse collection service.

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Cllr. Willers expressed the view that the problem of littering and illegal dumping had increased over the past 5 years and that highlighting the important role that landlords must play in relation to the proper disposal of waste by their tenants.

It was proposed by Cllr. Fahy "that election posters be banned from being erected at any future election in the Republic s posters are only a refuse and litter burden on the State". This proposal was seconded by Cllr. Canney.

However, some Members expressed their disagreement with the proposal and therefore a vote was taken and the result of the vote was as follows:

For:

Cllrs. Canney, Cunniffe, Fahy (3)

Against:

Cllrs. Broderick, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, Cuddy, Feeney, G. Finnerty, M. Finnerty, Hynes, Maher, E. Mannion, McClearn, McDonagh, McHugh, Noone, Roche, Ryan, Welby, Willers, Comh. Ó Cuaig, Ó Curraoin, Ó Laoi (21)

Abstain:

Cllr. S. Walsh (1)

The Mayor declared the motion defeated.

Mr. Cullen replied to the questions raised as follows:

CCTV - The Council will be installing further c.c.t.v. cameras in 2012 at illegal dumping black spots.

Litter Fines - The option of a graduated system of enforcement in relation to the issuing of fines was not currently available to the Council, as no provision for same existing in the relation legislation.

Election Posters - It is required by law that election posters are removed seven days after polling day.

Community Groups - He stated that community volunteers play a very important role in the control of litter and the Council appreciates the work of the elected Members in engaging community groups to help with cleanups, litter picks etc. He said that the Council will continue to work in partnership with communities in this regard and intends to build on same.

Roadside littering - He said that a scheme called "Adopt a Road Scheme" is being instigated by the Council whereby communities can "adopt" a section of road with the aim of keeping the verges in good condition.

Moycullen Bringbank Centre - Mr. Cullen advised that the issues relating to the facility were close to resolution

Athenry Bringbank Centre - He said that he will revert to the Members with a date for the reinstatement of this centre

Casla Recycling Centre - He said that tenders have been received and are being assessed at present. It is hoped that this centre will be in place by the end of the year.

Landowners – He said that the responsibility of landowners as regards litter deposited on their land is set down in law. Unfortunately, if they are the victim of other people dumping on their property, they become the owner of the litter and must dispose of it and be responsible for the cost of its disposal.

Householders - He said that there is a provision in the Waste Management Act giving local authorities the power to require the public to indicate how they dispose of waste. However, he said that County Galway has a population of approximately 175,000 and the vast majority abide the law and dispose of their waste in a proper manner.

Amenity Site Tuam - He said that there is evidence that a modest charge will not be a deterrent to people depositing their waste and the Council intends to ask the provider of the service to extend the type of waste to be accepted at the site but that is was not possible to facilitate the acceptance of residual waste at the site.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. Fahy, it was agreed that the Litter Management Plan 2011 – 2014 be adopted by the Council.

Audit Report on the Accounts of Galway County Council for the year ending 31st December, 2010 909

Report dated 17th January, 2012 was already circulated to each Member.

The Audit Report on the Accounts of Galway County Council for the year ending 31st December, 2010 was proposed by Cllr. McDonagh, seconded by Cllr. S. Walsh, and agreed.

Filling of Casual Vacancy of the Chair of the Environment & Water Services Strategic Policy Committee 910

Report dated 17th January, 2012 was already circulated to each Member.

It was proposed by Cllr. McDonagh and seconded by Cllr. Cuddy and agreed that Cllr. T. Broderick be appointed, as Chair of the Environment & Water Services Strategic Policy Committee.

Qualifying Works for Notice of Motion Allocations 911

Report dated 23rd January, 2012 was circulated to each Member

Mr. Gilmore referred to the Report stating that the position on expenditure under the Notice of Motion facility is that monies voted by the Councillors in the Roads Budget may only be expended on public roads and it cannot be used to fund projects which come under the expenditure budgets of Environment, Water or other directorates.

He said that roads funding from the Council's own resources and regional & local road grants have reduced from €39.2m to €29.2m between 2008 and 2011. Over that period, three exceptionally difficult weather events occurred, all of which impacted negatively on the condition of the road network, in particular the local road network.

He stated that, on that basis, he would urge that Notice of Motion monies be allocated to the Council's priority areas of roads expenditure, namely surface repair/reconstruction and road drainage.

Cllr. McClearn stated that the proposed 2012 Work Programme for the Roads & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee included consideration of qualifying works for notice of motions allocations. Following discussion on the matter, on the proposal of Cllr. McDonagh, seconded by Cllr. McHugh, it was agreed to note the report and defer further consideration of the matter until such time as the Roads & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee had an opportunity examine the proposal.

To Note Indicative Programme of Works for SPC and County Development Board for 2012 **912**

Report dated 23rd January, 2012 was circulated to each Member.

The Indicative Programme of Works for Strategic Policy Committees and the County Development Board for 2012, as outlined in the Report, was noted by the Members.

Presentation by ESB Networks on 110KV Conamara Line **913**

The Mayor welcomed a group from ESB Networks and introduced Mr. John Moran, Project Manager on the ESB Networks 110kV Conamara Line Project to the Members.

Mr. Moran then made a presentation to the Members outlining the background to the project as follows:

- The need for 110kV reinforcement of the Conamara networks was identified and a project was initiated in 1996.
- Consultation took place with Galway County Council and Dúchas on issues relating to environmental measures between 1996 and 2002.
- Public consultation and Environmental Impact Assessment completed prior to route selection in 2003.
- Planning application lodged in 2004, granted in 2005, overturned by An Bord Pleanála in 2006.
- Planning application re-lodged with An Bord Pleanála and granted in 2009.

He explained that the reasons to reinforce the Network were as follows

- Demand has doubled in Conamara since 1994
- Conamara 38kv loop which measures approximately 140 km is the longest in Ireland
- Voltage quality
- Reliability of supply due to length of line
- Planned maintenance and repairs considerations
- Inability to connect new load in the region

He said that the reinforcement of the line with 110kV injection will:

- Allow for significant growth in electricity demand for at least 10 years
- Facilitate industrial/commercial development in Conamara
- Allow for maintenance on the 38 kV Networks
- Facilitate future renewable energy projects
- Improve quality of supply for all customers

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He said that Screebe is the optimum location for reinforcement of the Conamara 38kV Loop, no additional 38kV circuits are required, it satisfies all 38kV Network reinforcement requirements and the site has functioned as a generating station/substation for over 50 years and is an existing brown field site.

The agreed solution (Maam Cross to Screebe) aims to achieve a minimal impact by:

- Using the existing mv footprint from Screebe Bridge to Glentrasna for the 110kV overhead line
- Replace this section of mv line with a mv cable in the regional roads R336 and R340
- Use braced poleset angle structures instead of lattice steel towers to minimize visual impact.

He said that the landowner engagement process began in June 2011, over 90% of landowners have been interviewed to date, over 80% have granted access for construction and overall the project has been very well received.

He gave a breakdown of the structures to be put in place as follows:

- The overall length of the line is 48km
- Total structures on the line is 276
- 235 double woodpoles, 16 braced double woodpoles
- 25 steel masts
- Approximately 4 km of underground cable in Galway City
- Overall 91% of structures are double woodpoles.

He informed the Members that line construction will start in early 2012, station upgrades to start in Screebe in quarter two, a significant amount of work has already been completed on the 110kv substation at Westside in the city. The project will take 18 months to construct.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Moran for the detailed report and a discussion then took place.

In reply to queries from the Members, Mr. Moran said

- The 18 month timeframe for completion of the project will be subject to weather and other conditions being favourable.
- Most of the wayleaves have been completed and those remaining are not a cause of any concern
- The rates of compensation paid to landowners is confidential
- The route chosen is along the strategic corridor in accordance with the Galway County Development Plan
- The 110kV line will facilitate future renewable energy projects but only to a certain limit. If extra capacity is needed in the future, independently constructed lines will be required.
- The project will cost approximately €29m and funding is available.

The County Manager thanked Mr. Moran and his colleagues from ESB Networks for attending the Meeting and giving the very informative presentation. She stated that this

project will ensure that the infrastructure required in order to meet the increased demand for energy in West Galway will be in place and will facilitate industrial development in the west.

Presentation by ESB International on the Management of the River Shannon 914

The Mayor welcomed a group from ESB International (ESBI) to the Meeting and introduced Mr. Senen Colleran, Hyrdo Manager, ESB Generation Operations ESBI to the Members.

Mr. Colleran stated that the purpose of their visit was to give the Members an overview of the role of ESBI in relation to the River Shannon.

He said that the ESB operates a hydro-electric power plant on the River Shannon. Dams and embankments form part of the infrastructure associated with this scheme. A preliminary flood risk assessment for ESB's dams and embankments has been undertaken to the address the requirements of various legislation including the EU Directive 2007/60/EC on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks, S.I. No. 122 of 2010 – European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations.

This preliminary flood risk assessment for ESB's dams and embankments was undertaken under the following broad headings:

- Past Floods
- Potential Future Floods
- In relation to both past and potential floods the following flooding scenarios were investigated:
- River Floods Downstream of Dams
- Floods around Reservoirs
- Breaches of Dams or Embankments
- Overtopping of Dams or Embankments
- Operational Malfunctions

For river floods downstream of dams, the preliminary flood risk assessment has indicated that the construction of dams and embankments on the River Shannon has not lead to increased flooding downstream of the dams. In fact, the operation of the dams has beneficial effects with regard to flooding of the areas downstream. Similarly for potential future river floods downstream of dams, the water management procedures that are implemented by ESB are such that even for very extreme design floods, the operation of the dams will have some beneficial effects for downstream flooding.

To cater for increased upstream water levels, ESB acquired lands around reservoirs and lakes upstream of its dams and embankments. There has not been a history of significant flooding above the ESB's land acquisition levels upstream of the dams and embankments.

The embankments on the River Shannon, near Portumna, differ from ESB's other dams and embankments, in that they were constructed along the bank of the river, to prevent adjacent low lying lands from flooding during the summer. Overtopping of these embankments has occurred during very large winter floods, the most recent in 2009, when water levels in the River Shannon exceeded the design crest level for the embankments. While it is not feasible

to prevent overtopping of the Portumna Embankments during large floods, improvement works are regularly implemented to ensure their stability.

No operational malfunctions of water control equipment have occurred under the current dam safety procedures being implemented by ESB. These procedures will also protect against potential future operational malfunctions of water control equipment. ESB has been working with the Office of Public Works and Local Authorities in relation to Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Studies and the implementation of Catchment Flood Risk Management Plans. One of the issues being investigated during these studies is how ESB infrastructure on the rivers might be used to manage or reduce the flood risk from river loads. ESB will continue to work with these bodies during future cycles of this process for the River Shannon. The integrity of the dams and reservoirs and safe water management on the river are serious priorities for ESB. The implementation of comprehensive procedures will continue to ensure the safety of the dams and embankments at all times. These procedures include the independent evaluation of ESB's dam safety activities by the External Dam Safety Committee of international experts. Where identified, advances in the state-of-the-art with regard to dam safety will be implemented to ensure that procedures continue to be improved.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Colleran for the detailed overview of the role of ESBI in relation to the River Shannon.

Cllr. McClearn welcomed the presentation and the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the management of the River Shannon by ESBI. He stated that the main difficulty arising on the River Shannon resulted from the absence of maintenance, the accumulation of silt arising from Bord na Mona works together with the failure to clear trees from the channel due to restrictions imposed by the National Parks & Wildlife Service. He stated that ESBI are viewed as managing the River Shannon based on criteria that favour ESBI. He acknowledged the role played by ESBI in responding to the severe flooding in 2009 whilst expressing disappointment that the initial response was slow. Cllr. McClearn requested Mr. Colleran to clarify the position of ESBI on the proposal from Dublin City Council to abstract water from the Shannon.

Cllr. D. Connolly referred to the lack of maintenance on the channels and that absence of a single body to manage the Shannon. He stated that the lower reaches of the Shannon were taking priority and unless action is taken in the upper reaches of the Shannon and the callows, there was a significant risk of severe flooding impacting on areas such as Athlone & Ballinasloe again.

Cllr. M. Connolly also referred to the need to address the lack of maintenance and water quality on the Shannon, whilst Cllr. Cunniffe enquired in relation to the existence of a protocol for the management of the Shannon and flood warning systems.

Suspension of Standing Orders

915

It was proposed by Comh. Ó Curraoin, seconded by Cllr. D. Connolly, and agreed to suspend Standing Orders to allow the Meeting to continue after 6.00 pm

In reply Mr. Colleran confirmed that ESBI engaged with the other stakeholders in relation to the management of the Shannon on an ongoing basis. He confirmed that the levels of the

Shannon are monitored every day by staff, that effective means of communication were in place and that local authorities were emailed twice a week with forecasts. He stated that the management of the Shannon is complicated and requires a holistic approach. He acknowledged the role of the Office of Public Works as the lead agency in the CFRAMS process and confirmed that the issue of the accumulation of silt and the dredging of the Shannon will be considered in the CFRAMS process. Mr. Colleran clarified that the change in level implemented in 1973 related to the navigational level and that similar to other stakeholder s ESBI awaited detailed proposals in relation to the abstraction of water from the Shannon. He stated that due to the profile of the River Shannon the response time to changes in the level of the River was days not hours and that it was necessary to achieve a balance in terms of managing levels to facilitate navigation and guard against flooding.

The County Manager expressed her appreciation to ESBI for attending the Meeting and for the detailed and informative presentation.

Conferences

916

On the proposal of Cllr. Feeney, seconded by Cllr. McHugh, the attendance at Conferences as listed was agreed.

- **TJK Conferences – Local Government Seminar for Councillors – 27th – 29th January – Patrick Punches Hotel, Limerick**
 1. Peter Feeney
 2. Peter Roche
 3. Seosamh Ó Laoi
 4. Tomás Ó Curráoin
- **Smart Marketing – The Role of the Council in Encouraging Enterprise through Tourism & Sport – 27th – 29th January – Abbey Court Hotel, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary**
 1. Michael Fahy
- **European Commission Representation in Ireland – European Economic Policy – What's in it for Ireland – 31st January – Athlone Institute of Technology, Athlone, Co. Westmeath**
 1. Seán Ó Tuairisg
- **IPRT (Irish Penal Reform Trust) & the Community Platform: Social Exclusion & Crime – 2nd February – The Carmelite Centre, Aungier St., Dublin 2**
 1. Seán Ó Tuairisg

Managers Business & Correspondence

917

Report dated 23rd January, 2012 entitled "Reform of the water sector in Ireland – Public Consultation" was circulated to each Member.

Mr. Cullen referred to the Report dated 23rd January, 2012 stating that the information provided in the Report is a summary of the Position Paper on the Reform of the Water Sector in Ireland produced by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and also the PricewaterhouseCoopers "Irish Water: Phase 1 Report" and he said that both documents should be consulted for full detail.

He said that the Programme for Government (PfG) envisaged the creation of Irish Water, a State company to take over water investment and maintenance programmes from the 34 city and county councils. The PfG also provided for the introduction of a funding model including proposals for the installation of meters on domestic properties and a move to charging for water on the basis of usage.

PricewaterhouseCoopers (pwc) were retained to undertake an assessment of the transfer of responsibility for water services and in their Phase 1 Report, have recommended the establishment of a public water utility with full responsibility for the water cycle from abstraction to wastewater treatment and sludge disposal. The next phase involves the development of a detailed implementation plan for the transition of water services from the local authorities to the public utility, Irish Water.

In this context the government has commenced a public consultation process running to 24th February 2012 seeking views on:

- The development of an implementation plan for the public water utility and, in particular issues arising from an organisational, human resource and environmental perspective in the transitional phase as well as boundary issues between the proposed utility and other actors in the water sector, and
- The proposed approach in relation to water charges and water metering

Mr. Cullen stated that we are entering a period of unprecedented change in the provision and delivery of water services in Ireland. The decision to create a public water utility to assume responsibility for water services historically provided by the local government sector has already been taken. The public consultation process now underway seeks views in relation to the development of an implementation plan for the new public utility and also on the proposed approach to metering of domestic properties.

A discussion took place and the Members made the following points:

- They thanked Mr. Cullen for the Report stating that it was a helpful summary of the Department's Position Paper, but many expressed the view that the decision to create a public water utility will further erode the functions of local government and will have a negative impact on their constituents unless there is some mechanism whereby Elected Members can continue to make representations on their behalf.
- They sought clarity in relation to the status of staff employed in the Water Services Section of the Council if the function is transferred from the local authority

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- They stated that local authorities have given great support to group water schemes in the past and expressed concerns that this level of support may not be provided under the new model of service delivery.
- They expressed concern that power will be taken away from local government in the new system and also from central government and that the new regime will have the power to charge what they like for water supply as they will be there to make a profit.
- Some Members expressed the view that it was inevitable that a single water utility would be set up as the infrastructure in place is not fit for purpose and is not sustainable into the future.

Mr. Cullen replied that he could only present the facts available at this point and that a number of questions currently remain unanswered. He acknowledged the views expressed by the Members in relation to the need for the new model to provide scope for local input and indicated his understanding that whilst Irish Water may have a national remit it may operate on a regional basis. In relation to staff, he said that it was envisaged there would be a transfer of local authority staff to the new authority but no further information was available in relation to the numbers transferring to the authority.

He said that it was important to also recognised the benefits that can be achieved by operating at a large level in terms of the potential offered for efficiencies. He also referred to the level of investment needed to deliver high quality water and wastewater services and that the level of investment necessary was not available under the existing model and that there was a need for a model that provided access to private funding and investment.

It was agreed that Mr. Cullen would summarise the points raised by the Members at the meeting for consideration at the February Monthly Meeting of the Council to be held on 24th February and that following such further consideration a submission would be made to the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government.

The County Secretary advised the Members of correspondence received from the Volvo Ocean Race Festival Committee requesting an opportunity to present an overview of the Volvo Ocean Race Galway Festival to the Members. It was agreed by the Members to invite representatives of the Volvo Ocean Race Festival Committee to make a presentation at the February Monthly Meeting of Council.

Mayors Business

918

The Mayor informed the Members that 10 projects nominated by Galway County Council for the LAMA Awards had been short-listed as finalists. He stated that this is a great achievement and he wished all concerned well at the Awards Ceremony to be held on 11th February, 2012.

Notice of Motions

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 15 – CLLR. D. CONNOLLY

919

It was proposed by Cllr. D. Connolly, seconded by Cllr. Canney and agreed “that Galway County Council call on the Minister for Education to reverse the recent decision to increase

the pupil teacher ratio which if implemented will have a massive impact on rural schools which are an integral part of primary education here in County Galway". *The following reply was given:-*

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 16 – CLLR. J. CUDDY

920

The following reply was given:-

"The Council will investigate the putting in place of Bye-Laws regulating washing of horses in rivers, lakes and seas in the context of current legislation."

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 17 – CLLR. J. CUDDY

921

The following reply was given:-

"The review of the speed limits has commenced and we are currently examining the submissions received. Over the coming weeks it is proposed to prepare a report on the submissions received and liaise with the Councillors, the Gardaí, the NRA and other relevant bodies on the submissions received. It is then intended on finalising this report to revise the special speed limits for County Galway."

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 18 – CLLR. J. CUDDY

922

The following reply was given:-

"Galway County Council are constantly reviewing the efficacy of the repair methods for potholes in the County. The weather conditions play a significant role in the effectiveness of pothole repair. It is unrealistic in certain circumstances to cease repair during unsuitable conditions, hence the repair itself may not survive longterm."

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 19 – CLLR. M. FAHY

923

The following reply was given:-

"The provision of bus shelters is primarily a matter for Bus Éireann and Galway County Council's work at Ardrahan is designed in such a way to accommodate their installation. It is understood that Bus Éireann have plans to install shelters at this location. This will be checked out and confirmation will issue to Cllr. Fahy at the next Loughrea Area Meeting."

Criochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Submitted, Approved + Signed

Michael Maher

24th FEBRUARY 2012.
Date

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE AN GAILLIMHE

**MINUTES OF STATUTORY BUDGET MEETING FOR GALWAY COUNTY
COUNCIL HELD AT ARAS AND CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL, GALWAY,
ON TUESDAY 20TH DECEMBER 2011**

ILATHAR:

CATHAOIRLEACH:

Mayor Michael Maher

BAILL:

Cllrs. T. Broderick, S. Canney, L. Carroll, S. Cunniffe, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, Cllrs. J. Cuddy, Comh S O’Cuaig, Comh T. Ó Curraoin, Cllrs. M. Fahy, P. Feeney, G. Finnerty, M. Finnerty, M. Hoade, E. Mannion, T. Mannion, T. McHugh, Comh. S. Ó’Laoi, Cllr. J. McClearn, J. McDonagh, M. Noone, P. Roche, K. Ryan Comh S. Ó Tuairisg, Cllrs. S. Walsh, T. Walsh, T. Welby, B. Willers.

OIFIGIGH:

Ms Martina Maloney, County Manager, Messrs F. Gilmore, J. Cullen, K. Kelly, E. Cummins, Directors of Services; Mr. G. Mullarkey, Head of Finance; Mr. M. Owens, County Secretary & Meetings Administrator, Mr M. McGovern, Management Accountant, Mr. E. Molloy, Senior Engineer, Mr. A. Comer, Senior Executive Officer, Ms. L. Keady, Assistant Staff Officer, Ms. P. Delaney, Clerical Officer.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

Cllr. McClearn referred to the disruption of the December Monthly Meeting of Council, by members of the public opposed to proposals being considered by Government requiring the registration of septic tanks, to comply with a European Directive and complimented the Mayor on his handling of a difficult situation. He referred to the need to have appropriate procedures in place to prevent similar situations arising in the future. Cllr. McDonagh concurred with the sentiments expressed by Cllr. McClearn stating that the behaviour by members the public witnessed in the Chamber at the December Monthly Meeting was unbecoming and unacceptable and it was important that appropriate procedures be introduced for the attendance of members of the public at Council Meetings, to prevent a reoccurrence of same.

The Mayor agreed to a proposal from Cllr. McClearn, seconded by Cllr. McDonagh to convene a meeting of the Corporate Policy Group early in 2012 to consider the introduction of appropriate procedures to address the matter.

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Cllr. Willers also complimented the Mayor for undertaking his role at the Meeting in such difficult circumstances and stated that whilst she recognised that everyone had a democratic right to protest, the Council also enjoyed a democratic right to conduct the business of the Council in a proper manner. She further stated that what occurred at the December Monthly Meeting was a horrible experience, that it raised health and safety issues that needed to be addressed and that in particular placards should not be permitted within County Hall. Cllr. Willers outlined that the actions of the protestors resulted in the Chamber being brought into disrepute and that the association by Members of the Oireachtas, and in particular the involvement of a former Government Minister, with such a protest was inappropriate.

Cllr T. Walsh also wished to be associated with the compliments to the Mayor for his handling of the matter and stated that there was no excuse or justification for the behaviour witnessed in the Chamber at the December Meeting. In reply to Cllr. T. Walsh, it was confirmed that no apology had been received by the Mayor or County Manager from Deputy O Cuiv in relation to the events that occurred at the Meeting.

Cllr. Canney concurred with the views expressed in relation to the need for a protocol to be put in place. He stated that the involvement by Deputy O Cuiv was regrettable and expressed the view that an apology for his actions should be forthcoming.

Cllr. S. Walsh stated that a number of Oireachtas Members were present at the protest and that as Deputy O Cuiv had no involvement in organising the protest, no apology was necessary.

The Mayor, in reply to a proposal from Cllr. D. Connolly, that his previous motion regarding providing grant funding on an income based system to support those with septic tanks who require remediation be revisited, stated that the issue was not on the agenda for today's meeting and accordingly it was not intended to facilitate further discussion of the matter at the Budget Meeting.

The Mayor invited the County Manager to present the draft Budget 2012 Report to the Elected Members.

BUDGET 2012

898

The County Manager referred to the draft Budget for the year 2012 which had been circulated previously to each member of the Council.

She stated that a summary report from the Directors of Service in respect of activities of their respective functional areas was also enclosed. She stated that all statutory requirements had been complied with and that consultation had taken place with the Corporate Policy Group. The Corporate Policy Group considered the preparation of the Draft Budget at its meetings held on 8th November, 30th November and 7th of December 2011.

She noted that the Council is required to:

- a) Adopt the Draft Budget, with or without amendment and
- b) Determine in accordance with the Budget so adopted, the annual rate on the

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valuation to be levied. The Council is required to complete the statutory process within a period of 21 days. This allows, for the adjournment, if necessary of the statutory meeting of the 20th December 2011, provided the process is completed by 9th January 2012.

Context of budgetary preparation

The County Manager noted that during 2011, the Council demonstrated its commitment to maintaining the services in the County. She acknowledged the commitment and support of staff to respond to the challenges this entailed and that the scarcity of resources has resulted in considerable change and contraction in the wake of the changing economic context in which the Council operates. She outlined that the Council has attempted to adjust to the reduction in resources which were available, while at the same time attempting to maintain essential services and respond to more onerous statutory compliance requirements, particularly in the water services area acknowledging that the Elected members and staff have shown resilience and flexibility in responding to the changed circumstances.

The County Manager stated that the Council is conscious of the difficulties being experienced by residents of the County, businesses and communities arising during this period of economic turmoil and is committed to ensuring the cost effective delivery of services, within the current financial constraints.

The County Manager acknowledged that the demands on the Council are continuing to change, in line with citizen needs and changes in national policies and approaches.

She noted that the focus in the provision of Social Housing has changed from direct provision to greater use of the Rental Accommodation Scheme, leasing and greater emphasis on the voluntary sector, with the Council making significant progress in addressing voids in 2011.

Following on from the severe weather experienced in the winter of 2009/2010 the Council, working with the Office of Public Works has continued its efforts at tackling a number of flooding issues throughout the county. To date 58 minor works schemes have been progressed and planning is continuing for the Major Schemes on the Dunkellin and Clare Rivers. The OPW has completed significant advance works at Claregalway bridge and work on Crusheeny bridge is currently underway. Galway County Council is also progressing work on the N18. Allocations for works in County Galway have amounted to €2.9m since the 2009 flood event. Annual expenditure levels in previous years have been less than €1/4m. The County Manager acknowledged that considerable work remains to be done and confirmed that the Council is committed to progressing the relevant projects, in partnership with the OPW, whilst acknowledging the support and assistance received from the OPW to date.

Income from various sources continues to decline including planning fees, fire certificates, parking charges etc.

The County Manager indicated that she was happy to report major progress on advancing the works under the Remedial Action List on the 27 public water supply schemes in County Galway which were identified by the EPA as in need of remedial works to ensure

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that they met the required standard for water production and supply. Over the last number of years the Council has devoted significant resources to identifying the appropriate solutions for the plants in the county and advancing the necessary works through planning and implementation. The total cost of this programme is estimated at €12.5m which is part funded by the DOE. Most of the upgrades are now complete, and it is anticipated that the remainder of the work will be completed early in 2012. The completion of this remedial action programme has addressed significant vulnerabilities and risk factors associated with the production of drinking water on public supplies in the county, in particular Gort, Mid-Galway and Clifden. The County Manager stated she wished to put on the record her appreciation of the work carried out by the staff of the Water Services Unit and the financial support from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government which, together with our own resources, enabled this work to be completed. Of course, the introduction of more sophisticated technology and treatment systems in plants which previously had little treatment other than disinfection has resulted in increasing costs of water production particularly electricity, chemicals and sludge management. In addition, new schemes are coming on stream this year and will add to the cost base. The County Manager confirmed that these additional costs are reflected in the draft budget and are non-discretionary.

The year 2011 saw significant work on the forward planning front. Arising from a new legislative requirement the Council amended the County Development Plan to include a 'core strategy' in compliance with the Regional Planning Guidelines. The legislation also requires significant work on local area plans which is currently in progress. Also the commencement of the legislation in relation to the operation of quarries will lead to a large increase in workload, with an estimated 200 quarries in County Galway. Work is also continuing on identifying solutions in relation to unfinished estates. The County Wind Strategy was adopted in 2011 and has already proved valuable in clarifying the Council's policy in relation to proposals for harnessing the wind resource of the county to help with the national commitments to deliver renewable energy.

While the County Manager acknowledged that the level of resources available for road maintenance and improvement falls short of that which would be desirable, she confirmed that the Council will continue to adapt in an effort to make the best use of allocations.

	Roads Grant Funding	Council's own contribution
	€m	€m
2008	38.90	5.12
2009	35.39	4.09
2010	23.65	3.02
2011	21.80	2.71

The County Manager stated that the introduction of the registration system for septic tanks is also likely to impact on work programmes for 2012. During 2011, the Council has focused on effective management of the Council's resources through prudent revenue expenditure controls and limiting exposure to capital projects, timely recoupments, together with a review of work processes and practices in a number of areas. Galway County Council must respond flexibly to the changed demand for services. This will be achieved by maximizing value for money in the delivery of services, and prioritisation of compliance obligations in the context of reduced resources. Galway County Council

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provides essential services and spends significant resources throughout the County. The 2012 Budget represents a valuable injection of funds to the County.

Budget 2012

The draft budget for 2012 envisages expenditure of €136 million which equates to a reduction of 5.5% on the budget adopted for 2011. This represents a significant further reduction in the resources available to the Council following on from the reductions since 2008.

TABLE 1: BUDGETARY TREND 2008 - 2011

2008 - Adopted Budget	€160 M
2009 - Adjusted Budget	€146 M
2010 - Adopted Budget (note: €3m of this sum is due to an adjustment in accounting treatment)	€149 M
2011 - Adopted Budget	€144 M
2012 - Draft Budget	€136 M

In line with previous approaches, the County Manager noted that the budget includes a figure for road grants based on the original 2011 allocation as the 2012 allocation has not yet been received.

The County Manager outlined the key influences in the preparation of the Draft Budget as follows:

(1) Local Government Fund

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government has formally advised Galway County Council that our allocation for the year 2012 will be €30.45m, a reduction of 7.3% on that received in 2011.

(2) Trends in Local Government Fund allocation is as follows: -

	Allocation	% Reduction
2008	€40.60m	
2009	€36.88m	9%
2010	€36.09m	2%
2011	€32.84m	9%
2012	€30.45m	7%
Cumulative Reduction (2008 to 2012)		25%

(3) Cost Reduction Achievements.

The changed economic circumstances since 2008 and the reduction in funding available to the Council from both National level and local sources has brought about significant cost reductions in the operation of the Council activities.

Significant savings have been achieved to date in

- A) Payroll costs
- B) Procurement
- C) Work practice changes

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A key objective of the Public Service Agreement is to facilitate a significant reduction in the number of staff working in the public service, achieve substantial and sustainable savings on the Exchequer pay bill and maintain public services. Table 2 below gives an indication of the change between Quarter 4 2008 and Quarter 3 2011.

	Quarter 4:2008	Quarter 3:2011	Difference	%
Defence	11,265	10,169	1,096	9.73
Education	95,024	90,578	4,446	4.68
Health	111,025	104,287	6,738	6.07
Civil Service	38,817	36,571	2,246	5.79
Justice	15,692	14,477	1,215	7.74
Local Government	35,008	30,089	4,919	14.05
State Agencies	13,060	11,709	1,351	10.34
	319,891	297,880	22,011	6.88

The County Manager noted that as was evident from these figures, the reduction in staff resource in the Local Government sector is by far the highest sectoral reduction.

She outlined that since the introduction of the moratorium on recruitment in the Public Sector the staffing levels in Galway County Council have been reduced significantly, noting that an analysis of staff changes from September 2008 to September 2011 indicates that the council has seen a net reduction of almost 280 in staff members. This represents a net reduction of almost 25%. In addition to this, the County Manager stated that it is anticipated that approximately 30 staff members will resign their positions before the end of February 2012. She noted that this change in staff numbers is dramatic and, together with the reduction in pay rates introduced in 2010, results in a reduction in the Revenue budgetary provision for current staff of almost 12.5%. The County Manager highlighted that superannuation costs borne by the council in full has increased significantly following a large number of retirements and that this was even more challenging in 2012 with the significant increase in anticipated retirements. This reduction in staffing numbers has had an impact on the council's capacity to deliver services, although the potential impact has been reduced by the willingness and flexibility shown by the remaining staff to meet service priorities.

The County Manager outlined that as resources reduce, both human and financial, it will be essential that the Council prioritise essential services in the assignment of staff and have realistic expectations regarding the levels of service that can be sustained.

Procurement

The County Manager advised that a regional procurement network has been established with the adjoining counties which has advanced joint procurement competitions and that the Council is utilising the National Procurement Service which has 45 national framework contracts in place for high spend requirements in areas such as ICT, office supplies and vehicles. Amendments are being made to the LA quotes system to improve its effectiveness, whilst tendering of electricity, public lighting maintenance and chemicals is also underway.

The County Manager confirmed that in 2011, the Council generated savings through the introduction of managed print services, the roll out of a new fuel card system and a new contract for cash collection and that there will be a continued focus on this work in 2012.

Public Sector Agreement (Croke Park)

The County Manager advised that the Croke Park Deal has provided a structure to manage change across the public sector in the years ahead and while much has been achieved to date in the Local Government sector and in Galway County Council in particular, further opportunities remain. She stated that in addition to the reduction in staff numbers, a number of actions which will impact on Galway County Council are being progressed at National level. The Council has prepared its own local action plan and interaction with the relevant Trade Unions is taking place, with a view to achieving further efficiencies and cost savings, noting that this was essential if the impact on service level of reduced resource availability was to be minimised.

The County Manager noted that the standardisation of annual leave across with public service will take effect in 2012, resulting in a reduction in leave entitlements for some staff and the removal of concessions such as 'race days' and privilege days.

She stated that the priorities in the reform process include the increased use of ICT, more use of the internet for information and service provision, shared services and changes to the process of public procurement, noting that Galway County Council has a long tradition of shared services including the provision of motor tax services, fire service and library service on behalf of the City, whilst the Council also carried out a number of services on behalf of Ballinasloe Town Council.

The County Manager referred to ongoing restructuring and re-assignment of duties that had taken place across the Council to take account of staff reductions and the requirement to maintain critical services. Examples included the re-assignment of a large number of staff to the Water Services area to ensure that this critical service is appropriately resourced. Engineering areas and depots having been consolidated and the number of functioning area offices being reduced. It was noted that this trend was likely to continue, with reducing human resources. She advised that the draft budget included a proposal to withdraw from the direct operation of Civic Amenity Sites with a view to reducing costs and freeing up the staff resource currently deployed. It was also noted that greater use of contractors to supplement the council's own resources in the Roads area was now essential.

The following was also noted:

- A number of staff have transferred to the Road Safety Authority.
- The Council has with the implementation of the Core payroll and Human resource management system, improved management information which is facilitating enhanced attendance management.
- The Council is implementing the Labour Court recommendation in relation to the standardisation of payment systems to part-time fire-fighters.

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- The Council is supporting the employment activation schemes including placement of unemployed apprentices, graduate placement programme and work experience opportunities.
- A significant amount of savings have been obtained in areas such as office rental costs, including the relocation of the finance section staff from Liosban to HQ and a review of area office arrangements. In addition the council has introduced more cost effective managed print services.
- A number of staff are undertaking a training course in Bio-diversity which will assist the Council in fulfilling its legal obligations associated with the implementation of Strategic environmental assessment and appropriate assessment.
- The Valuation Office has developed an online facility to facilitate the Council in submitting requests for revaluation.
- The Department of Finance has taken over responsibility for the administration and processing of VEC pensions from the council.
- Employees who were previously paid weekly are now paid fortnightly, thereby reducing administrative requirements.
- It is anticipated that responsibility for issuing Driver licenses will transfer to a central agency, which will have implications for this council.

Local Government Efficiency Review Group Report

The County Manager noted that the report envisages savings accruing through further reductions in staff numbers, the use of joint administrative areas, shared services and procurement. Whilst, it envisages staff reductions ranging from 5-30% across various grades and functional areas.

She stated that whilst the Council is already very advanced on the issue of generating savings from procurement and energy, some of the gains made in 2011 will be eroded due to the price increases in the electricity sector and increasing cost of some chemicals together with the recently announced increase in the VAT rate. She noted that the council is continuing to invest in the area of water conservation and leak eradication which improves efficiency, whilst the network maintenance teams are responsible for reducing unaccounted for water and will build on the success of the capital expenditure on the water conservation project.

The County Manager advised that many of the items identified in the report require intervention at national level citing the recommendation for the direct deduction of social housing rent from social welfare payments, the proposal for more road tolls, economic cost recovery in planning, continuous registration of vehicles, water charges and a local property tax etc. noting that the Council awaits developments in this regard whilst aware that the Government is currently advancing proposals for the implementation of a household charge in 2012.

She noted that Local Government has been subject to previous reviews including the Indecon Report in 2006 which identified the funding gap which was emerging for Local Authorities and proposed a number of solutions including the introduction of economic

charges for services and stated that it will not be possible for Local Authorities to maintain required service levels in the absence of adequate financial and staff resources.

Water Services and associated charges

The County Manager acknowledged that the Members will be aware of the proposals in the Programme for Government to establish Irish Water, a State Company and that the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government was considering proposals for the transfer of water services provision from local authorities to the new water utility, noting that a decision had yet to be made around the format of the new entity.

She stated that Galway County Council awaits the outcome of this process and will have to consider the consequences locally for services and resources in due course, noting that in the meantime, the Council must continue to fulfill its mandate in relation to this essential service.

She advised that over the last number of years, the Council had prioritised the investment in Water Services infrastructure to ensure that the Council fulfilled its legal obligations and protected public health. She stated that this investment resulted in increasing costs of operation and maintenance associated with running new, more complex and upgraded facilities.

It was noted that the Draft Budget includes provision of €25.6m for the Water Services Division, representing 19% of the overall budget provision for 2012. It was further noted that this cost continues to increase as a proportion of overall revenue account expenditure and that the service also expands on an annual basis, particularly with the take over of group water schemes which are connected to the Galway County Council network.

The County Manager stated that the increase in costs can be accounted for by a number of elements:

- (i) More complex operation, maintenance and management arrangements.
- (ii) Take-over of Group Water Schemes
- (iii) New and upgraded plants coming on stream, (Council and DBO)
- (iv) Loan charges

National Water Pricing Policy

The County Manager advised that Galway County Council, in 2011, had borrowed almost €54m to cover the cost of capital investment, which is not met by the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government in the context of the National Water Pricing Policy. She stated that the cost of servicing water services borrowing in 2011 is €2.5m while in 2008, the corresponding figure was €1.3m, representing an increase of 192% in three years. It was noted that the requirement to borrow further funds to meet the Councils portion of the capital cost of projects will continue in the future as income from Development Contributions continues to deteriorate. The County Manager noted that the Council must continue to invest in Water Services infrastructure in accordance with the allocations in the Water Services Investment Programme if it is to meet the required environmental standards and service requirements.

The County Manager stated that in accordance with the National Water Pricing Policy, the costs incurred in the provision of water services are intended to be met through

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charging the non-domestic consumer the economic cost of production for the proportion attributable to this sector, with the balance in respect of the domestic sector being recouped through the Local Government Fund. The recognition of the principal that the users of services should bear the economic cost of provision of these services is acknowledged, specifically in the report of the Fourth Commission on Taxation. She stated that applying this methodology, the County Council charge for water supply should be €1.62 per m³ noting that the charge in 2011 was set at €1.10 per m³. She referred to her previously stated position of wishing to bridge this gap, with the implementation of phased increases.

The County Manager outlined her proposal for an increase of 17 cent per m³ from €1.10 to €1.27 in the charge for commercial water resulting in a litre of water costing 0.00127 cent. She noted that in effect the subsidy to business in 2012 will be of the order of €1.65m p.a. She also outlined that the charge for waste water in 2011 is set at €1.17 whilst the economic cost for wastewater should be €3.38 and therefore she was proposing to increase the 2011 waste water charge by 18 cent.

The County Manager stated that while the costs of operation and maintenance of water services was continuing to escalate, the Local Government Fund allocation which was intended to meet the cost of supply to the domestic customer continues to reduce. Therefore, in the absence of domestic water charges there remains a significant shortfall in funding for the cost of water services, which is unsustainable. She advised that the Draft Budget included an income provision of €750,000 as an estimated contribution from the Department of the Environment to meet the increasing costs associated with the cost of supplying water services to the domestic sector.

She outlined that it was evident that the current approach to funding water services capital investment was unsustainable and must be amended to take account of the resource availability within the Local Government sector.

Trends in Charging:

Charge per M3	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Water Pricing Policy Cost 2012
Water	0.89	1.00	1.05	1.10	1.27	1.62
Waste Water	0.61	1.07	1.12	1.17	1.35	3.38
Consolidated	1.50	2.07	2.17	2.27	2.62	5.00

It was noted that charging less than the economic cost of water, restricts the availability of resources for other services whilst in addition, if it continues, it will impact on the Council's capacity to co-fund new Capital investment which is needed to ensure the legal compliance standards are met.

Commercial Rates

The County Manager confirmed that in view of the difficult trading conditions for many businesses at present, she was not proposing to increase the rate multiplier for 2012, noting that since 2008, Galway County Council has limited rates increases to just 1%.

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It was noted that total income from commercial rates in the county for 2012 was estimated at €23.8m and was a vital component in allowing the Council to fulfill its statutory role and provide the required services throughout the county.

The County Manager advised that many of the costs incurred by the Council are non-discretionary costs in that they must be spent on particular services, citing as examples, Higher Education Grants, loan charges, statutory demands, pensions etc. She noted that the scope for reduction in costs and expenditure is therefore limited to discretionary items.

The County Manager outlined her concerns about the limited budgetary provisions for a number of activities, which was having or is likely to have an adverse effect on the services which the council provides. She stated however that unfortunately, due to the limited funds available, she was unable to make provision in the draft budget for any contingencies which might arise in 2012, citing as examples costs arising from severe weather events or other unexpected incidents.

She advised that the level of vacancy of local authority housing had been significantly reduced in 2011 and the majority will be available for letting early in the New Year. She further advised that the allocation for housing maintenance had been increased in 2011 to fund works on vacant units.

It was noted that a reduction had been made in the provision for the Councils contribution to Housing Grants reflecting the earlier changes in the co-funding requirements for Housing Aid Grants.

The County Manager also advised that the level of resources being provided to the roads programme was continuing to reduce, noting that the reduction of €300,000 in the allocation to county roads in the draft budget from the Councils' own resources would impact on the level of activity in 2012. She advised that as in other years, a full picture would emerge following the notification of grants from the Department of Transport and the NRA to allow compilation of the Roads Programme for 2012. The County Manager confirmed that the Director of Services for Roads was exploring options to further improve the efficiency of the road maintenance operations in 2012 whilst noting that the National Budget indicated an intention to discontinue the L.I.S. programme in 2012.

The County Manager referred to Galway County Council's strong tradition of supporting the various voluntary and community activities throughout the County across the range of services e.g. Golden Mile and other heritage activities, festivals and arts activities, economic and tourism activities, noting that this area of expenditure supports significant voluntary efforts in communities throughout the County and she acknowledged the support of the elected members in this regard. She advised that the draft budget included provision to continue to support Community activity through the work of the staff of the Community, Enterprise and Economic Development section and Heritage section and by the retention of grants largely at the level agreed in the adopted budget for 2011. She advised however that provision for co-funding of economic and tourism projects had been reduced significantly.

Non Rates Income

Non – Principal Private Residences (NPPR)

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The County Manager advised that in July 2009, a €200 charge was introduced on non-principal private residences and that the Local Government Management Association had collected the charge on a shared service basis for local authorities. She advised that the legislation provided for self-certification and penalties for late payment noting that 85% of payments had been made on-line, reducing overhead costs. She confirmed that the Draft budget anticipated an income from this source for 2012 of €2M.

She stated that income sources from planning fees and fire safety certificates had seen significant reductions in 2011 and it was anticipated that this reduced level of income would continue in 2012. The County Manager also advised that it would be necessary in 2012 to increase charges for some services, citing for example, fire call outs and burial spaces.

Capital Investment in Infrastructure

The County Manager referred to the Medium Term Exchequer Framework for Infrastructure and Capital investment 2012-2016 recently published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and advised that the report acknowledged that there would be a lower level of resources available for capital investment and consequently 'sharp prioritisation of investment is paramount'.

The County Manager noted that the main priorities identified included:

- Ensuring adequate maintenance of the National Road Network in order to protect the value of previous investments
- Targeting the improvement of specific road segments where there is a clear economic justification, including advancing two key PPP roads projects. The intention is to continue to pursue the Gort to Tuam PPP with a view to the project going ahead within the Framework period. Work will continue on the Galway City Outer Bypass (N6) to resolve the legal issues delaying the project.
It is also intended to progress some relatively low cost targeted improvements on the National Secondary network where safety is an issue and in tourist areas.
- The Government plans to direct significant funding towards the maintenance and rehabilitation of regional and local roads, maintaining the current trend of allocating 85% of investment to this work. Some strategic improvement and safety schemes will be progressed.
- Alongside structural reform of the water sector, water services investment will be an important element. In the years to 2016, €1.6bn of exchequer resources will be committed.
- Water services investment will be a key focus of the Public capital Programme, with prioritisation of water conservation, compliance and capacity improvements e.g. Costello, improving waste water infrastructure including the East Galway Treatment Plant.
- There will be continuing investment in flood defence and mitigation.
- Funding for Oranmore Railway station will be provided. However the next phase of the Western Rail Corridor is deferred for further consideration in 2015.
- The Government plans to proceed with the Smarter Travel demonstration areas in a reduced manner to generate the maximum modal shift. Some funding will be available for cycle-lanes and cycle-ways, pedestrianisation projects, signage and traffic calming.

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- Some funding will be available for Tourism projects associated with recreational walking and cycling.
- In relation to the Housing function the report refers to the need to improve energy efficiency of the social housing stock, deliver prompt turnaround of voids, limit local authority housing output and increase use of Voluntary housing agencies
- The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport plans to launch two sports capital programmes to enhance local sporting infrastructure.

The County Manager referred to the Galway County Council capital programme for the three year period 2012 – 2014 attached to the Budget Report and advised that it had been informed by the Government Infrastructure and Capital Investment Framework, the availability of resources and consequently was less ambitious than previous programmes. It was noted that key features included the following trends:

Housing

- The move away from direct provision towards leasing of housing available in the market reduces the likely expenditure in this programme.
- Continuation of housing adaptations grants for older people and people with disability.
- Continued funding for energy efficiency retrofitting programme in the stock of social housing.

Water Services

- The three year capital investment programme announced by the Minister in 2010 sets the priority projects which we are anxious to progress valued at €131m
- Investment in the upgrading of rural water schemes to continue.
- Water conservation remains a key priority.

Roads

- The Council is anxious that the contract for the M17/M18 be advanced during the lifetime of the Framework, having regard to the availability of private sector funding.
- The Galway City Outer Bypass remains a key priority.

Conclusion

The County Manager noted that the preparation of the Draft Annual Budget for 2012 had been very challenging, in the context of increasing responsibilities and services standards, coupled with a reduction in the available resources. She stated her belief that the proposed Draft Budget would allow Galway County Council to deliver the optimum level of core services in 2012, having regard to available resources noting however that there was no provision for contingencies included. She stated that the proposed gross expenditure of €136m together with the capital programme spend estimated at €100m, represented a very considerable investment of monies in the development of the County and the delivery of services throughout the County.

The County Manager noted that if resources were available, there were many other valuable areas of activity the Council would wish to engage in stating however that the Council had already adapted to the challenge of delivering with less resources.

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She stated that the Council would continue to advance the capital infrastructure programmes, particularly in water services, which would improve the competitiveness of County Galway and the attractiveness for further economic investment stating that as the Members would see from the reports of the Directors of Service, much progress was made in 2011 and would continue in 2012.

The County Manager expressed her appreciation to the members for their co-operation and support during 2011 recording her appreciation in particular to the Mayor, Cllr. Michael Maher and former Mayor Cllr. Jimmy McClearn for their commitment to the special responsibilities of the office of Mayor and their courtesy and co-operation in doing the business of the Council. She also acknowledged the assistance of the Corporate Policy Group in the discussion on the draft budget.

She thanked the staff of the Council for their dedication and flexibility during 2011 noting that the year was challenging with reduced human and financial resources and difficult weather conditions which brought increased workloads. She stated that the staff had proven themselves to be committed public servants who are anxious to maintain service provision at the highest level possible.

The County Manager also thanked the Council's Directors of Service and their staff for their rigorous examination of budget items for 2012 to identify areas for efficiency improvement and cost saving and in particular acknowledged the work of Mr. Ger Mullarkey, Mr. Michael McGovern, Ms Mary McGann and the staff in the Finance Unit. Noting that the preparation of the Draft Budget had been onerous and had been approached in a most meticulous manner.

She stated that the year 2012 would undoubtedly bring new challenges for Galway County Council but that she was confident that with support of the Members, Management team, and colleagues, the Council would provide valuable services in 2012 to meet the critical needs of the citizens and adapt flexibly to the changes required.

The County Manager recommended the Draft Budget to the elected members for adoption.

The Mayor thanked the County Manager and called on Mr. Mullarkey to outline the specific figures as presented.

Mr. Mullarkey stated that in order to deliver a balanced Draft Budget for the consideration of the Council, it has been necessary to reprioritise work and identify efficiency improvements and proceeded to outline the figures as below.

The following tables set out the expenditure and income breakdown proposed for 2012:

Expenditure by Programme Group	2011 Budget	2011 Estimated Outturn	2012 Draft Budget
		€	€
Housing and Building	11,673,973	12,153,785	11,928,351
Road Transportation & Safety	36,133,833	38,066,411	34,602,354
Water Services	25,122,403	24,547,415	25,586,948
Development Management	8,109,198	7,912,680	7,409,368
Environmental Services	18,421,961	18,042,714	17,501,117
Recreation & Amenity	8,249,765	8,165,649	8,292,863
Agriculture, Education Health & Welfare	25,568,360	24,594,560	20,614,508
Miscellaneous Services	11,047,982	10,304,401	10,426,570

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Total	144,327,475	143,787,606	136,362,079
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In the Draft Budget, the estimated Revenue Income anticipated is as follows: -

Estimated Revenue Income	2011		2012	
	€	%	€	%
Local Government Fund	30,335,000	21	28,105,841	21
Pension Related Deduction	2,500,000	2	2,350,000	2
NPPR	1,800,000	1	2,000,000	1
State Grants & Subsidies	56,021,502	39	50,807,843	37
Non-Domestic Water Charges	4,290,000	3	3,684,250	3
Local Determined Income	30,767,450	21	31,237,222	23
Other Income	18,613,523	13	18,176,923	13
	144,327,475	100	136,362,079	100

Expenditure Adjustments

The principal variances between the Budget for 2011 and 2012.

Service	Service Description	2012	2011	Change
		€	€	€
A01	Maintenance of LA Housing Units	3,775,445	4,091,297	(315,852)
B				
Division	Road Transport & Safety	34,602,354	36,133,833	(1,531,479)
C01	Water Supply	13,581,506	13,126,004	455,502
C02	Waste Water Treatment	5,925,462	5,463,730	461,732
E06	Street Cleaning	1,113,551	1,373,157	(259,606)
G01	Land Drainage Costs	2,362,244	862,244	1,500,000
G05	Educational Support Services	16,739,021	23,070,827	(6,331,806)
H10	Motor Taxation	2,516,024	2,694,627	(178,603)
	Subtotal of above	80,615,607	86,815,719	(6,200,112)
	Total Expenditure	136,362,079	144,327,475	(7,965,396)

Mr. Mullarkey noted that the reduction in Service E06 reflected the estimated out turn for 2011 whilst Service G01 reflected an increase in the provision towards essential works on land drainage districts, the vast majority of which is being funded by the OPW and for continued co-funding for flood alleviation measures to be advanced in 2012.

He stated that the reduction in Service G06 reflected the fact that the council no longer funds and recoups the costs associated with VEC pensions and in addition, noted that a lower expenditure and recoupment of HEG grants was being forecasted for 2012. He advised that in 2011, provision had been made to roll out motor tax, H10, to the regional offices, however, as the Department had indicated that there is no funding to establish the link to Shannon, this provision had been removed.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Mullarkey and opened the floor to discussion.

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There were opinions and concerns expressed, questions asked and clarifications sought by the Members on the following:

The proposal to freeze the commercial rate level at the current rate was broadly welcomed though some councillors expressed regret that it had not been possible to reduce the rate in the current economic climate. Concern was expressed at the reduction in the Local Government Fund allocation which was noted had reduced by 25% since 2008 and at the proposed increase in water charges. It was noted that the increase in water charges would have to be borne by the business and agricultural sectors which had to contend with very adverse economic conditions at the moment.

Concerns were expressed at the reduction in funding for local roads, especially given that the national budget had indicated that motor tax rates were to increase in 2012. There was disappointment with the fact that the LIS scheme was no longer going to be continued. There were suggestions that the community employment scheme be expanded to facilitate works on local roads. Clarification was sought as to whether any decision had been made on the M17 / M18 Gort to Tuam motorway.

Clarification was sought on the level of funding proposed for the operation of the dog warden service at €205,000. It was also queried if the Council could conduct works under the heading register of electors on a bi-annual basis which had a proposed budget of almost €218,000

Clarification was sought as to whether there would be any impact on the councils funding if the proposed transfer of the driving licence function was to proceed.

Concern was expressed as to the adequacy of the funding being provided for the purchase of lands for new graveyards or for extensions to existing graveyards. Clarification was sought as to whether the current grant to local communities to maintain burial grounds was being maintained.

Clarification was sought in relation to office rental costs and it was noted that the Council proposed to close the Lackagh office in 2012. Clarification was also sought as to whether the funds raised under the NPPR heading of €2M were for any specific purpose.

Concerns were expressed at the level of water being lost through old networks and queries as to whether any additional funding was available to address this. It was suggested that dealing with unfinished housing estates should be made a priority in 2012. The funding for the Spiddal Sewerage scheme of €500,000 was welcomed

It was noted that the proposed household charge of €100 was being used to replace the government contribution to the Local Government Fund. Opinion was expressed that the Government should progress the amalgamation of local authorities with a view to reducing costs.

Clarification was sought in relation to the proposed expenditure under heading H0501 coroners fees, as to whether this was a flat fee or was it based on a fee per case.

Clarification was also sought as to what the funding raised under the proposed septic tank charge would be used for. It was suggested that the Council should reduce its expenditure on consultants.

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Concern was expressed at the decline in staff numbers especially the reduction on the outdoor frontline staff and the major impact this was having on the delivery of services at a time when the Council was facing an increased demand for services. It was suggested that the Government should consider lifting the moratorium on staff recruitment to enable the local authority to carry out the services required.

Clarification was sought on the amount borrowed to fund water services as to whether it was €46M or €54M. Clarification was also sought as to whether the Council had to bear the costs of advertising in relation to national roads.

The Councils contribution towards tourism initiatives was welcomed.

Clarification was sought in relation to the issue of funds not being available to fund the link to Shannon re the provision of motor tax facilities in regional offices. It was noted that the costs of Service B09 car parking exceeded the income raised. Clarification was also sought as to whether the council could impose rates on vacant buildings.

An update on the status of the Kiltormer sewerage scheme was sought. Clarification was sought on the amount of NPPR income to be collected in 2011.

Clarification was sought in relation to the amount of income to be received from the Local Government Fund with €30.45M noted on page 4 and €28.10M on page 9. Clarification was sought in relation to the amounts included under heading C03 cost of water collection vis a vis the income collected for water. Clarification was also sought in relation to the funding under heading A09 Housing Grants.

Responses to the issues raised were as follows:

The County Manager noted the concerns raised at the proposed increase in water charges but advised that the Council was required by the National Water Pricing Policy to recover the economic cost of water production by means of charging the non-domestic consumer the proportion attributable to that section with the balance in regard to the domestic sector to be recouped as part of the Local Government fund. She noted that the proposed charge for 2012 was still below the actual cost of production.

The County Manager shared the concerns in relation to the reduction in funding for local road maintenance but as noted with the Local Government Fund having been reduced by 25% since 2008 stated the Council just did not have the resources available. She noted that consideration was being given to the use of community employment schemes but that it would probably require a national initiative to progress. She also noted that the council was partaking in the various other employment initiatives being promoted by Government. She advised that there was no further information available as to the position in relation to the M17 / M18 motorway.

In relation to the operation of the dog warden service it was noted that the 2012 budget had allowed for the employment of 2 dog wardens, 2011 there was only 1, in addition to costs associated with the storage of abandoned dogs. It was also noted that the compilation of

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the register of electors is a statutory requirement and would require national legislation to be amended to allow bi-annual preparation.

Income collected from driving licences are remitted to the Department of Environment similarly to motor tax and form part of the funding available for the Local Government Fund, the proposed transfer of the issuing of driving licences away from local authorities should have no impact on the councils funding assuming this funding arrangement remains in place.

In relation to queries on graveyards the County Manager stated that it was the Council's policy to work closely with the local communities in relation to land acquisition for new burial grounds or extensions. She also confirmed that the grant to local communities towards maintaining graveyards remained unchanged in 2012.

It was noted that most area offices were actually owned by the council. It was also noted that an ongoing review of rented accommodation was carried out and this had resulted in the Finance department relocating to County Hall in late 2010. The proposed transfer of the Lackagh Office would generate savings of €46,000 in a full year with staff being redeployed to HQ and the Tuam Regional Officer. Income raised under the NPPR heading forms part of the Councils general funding.

With regard to coroners fees, it was confirmed that the payment includes a retainer together with fees that are paid on a case by case based on rates as determined by the Department of Justice. It was noted that the budget had allowed for the collection of the septic tank registration charge and would form part of the Councils funding for 2012. It was noted that due to the technical complexity of some projects e.g. the need for EIS studies, appropriate assessment, etc. that where the Council do not have the appropriate resources in-house then consultants are hired. It was also noted that the appointment of any consultants are subject to the appropriate procurement procedures.

The County Manager acknowledged the concerns expressed at the decline in staff numbers and its impact on the ability of the council to meet future service delivery demands. However she noted that under the Government's national recovery plan that there was a requirement on the local authority sector to reduce staff numbers and that the Council would have to adapt to the changed circumstances we are now operating in.

It was confirmed that the amount of borrowings in support of water services was €54m. It was also verified that the NRA fund the costs associated with advertising for national routes.

It was noted that the emphasis on motor tax collection was on promoting the on-line option and as a consequence funding for additional links from area offices to Shannon had been curtailed. In relation to the observation on car parking, it was noted that the costs included the repayment of loan charges associated with the purchase of the meters as well as an allocation of service support costs. However it was also noted that parking income has been declining in recent years reflecting the current economic environment. It was clarified that existing legislation does not permit the imposition of rates on vacant buildings.

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It was confirmed that the Kiltormer sewerage scheme would not be progressing. It was also confirmed that approx €2m would be collected under the NPPR heading in 2012.

In relation to the income received under the Local Government Fund it was noted that this figure was made up of two elements the direct contribution from the Department of €28.1m and the income raised locally under the Pension Related Deduction of €2.35M to give a total of €30.45m. It was clarified that the heading C03 cost of water collection included costs payable to Celtic Anglian and a bad debt provision. It was noted that the co-funding of housing aid grants had changed resulting in the Council having to contribute a maximum of 20% as opposed to 33% for DPG /ERG type grant funding enabling the Council to budget for a similar level of gross expenditure at a reduced net cost to the Council.

ADOPTION OF BUDGET 2012

899

It was proposed by Cllr. McDonagh, seconded by Cllr. Cuddy and agreed to reduce Sub Service B0406 Local Roads General Improvement Works by €10,000 and to increase Sub Service F0302 Playgrounds by €10,000 as a contribution towards the Lackagh Community Playground.

It was proposed by Cllr Noone, seconded by Cllr Hoade and agreed to reduce Sub Service H0904 Expenses LA Member by €4,700 and to increase Sub Service F0302 Playgrounds by €4,700 to facilitate the Council in supporting the development of a community playground in Lackagh.

It was proposed by Cllr. McClearn and seconded by Cllr. McDonagh that Galway County Council hereby adopt the draft budget, amended as follows, for the financial year ended 31/12/2012

To reduce the proposed increase in water charge by 50% which would result in a reduction in income of €202,000.

The reduction in income of €202,000 to be funded as follows:

- Sub Service E0601 Reduce the provision for the Operation of the Street Cleaning Service by €50,000
- Sub Service F0204 Reduce the provision for the Purchase of books by €50,000
- Sub Service F0502 reduce the provision for Contribution to other bodies arts programme by €22,000
- Sub Service G0404 reduce the provision for Operation of Dog Warden Service by €10,000
- Service G Income increase the provision for other income by €10,000
- Sub Service H0905 reduce the provision for other expenses by €10,000
- Sub Service A0101 reduce the provision for Maintenance of LA Housing units by €30,000
- Sub Service A0103 reduce the provision for Traveller Accommodation Management by €10,000
- Sub Service E0901 reduce the provision for Maintenance of Burial Grounds by €10,000

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As agreement was not reached in this regard a vote was taken.

Voting on the proposal was as follows:

AR SON: Cllr. T. Broderick, L. Carroll, J. Cuddy, S. Cunniffe, M. Fahy, P. Feeney, G. Finnerty, M. Finnerty, M. Hoade, S Ó Laoi, M. Maher, E. Mannion, T. Mannion, J. Mc Clearn, J. Mc Donagh, T. Mc Hugh, M. Noone, P. Roche, K. Ryan, S. Ó Tuairisg, T. Walsh, T. Welby, B. Willers (23)

IN AGHAIDH: Cllr. S. Canney, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, S. Ó Cuaig T. Ó Curraoin (5)

The motion was declared carried.

DETERMINATION OF THE ANNUAL RATE OF VALUATION FOR 2012

900

It was proposed by Cllr McClearn, seconded by Cllr McDonagh and agreed "That Galway County Council hereby determine in accordance with the Budget for the Financial Year ending 31/12/2012, the rates as set out in Table A and C as amended, to be the Rates on Valuation to be levied for the several purposes as set out in those tables for the Financial Year ending 31/12/2012."

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE AND INCOME OUTTURN FOR 2011

901

It was proposed by Cllr. McHugh and seconded by Cllr. Carroll and agreed.

"That Galway County Council approves the estimated expenditure and outturn figures for 2011 as set out in the Budget documentation".

REPORT ON THE THREE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME

902

It was agreed that the Council would note the Report on the 3 Year Capital Programme.

The County Manager thanked the Members for supporting the Draft Budget

The Mayor thanked the County Manager and the staff for the preparation of the 2012 Budget which was an onerous task in regard to the adverse economic conditions that currently prevail.

Chriochnaigh an Cruinniú ansin.

Submitted, Approved + Signed

Michael Maher

23RD January 2012

Date

Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 19th December 2011

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD AT ARAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL, ON MONDAY, 19th
DECEMBER, 2011**

CATHAOIRLEACH:

Cllr. M. Maher

ILATHAIR FRESIN:-

Baill:-

Cllrs. T. Broderick, S. Canney, L. Carroll, S. Cunniffe, D. Connolly, M. Connolly,
Cllrs. J. Cuddy, Comh S O'Cuaig, Comh T. Ó Curraoin, Cllrs. M. Fahy, P. Feeney, G. Finnerty, M. Finnerty, M. Hoade, P. Hynes, E Mannion, T. Mannion, T McHugh, Comh. S. Ó'Laoi, Cllr. J. McClearn, J McDonagh, M. Noone, P. Roche, K. Ryan 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, E. Cummins, Director of Services, Ms, G. Mullarkey, Head of Finance, Messrs. A. Farrell, A. Comer, Senior Executive Officer Messrs. E. Molloy, L. Gavin, Senior Engineer, Ms. V. Loughnane, Senior Planner, Mr. M. Owens, County Secretary, P. O' Neachtain, and Ms. R. O'Boyle, Staff Officer.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

Cllr. T. Walsh expressed concerns in relation to the health & safety issues presented by virtue of the number of members of the public present in and within the vicinity of the Council Chamber, and in particular the fact that the emergency exits for the Council Chamber were blocked. The Mayor confirmed that he intended to proceed with the Meeting on the basis that the emergency exits were kept clear at all times and that only an appropriate number of the members of the public present, remained in the Council Chamber. The Mayor requested the co-operation of the members of the public in withdrawing from the Council Chamber in order that the emergency exits were kept clear at all times and advised that those members of the public remaining in the Council Chamber should not, in any way, disrupt or interfere with the business of the Meeting.

In reply to Comh. O Cuaig, the Mayor confirmed that the Government's proposals in relation to the registration of septic tanks, to comply with the requirements of a

Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 19th December 2011

European Directive, were not on the agenda for the Meeting, that no request had been received by the Mayor or the Meetings Administrator for the inclusion of the item on the agenda and that since the issuing of the agenda, no contact had been made with either the Mayor or the Meetings Administrator by any of the Elected Members in relation to the matter. The Mayor advised however, that he was willing to allow the matter be raised for consideration under Item 14 on the agenda Mayor's Business.

Due to the failure of members of the public to withdraw from the Chamber and to adhere to repeated requests by the Mayor not to interrupt the Meeting, the Mayor, owing to the general disorder of the members of public present in the Chamber which was impeding the orderly transaction of business, adjourned the Meeting in the interests of public safety and order.

On the resumption of the Meeting, the Mayor expressed his disappointment that such inappropriate behaviour had entered the Council Chamber necessitating the adjournment of the Meeting. He acknowledged the democratic right to peaceful protest but regretted that did not happen on this occasion. The Mayor stated that the item was not on the Agenda and that all of the Elected Members were aware of this fact as the agenda had been circulated and known well in advance of the Meeting. He further stated that it was regrettable that notwithstanding same and his commitment to allow the item to be considered under Mayor's Business it was necessary to adjourn the Meeting of Council owing to the general disorder of members of the public. The Mayor advised that this was the second occasion that disruption to the business of the Council had occurred due to the actions of members of the public present in the Council Chamber and accordingly he confirmed that the Council was now forced to introduce new procedures to control public access to the Council Chamber during Council Meetings.

RESOLUTIONS OF SYMPATHY

879

A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:-

Mr. Brian Hehir, Market Street, Clifden, Co. Galway
Ms. Rita Treacy, Ramore, Killimor, Ballinasloe
Mr. Tommy Flaherty, An Trá Bháin, Letir Móir, Co. na Gaillimhe
Mr. Richard Dooley, Cummer, Tuam, Co. Galway

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

880

Cllr. Fahy referred to Item No 846 of the Minutes relating to Prohibition on Temporary Dwellings at Kinvara Pier and requested that this matter be deferred further until the March Meeting. Following discussion it was agreed that in the first instance the matter would be considered further by the Loughrea Electoral Area Committee.

In reply to Cllr. D. Connolly it was agreed the resolution of Council calling on the Minister for Finance not to implement any measures in Budget 2012 that would impact on vulnerable people in education who have special needs and require

Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 19th December 2011

assistance from Special Needs Assistants, Resource Teachers, O/T equipment would be considered further on receipt of a reply to from the Minister for Finance.

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on the 28th November, 2011 were approved by the Council and signed by the Mayor on the proposal of Cllr. McDonagh, seconded by Cllr. McHugh.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION **881**

The Report of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on 18th November 2011 was approved by the Council on the proposal of Cllr. McDonagh, seconded by Cllr. McHugh.

The Report of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on 30th November 2011 was approved by the Council on the proposal of Cllr. McDonagh, seconded by Cllr. T. Walsh.

The Report of the Corporate & Cultural SPC Meeting held on 24th October 2011 was approved by the Council on the proposal of Cllr. Hoade, seconded by Cllr. McHugh.

The Report of the Planning, Economic Development & Community SPC held on 1st July 2011 was approved by the Council on the proposal of Cllr. D. Connolly, seconded by Cllr. Ryan.

The Report of the Housing SPC Meeting held on the 21st September, 2011 was approved by the Council on the proposal of Cllr. McDonagh, seconded by Cllr. T. Walsh.

Arising from the Report, Cllr. Willers referred an outline of the staffing structure of the Housing Section, as circulated at the Meeting of the Housing SPC, and requested that a similar staffing structure be circulated for the other sections of the Council.

DECLARATION OF ROADS TO BE PUBLIC ROADS – SECTION 11 OF ROADS ACT 1993 **882**

On the proposal of The Mayor, Cllr. Maher, seconded by Cllr. Feeney, the Council approved the declaration of the following road to be a public road, the statutory procedure having been complied with:-

Blackberry Way Housing Estate, Craughwell

Road commencing at its junction with the L-31136-0 Ballymore stop end road and continuing for a distance of approximately 194m in a northerly, easterly and southerly direction.

Electoral Area: Loughrea

DECLARATION OF ROADS TO BE PUBLIC ROADS – SECTION 11 OF ROADS ACT 1993 **883**

Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 19th December 2011

On the proposal of Cllr. Ryan, 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 the junction with the public road R365 in the townland of Ballynahowna and extending south east for a distance of 33m in the townland of Ballynahowna, then extending south west for a distance of 89m in the townland of Ballynahowna.

Electoral Area: Ballinasloe

DECLARATION OF ROADS TO BE PUBLIC ROADS – SECTION 11 OF ROADS ACT 1993 **884**

On the proposal of An Comhl. O’Laoi, seconded by Cllr E. Mannion, the Council approved the declaration of the following road to be a public road, the statutory procedure having been complied with:-

Road commencing at junction with County Road L53945 in the townland of Liopa and extending east for a distance of 55 metres in the townland of Liopa and finishing at Sean Howe’s house in the townland of Liopa.

Electoral Area: Conamara

DECLARATION OF ROADS TO BE PUBLIC ROADS – SECTION 11 OF ROADS ACT 1993 **885**

On the proposal of An Comh. O’Laoi, seconded by Comh O’Curraoin, the Council approved the declaration of the following road to be a public road, the statutory procedure having been complied with:-

Road commencing at junction with County Road L52322 in the townland of Tír an Fhia and extending south for a distance of 300 metres in the townland of Tír an Fhia and finishing at Pdraig Griffin’s house in the townland of Tír an Fhia.

Electoral Area: Conamara

FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY ON THE MEMBERSHIP OF JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE **886**

Report dated 13th December, 2011 was already circulated to each Member.

It was proposed by Cllr T. Mannion, seconded by Cllr. Hoade and agreed that Cllr. M. Connolly be appointed to the Joint Policing Committee.

FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY ON THE BOARD OF GALWAY RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY **887**

Report dated 13th December was already circulated to each Member.

It was proposed by Cllr. McDonagh, seconded by Cllr. M. Finnerty and agreed that Cllr. S. Cunniffe be appointed to the Board of Galway Rural Development Company.

FIRE SERVICES REVIEW – UPDATE **888**

Report dated 21st October 2011 was already circulated to each Member.

Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 19th December 2011

Mr. Cummins referred to his request at the June Monthly Meeting of Council for additional time to consider the work/ findings of the Review Group and to study the new 2011 census data and to the July Monthly Meeting at which he confirmed the Council's commitment to creating a Fire Service presence in Conamara. Mr. Cummins advised that he was not in a position to present a report by the Review Group and that it was necessary to consider a number of issues by means of explanation.

Mr. Cummins advised that there are 10 no. brigade areas in County Galway, namely Galway City, Athenry, Ballinasloe, Clifden, Gort, Loughrea, Mountbellew, Portumna, Tuam and Inis Mór, that Galway City brigade areas is covered by 36 no. full time Firefighters and that Fire Services in all the other brigade areas are provided by a retained system where in the event of an emergency call, a relevant group of Firefighters are alerted and report to their stations and turn-out. He stated that the retained services provide an excellent model of service delivery where, to a substantial degree, a contingent rather than continuous capability is required. It was noted that in order to guarantee a minimum turn-out time it is a requirement/necessity that retained Firefighters must live locally.

Mr. Cummins outlined that the provision of a Fire Service, excluding the establishment and maintenance of a Fire Brigade, the assessment of fire cover needs, the provision of premises and the making of such other provisions as it considers necessary or desirable is a statutory function of Galway County Council as the Fire Authority under the provisions of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003. He acknowledged that the Fire Authority is supported by the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government through setting general policy, the provision of training support, the issue of guidance or operational and other related matters and by the provision of capital funding.

Mr. Cummins stated that a review of Fire Services in Ireland conducted in 2002 concluded unanimously that provision of Fire Services by Local Authorities was an appropriate approach, which should be continued and strengthened. He outlined that the resulting report recommended that national oversight, co-ordination and leadership of Fire Services should be strengthened and that the establishment in 2009 of the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management gave effect to this recommendation.

He acknowledged that the National Directorate had clearly set out a national blueprint and programme for developing and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of Fire Services. This being contained in the Irish Fire Services National Development Framework 2010 – 2015. He outlined that this Framework sets out policies and key actions in the areas of; Fire Services Role in Society, National Process and Standards, Staff Learning and Development, Quality Assurance Systems and Reporting Performance, Service Infrastructure and Legislative Support. He noted that the National Directorate in collaboration with Fire Authorities was currently developing national guidance on a large number of issues in the interests of enhanced community safety.

Mr. Cummins advised that any future expansion of the Fire Services had to be considered in the context of a risk based approach to emergency management which

Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 19th December 2011

had been developed and piloted in a number of Counties. He confirmed that this integrated risk based approach would give access to appropriate information that would enable the Council to decide on the effective deployment and use of resources and to ensure that an appropriate balance between prevention, protection and response measures was achieved.

He stated that in terms of this risk based approach and on analysing the call profiles based on two years data, the high proportion of gorse/bog/forest fires in 2010 and to a lesser extent in early 2011 cannot be ignored in the case of Conamara. He further stated that a further analysis of 6-9 months of calls that incorporates the 2011 census data, would be desirable in order to smooth out tertiary type calls i.e. bog/gorse fires.

Mr. Cummins acknowledged that ultimately any review of the Fire Services would be moulded by budgetary provision and in the context of reduced Central subvention, income streams that are continuously reducing and increasing demands on rate payers. He outlined that any extension of the Fire Services would have to be considered within, and at best, at existing expenditure levels but more realistically within reduced budgetary provision with additional costs having to be found within existing revenue streams and at the expense of other areas of service provision.

He confirmed that given the current constraints on public finances further support from the Departments fire services capital programme would have to have regard to, (a) priorities within the Fire Service, (b) the extent of previous investment by the Department in the Council's Fire Services, (c) the location of existing facilities, (d) the value for money offered by any new proposal and (e) the totality of requests from Fire Authorities countrywide. Mr. Cummins further advised that continued investment in the fire appliance fleet had been identified by the Department as being a key national priority for the available capital funds.

Mr. Cummins highlighted that the review of the Fire Services in Galway County Council must have due regard to economic reality, the fact that the Fire Services revenue budget like other budgets will not be increasing, that it was possible that existing mechanisms of service delivery may be altered to provide additional or improved service in other areas provided costs are not increased, in order to be considered for capital funding the Council's plans or policies should not be at variance with National Policy and that it was vital that due consideration be given to the guidance documentation on enhanced community safety which would be available early in the New Year.

In conclusion, Mr. Cummins stated that the Review of the Fire Services was not a simple matter and was compounded by economic factors, guidance documents that would not be available until after Christmas and the necessity to carry out a risk based analysis, that when taken together would not allow for its completion until early in the New Year.

Comh O'Laoi referred to correspondence from Phil Hogan, TD Minister for Environment, Community & Local Government indicating that a submission was required from Galway County Council in order for the Minister to consider the allocation of funding for the provision of a Fire Station in South Conamara. He referred to the geographical basis for the provision of a Fire Station in South Conamara and contrasted the number of Fire Stations to serve the East of the County

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in comparison to Conamara. He commented that the delayed response from the Fire Service, due to the absence of a Fire Station in South Conamara, directly influenced the number of call-outs for the service.

Cllr. E. Mannion stated that it was shocking that there was only one Fire Station in Conamara, that there was a need for a presence in South Conamara and that a decision was needed on the provision of same sooner rather than later.

Comh. O'Cuaig referred to the number on the electoral register for Conamara, in comparison to Counties Leitrim and Longford, emphasising the need for a strong case to be made to Phil Hogan TD for a Fire Station in South Conamara.

Comh. O'Curraoin outlined his preference for a direct yes or no to be given as to whether a Fire Station would be provided in South Conamara and questioned whether the issue of cost was preventing the development of the Fire Station.

Cllr. S. Walsh referred to the number of meetings held in relation to the issue and questioned the impact of the proposal to relocate the current Fire Station in Galway City further East. He highlighted that it was necessary to broaden the scope of the review to include Galway City, Athenry, Loughrea and stated that the completion of the report must be a priority.

Comh O'Tuairisg expressed concern that the issue would be viewed in the context of East Galway versus Conamara resulting in a suggestion that a Fire Station in the east of the County would have to be closed in order that a Fire Station be provided for South Conamara.

In reply to Cllr Hoade, Mr. Cummins confirmed that the Fire Service was operating on the basis of a full complement of staff that were fully trained. He further advised that once a emergency call is staff are mobilised and accordingly costs are incurred by the Council which must be met by way of the appropriate charge.

In reply to concerns expressed by Cllr. Feeney in relation to the costs associated with training undertaken by the Fire Service, Mr. Cummins confirmed that the training undertaken was essential and was necessary to meet the Council's statutory obligations. Cllr. Feeney stated that the retention of the Fire Station in Athenry was essential in the context of the M6.

Cllr. G. Finnerty referred to the appropriate response by the Fire Service to road traffic accidents and the need for the Council to recoup costs incurred via the relevant insurance policy.

Cllr. D. Connolly highlighted the need to retain the Fire Station in Ballinasloe, particularly in the context of the Fire Station in Banahger being closed. In response to Cllr. Canney, Mr. Cummins that no funding has been made available to date to allow the Council to progress the development of a new Fire Station in Tuam, but that the Council would continue to pursue the matter with the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government. Cllr. Hynes referred to the need for a new Fire Station for Loughrea, due to the limitations of the existing station, and highlighted the requirement for additional space in order to meet training requirements.

Mr. Cummins confirmed that a further extension of time to allow for the completion of review would not be necessary and he would present the report to Council by the

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end of March 2012 based on a risk based assessment with due regard to achieving an appropriate balance between prevention, protection and resources. He confirmed that the review would be influenced by the National Standards due to be published in early 2012 and such standards would facilitate the Council in making a stronger case for continued investment in the Galway Fire Service

SMARTER TRAVEL – UPDATE 889

A Report was already circulated to each Member.

Mr. Gavin gave details of the various initiatives that had taken place in 2011. In reply to queries from the Elected Members, Mr. Gavin confirmed that discussions were taking place with the National Transport Authority with a view to securing funding to facilitate the provision of bus shelters with initial emphasis on the N17. In reply to Cllr. Carroll, Mr. Gavin confirmed that it was necessary to appoint consultants to assist in undertaking the Smarter Travel Walking & Cycling Strategy for the County as expertise not directly available within the Council was required. He confirmed that a short timeframe for the completion of the Strategy had been stipulated.

In reply to queries relating to the current position regarding the Council's bids under the National Competition for Smarter Travel Areas, Mr. Gavin confirmed that notification of the outcome of the competition was still awaited. Mr. Gavin also confirmed that no specific agreement was in place with Adshel in relation to the provision of bus shelters, but undertook to review the potential offered by same together with the provision of bus shelters in specific locations identified by the Elected Members. In reply to Cllr. Canney, Mr. Gavin confirmed that the provision of a bus corridor on the N17 from Two-Mile-Ditch was the subject of consideration in the context of the Galway City & Environs Smarter Travel Strategy.

FLOODING UPDATE 890

A Report dated the 21st November 2011 was made available to each Member of the Council.

Mr. Gavin briefed the Elected Members on the current position in relation to the Dunkellin River & Aggard Stream Flood Relief Scheme, Clare River Flood Relief Scheme including Advance Works and works for South Galway. He also provided a progress report on the Drainage District Maintenance together with the status of minor works being with the benefit of funding made available from the Office of Public Works.

The Elected Members welcomed the work undertaken to date noting in particular the volume of work undertaken under the Office of Public Works Minor Works Scheme, noting that of the 138 submissions made by the Council, 79 had been approved for funding of which 70 schemes had been completed with the remaining 9 schemes scheduled for completion in early 2012. Mr. Gavin dealt with queries raised by the Elected Members in relation to specific projects, together with progress on CFRAMS. Mr. Gavin also confirmed that an emergency number was in operation in the event that issues arose in relation to flooding over the holiday period.

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CONFERENCES

891

On the proposal of Cllr. Mc Donagh, seconded by Cllr. T. Mannion, attendance at Conferences was agreed.

TASC – Incomes – Instruments of Recovery – 29th September – Metropole Hotel, Cork
Cllr. Pat Hynes

Esperanza Enterprises – Waste Water Discharge: Control design, operation & maintenance – 11th – 13th November – Carlton Hotel, Tralee, Co. Kerry
Comh. T Ó Curráoin, J. McDonagh

Alcohol Action Ireland – Alcohol: Where's the Harm? Conference – 15th November 2011 – Royal College of Physicians, Dublin 2
Cllr. S Walsh

TASC – The Nordic Models: Resilience in Changing Times – 17th November – Croke Park, Dublin
Comh S Ó Tuairisg, Cllr. S. Walsh, Cllr. Hynes

Superior Training – The Local Government Budget 2012 – 18th – 20th November – Carlton Millrace Hotel, Bunclody, Co. Wexford
Cllrs. S Cunniffe, T. McHugh, T. Walsh S. Walsh

Esperanza Enterprises – Local Authority's role in preventing water pollution – 18th – 20th November – Mill Park Hotel, Donegal Town, Co. Donegal
Cllrs. P Feeney, J Mc Donagh, P Roche

Galway Chamber of Commerce – Meetwest Business Networking 2011 – 21st November – Galway Bay Hotel, Salthill, Galway
Cllrs. P Feeney

Midland Regional Authority – Digital Local Agenda Conference 2011 – 23rd November – Sheraton Hotel, Athlone, Co. Westmeath
Cllr. S Walsh

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Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland – 9th Irish National Radon Forum – 24th November – Chartered Accountants House, Pearse St., Dublin 2
Comh. S Ó Tuairisg, Cllr. M Hoade, P Hynes, S Walsh

Clare Tourism – Tourism – The Potential for Economic Growth – 25th – 26th November – Falls Hotel, Ennistymon, Co. Clare
Cllrs M Hoade, T Walsh, J Cuddy, E Mannion

Esperanza Enterprises – Renewable Energy 20-20-20 – Transforming Ireland into a highly energy-efficient, low carbon economy – 25th – 26th November – Lucan Spa Hotel, Lucan, Co. Dublin
Cllrs. S Cunniffe, P Feeney

Esperanza Enterprises – Promoting Volunteerism – 2nd – 4th December – Westport Plaza Hotel, Westport, Co. Mayo
Cllr. M Hoade

Sustainable Learning Networks in Ireland & Wales (SLNIW) – 2nd International Conference on Networks, Learning & Entrepreneurship – 7th – 8th December – Waterford Institute of Technology
Cllr. S Walsh

Superior Training – Water Services (Amendment) Bill 2011 – 9th – 11th December – Carlton Millrace Hotel, Bunclody, Co. Wexford
Cllrs. S Cunniffe, J McClearn, S Walsh

Ashford Building Services – Proposed Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy – 9th – 11th December – Carlton Hotel, Tralee, Co. Kerry
Comh. T Ó Curráoin

MANAGERS BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE

892

The County Secretary referred to correspondence received from ESB Networks offering to present to the Elected Members on the 100KV line for Conamara at a future Council Meeting. It was agreed to invite ESB Network to present at a Council Meeting in 2012.

Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 19th December 2011

The County Secretary also referred to correspondence received from ESB International inviting the Elected Members to visit Ardnacrusha Power Station and/or for ESB International to present to the Elected Members on the ESB's role in the management of the Shannon. It was agreed to invite ESB International to present at a Council Meeting in 2012 on their role in the management of the Shannon.

The County Secretary referred to correspondence from the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland suggesting that it may be useful for the the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland to make a presentation to the County Council to raise awareness of radon. It was agreed to invite the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland to present to a Council Meeting in 2012.

MAYORS BUSINESS

893

It was proposed by Cllr. McClearn, seconded by Cllr. T. Mannion and agreed to endorse the resolution of North Tipperary County Council that an independent review of the proposals in relation to the proposed abstraction of water from Lough Derg by Dublin City Council be carried out in view of the potential serious impact for Lough Derg and its hinterlands and the importance of the facility to County Galway and other adjoining counties together with the contribution made to the local economies from fishing, tourism, boating, etc and the status of Lough Derg as a Natural Heritage Area and Special Area of Conservation.

In reply to Cllr. Fahy, the Mayor advised that no date had been agreed between the Council and Áras an Uachtarain for the hosting of a Civic Reception to mark the inauguration of Michael D. Higgins as the 9th President of Ireland.

Cllr. McHugh referred to the completion and official opening of a section of the Tuam Inner Relief Road and complimented all involved in delivering the project in a short timeframe.

Cllr. McHugh stated the project represented a good example of Public Private Partnership with the site and significant funding for the road being provided by Mr. Joe O'Toole together with significant investment from the Council in terms of both financial and human resources. with the Council

An Comh O'Laoi referred to the issue of declaring roads to be public road and in particular a significant number of roads in Conamara that have benefited from works being undertaken in the past, but due to the ending of the particular funding stream and owing to the fact that the roads are not public roads, no funding is currently available to undertake essential maintenance works. In reply to a request from An Comh O'Laoi, Mr. Gilmore agreed to undertake a desktop survey of the roads in question and to revert on the completion of same.

In reply to a query from Cllr. D. Connolly in relation to clarifying the status of a road in the Ballinasloe Area, Mr. Gilmore undertook to have the status of the road reviewed.

In reply to a query raised by Cllr. Broderick in relation to action taken by the Council to secure the removal of horses from the public road in 1999, the County

Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 19th December 2011

Cllr. Noone outlined his opposition to the proposals as outlined in the Bill, noting that septic tanks were built to the relevant required specification and that the registration fee was merely a means to generate revenue. He sought clarification on the certification of tanks and the role for the Council, if any, in this process.

Cllr. Welby referred to the public meetings organised by Marian Harkin MEP and stated that such meetings were a service in that they served to highlight the issue. He outlined his opposition to the Bill as proposed and referred to his previous proposal in relation to the need to ensure that only appropriately qualified assessors were engaged for certification purposes as part of the planning process.

Comh. O'Tuairisg stated that he wished to refute any suggestion that he was in any way associated with bringing protestors into the Council Chamber. He outlined his opposition to the Bill and suggested that those with influence with the Minister avail of same to ensure that more reasonable proposals are brought forward.

Cllr. Cuddy complimented the Mayor on his handling of the protest and stated that the proposal had been handled badly from the start by central government. He stated that the requirement to register septic tanks could be implemented without the requirement for a registration fee and requested further information in relation to the criteria to be employed in selecting septic tanks for inspection.

Cllr. McClearn expressed the view that Irish officials were not representing Irish interests to a sufficient degree at European level and that the current proposals relating to septic tanks presents a perception of rural bias that needed to be addressed. He stated that he agreed with the view expressed in relation to the requirement for grant funding for remedial works and indicated that this message would be brought to the Minister.

Cllr. M. Connolly stated that whilst public protest was acceptable the actions of the protestors at the Council Meeting was not and was critical of the involvement by Oireachtas Members in the protest. He highlighted the importance of lobbying on the issue through the Oireachtas Members prior to the enactment of the Bill.

Cllr. McHugh stated that an element of fear was being introduced to the debate at the public meetings being held on the matter and outlined that the alternative to what was being proposed in the Bill was fines being imposed by the European Commission for failure to comply with the relevant European Directive.

Cllr. E. Mannion stated that the concerns expressed in relation to the proposals would be conveyed to the Minister with a view to obtaining grant funding for remedial works. She highlighted that the only action required in 2012 would be to register the septic tank and that the issue of inspections and the undertaking of remedial works would not arise until 2013, thereby providing time to allow the issue of grant funding to be addressed. Comh O'Laoidh concurred with Cllr. E. Mannion and stated his intention to convey the concerns raised and the need for grant funding to the Minister.

The following reply was given:-

Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 19th December 2011

Cllr. Broderick outlined his opposition to the proposal, referring to the proposal as being anti-rural and that insufficient information was available on the issue in terms of fees, inspections and the requirement for remedial works.

Cllr. Ryan highlighted that the registration process was required due a lack of accurate information on septic tanks and in particular those built prior to the introduction of the planning code. He also undertook to raise the relevant concerns and need for grant funding for remedial works with the Minister.

It was proposed by Cllr. Canney, seconded by Cllr. D. Connolly that Galway County Council reject the imposition of any registration fee for septic tanks and that any remediation measures required upon inspections be financed by grants from central government.

In reply to Cllr. T. Walsh, the Mayor confirmed his intention to allow the Motion as proposed, as it was in order with Standing Orders.

A vote was taken on the proposal which resulted as follow: -

AR SON: Cllr. T. Broderick, S. Canney, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, S Ó Cuaig, J. Cuddy, T. Ó Curraoin, T. Mannion, M. Noone, S Ó Tuairisg, T. Welby

IN AGHAIDH: Cllr. L. Carroll, S. Cunniffe, M. Finnerty, S Ó Laoi, M. Maher, E. Mannion, J. Mc Clearn, J. Mc Donagh, T. Mc Hugh, K. Ryan, T. Walsh.

GAN VOTÁIL: (0)

As the vote was inconclusive, the Mayor used his casting vote against the proposal and declared the proposal lost.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 15 – CLLR. M. FAHY

895

The following reply was given:-

“This location will be examined in detail, but it appears from the description the pulling in area may not be part of the public road. If this is the case, repair may not lie with the County Council. However, in the meantime we will repair any public road damage.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 16 – CLLR. M. FAHY

896

The following reply was given:-

“This will be assessed and an estimate provided.”

NOTICE OF MOTION NO 17 – CLLR. M. FAHY

897

The following reply was given:-

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"This pavement improvement will be costed and if suitable will be proposed for funding under the annual roads programme."

MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY
COUNCIL HELD AT ARAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL ON
MONDAY 28TH NOVEMBER 2011

Criochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin

CATHAOIRLEACH

Submitted, Approved + Signed

LLATHAIR FREISTE

Michael Maher

Bailt:

23RD January 2012

Date

Carroll, M., Cuddy, S.,
Canniff, Comh S O'Connell, Comh T O'
Curran, Cllr. P. Fahy, P. Feeley, G.
Finerty, M. F., M. Hoade, P. Hynes,
Comh. S. O'Leary, M. Mannion, T. Muzzon,
T. McHugh, McDonagh, M. Noone, P.
Roche, S. O'Connell, Comh S. O Tuairisg, Cllr.
S. Walsh, T. Welby, B. Williams.

Oilright:

Ms. M. Moloney, County Manager,
Messrs. F. Gilmore, K. Kelly, P. Carroll,
J. Cullen, Directors of Services - G.
Mullarkey, Head of Finance; M. Owens,
County Secretary & Meetings
Administrator; B. Molloy, I. Owen, Senior
Engineers; A. Cooney, Senior Executive
Officer; M. O'Donnell, Administrative
Officer; P. O'Donoghue, O'Connell, O'Connell,
G. Healy, Staff Officers.

Criochnaigh an cruinniú anocht

The Mayor conveyed his congratulations to President Michael D. Higgins on his inauguration as the 9th President of Ireland and it was proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Cllr. M. Finerty and agreed to host a Civic Reception for President Higgins.

The Mayor advised the Members of the success enjoyed by the Galway County Council Library Service in winning the Best Library Service Award 2011 for the Summer Reading Programme, at the Chambers Ireland Conference of Local Government Awards ceremony in Dublin on 14 November 2011. The Mayor congratulated Pat McMahon, County Librarian, and his staff for their great

Minutes of Meeting held on 28th November 2011

CHOMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL ON MONDAY 28TH NOVEMBER, 2011.

CATHAOIRLEACH:

Cllr. M. Maher

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill:

Cllrs. T. Broderick, S. Canney, L. Carroll, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, J. Cuddy, S. Cunniffey, Comh S O'Cuaig, Comh T. Ó Curraoin, Cllrs. M. Fahy, P. Feeney, G. Finnerty, M. Finnerty, M. Hoade, P. Hynes, Comh. S. Ó Laoi, E Mannion, T. Mannion, T. Mc Hugh, J McDonagh, M. Noone, P. Roche, K. Ryan, Comh S. Ó Tuairisg, Cllrs. S. Walsh, T. Walsh, T. Welby, B. Willers.

Oifigigh:

Ms. M. Moloney, County Manager;
Messrs. F. Gilmore, K. Kelly, E. Cummins, J. Cullen, Directors of Service; G. Mullarkey, Head of Finance; M. Owens, County Secretary & Meetings Administrator; E. Molloy, L. Gavin, Senior Engineers; A. Comer, Senior Executive Officer; M. O'Donnell, Administrative Officer; P. O'Neachtain, Oifigeach Gaeilge; G. Healy, Staff Officer.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

The Mayor conveyed his congratulations to President Michael D. Higgins on his inauguration as the 9th President of Ireland and it was proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Cllr. M. Finnerty and agreed to host a Civic Reception for President Higgins.

The Mayor advised the Members of the success enjoyed by the Galway County Council Library Service in winning the Best Library Service Award 2011 for its Summer Reading Programme, at the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards ceremony in Dublin on November 9th 2011. The Mayor congratulated Pat McMahon, County Librarian, and his staff on this great

Minutes of Meeting held on 28th November 2011

achievement, stating that it was the second year in a row in which Galway County Council has won this award.

The Mayor informed the Members of his intention to host the County Galway Mayoral Charity Ball on Saturday 10th December, 2011 in Loughrea in support of the IHCPT – The Irish Pilgrimage Trust and the Carmelite Sisters of St. Joseph's Monastery, Loughrea and invited the Members to support same.

RESOLUTIONS OF SYMPATHY

841

Mr. John Mannion, Lydican, Carnmore, Oranmore, Co. Galway.
Aidan & Eileen Barrett, Castledaly, Peterswell, Loughrea, Co. Galway.
Mr. Paddy Kennedy, Lowville, Ahascragh, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING

842

Arising from the Minutes, a number of the Members referred to the item regarding Cill Rónáin Harbour and Cill Éinne Harbour Bye-laws and complimented the Mayor on the manner in which he chaired the Meeting, they also expressed their dissatisfaction at the behaviour of a minority of those in attendance in the public gallery during the Meeting and those involved in the protest outside Áras an Chontae. They stated that the behaviour of a minority of those present was regrettable and in particular it was very regrettable that Members of the Council were subject to abuse, including an incident where a Member of the Council was the subject of verbal abuse in the Council Chamber. Cllr. E. Mannion stated that whilst the Comhar Cumann had indicated that they were in no way associated with the incident of verbal abuse they had nonetheless offered an apology for the incident and she accepted the apology.

Also arising from the Minutes, Comh. Ó Tuairisg requested that the last line on Page 6 be amended to read as follows "proposed in the draft bye-laws would further increase the cost of living on the Island which is currently at 20%".

In reply to a query from Comh. Ó Cuaig regarding the promenade at Cill Rónáin, Mr. Molloy stated that the main contractor has finished work on the Island but the proposed works on the promenade will be advertised for tender in 2012.

The Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on 24th October, 2011 as amended, were approved by the Council and signed by the Mayor on the proposal of Cllr. M. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. Hoade.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

843

Minutes of Meeting held on 28th November 2011

The Report of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on 5th July 2011 was approved by the Council on the proposal of Cllr. Cuddy, seconded by Cllr. Fahy.

The Report of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting held on 24th October 2011 was approved by the Council on the proposal of Cllr. Fahy, seconded by Cllr. Cuddy.

The Report of the Oranmore Area Committee Meeting held on 26th September 2011 was approved by the Council on the proposal of Cllr. McDonagh, seconded by Cllr. Carroll.

Arising from the Report, Cllr. Cuddy stated that many of the local roads in the Oranmore Electoral Area were in need of urgent repair and highlighted the delays in undertaking such works. He also referred to the incidences of flooding occurring on the N17 in Baile Chláir and the urgent need to address same. In reply, Mr. Gilmore stated that the Council was obliged to operate within the limits of available resources and that it was important to recognize the impact of the severe weather experienced in the last few years on the road network. He confirmed that the Council continued to undertake routine maintenance within the limits of resources and that the issue of flooding on the N17 in Baile Chláir was being examined with a view to identifying an appropriate solution.

TO CONSIDER REPORT UNDER PART 8 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 – CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW RESERVOIR AT TOIN NA BROCAÍ, GALWAY 844

Report dated 22nd November, 2011 was already circulated to each Member.

On the proposal of Comh. Ó Curraoin, seconded by Comh. O'Tuairisg, it was agreed that the proposed construction of a new reservoir at Toin na Brocaí, Galway, as set out in the report, be approved.

In reply to Cllr. Welby, Mr. Cullen stated that the construction of the reservoir is at tender stage and it is anticipated that construction will commence in March or April of 2012 and the period for construction will be approximately eight months.

SECTION 85 AGREEMENT – GALWAY CITY COUNCIL UPGRADE DOUGHISKA GROUP WATER SCHEME 845

Report dated 14th November, 2011 was made available to the Members.

On the proposal of Cllr. Cuddy, seconded by Cllr. Hoade, it was agreed that Galway County Council, enter into an Agreement with Galway City Council under the provisions of Section 85 of the Local Government Act, 2001 to enable Galway County Council to undertake works needed to upgrade the water supply network at Doughiska Group Water Supply Scheme which serves approximately 73 houses in the Galway City and County areas.