

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Átha an Rí

Municipal District of Athenry

Minutes of the Meeting of the Municipal District of Athenry held in Aras an Chontae on Tuesday 6th May 2025.

I LATHAIR:

BAILL: Cllr. P. Feeney (Cathaoirleach)
Cllr. S. Broderick
Cllr. D. Collins
Cllr M. McNamara
Cllr C. Keane

OIFIGIGH: Mr. L. Hanrahan, DoS
Mr. S. Whelan, S.E.E.
Mr. P. Gavin, E.E.
Ms. M. Jordan, A.O.
Mr. J. Waters, A.O.
Ms. G. Cooley, C.O.

AS LATHAIR: Cllr. J. Charity
Cllr. T. Grealish

To confirm Minutes of the Meeting of the Municipal District of Athenry held in Aras an Chontae, on Tuesday 11th March 2025. AMD 43

Matters arising

In response to a query from Cllr Collins on an update on funding for Claregalway from the TII Mr Whelan said that funding may be available in 2026.

In response to a query on a new road patcher Mr Whelan confirmed that this will be considered subject to funding.

Cllr Collins requested an update on Round 3 of the Safe Route to Schools programme and the consultation process with rural groups. This will be provided by the Active Travel Team.

On the proposal of Cllr Collins, seconded by Cllr Broderick the minutes of the Athenry MD meeting held on the 11th March 2025 were approved.

Presentation on Affordable Housing.

AMD 44

Mr. Waters, A.O. Housing gave a presentation on Affordable Housing Schemes in Galway County as follows;

- The Affordable Housing Team consisted of five members.
- The targets from 2022 to 2026 were outlined and he explained due to the lack of land banks in the County there were no completions in 2022, 2023 and 2024.
- There are 17 Turnkey Units in Claregalway due for completion in quarter two of 2025
- There are 44 units scheduled for completion in Claregalway in quarter four of 2025. The construction of these units is under way and the Council is working with the developer to finalise.
- It is projected that 11 part V Affordable houses will be available in Claregalway in quarter three of 2026 and Kinvara in quarter two 2026.
- The Droim na Gaoithe estate in Claregalway will consist of 88 units comprising of 36 affordable 30 cost rental and 22 social properties. Funding has been requested and construction will begin in quarter three 2025 and will be completed in quarter four in 2026.
- There are 44 units in Athenry with Paul Keogh Architects for design and architectural services and they are currently doing site surveys. Planning will be end of August.
- The schemes are advertised extensively in advance of the commencement of the application process via the portal system. The Affordable housing is advertised on social media and local newspapers. Minister John Cummins visited the Council two weeks ago. The houses have A2 BER standard and a high level of finish.
- The proposed Cost Rental units will comprise of two bed houses, one bed apartments, two bed apartments and three bed apartments.
- Mr. Waters outlined the area of the proposed developments on a site map. A funding application was submitted to the Department and housing are awaiting approval. The proposed completion is in quarter four in 2026 .
- The Raheen site is close to Gort Mhaoilir and Raheen Woods hotel. There will be 28 affordable houses constructed on this site. The contract for architectural survey has been awarded and housing section will be submitting plans for Part 8 by end August 2025.
- The Pairc na hAbhainn development will be situated close to new cemetery and will have access through the south of Pairc na hAbhainn site. It will consist of sixteen houses.
- Galway County Council are actively engaging with developers for turnkey properties. A meeting was held in October 2024 with City Council, developers and other stakeholders
- Developments are typically mixed tenure with approximately 20% social housing and 80% affordable.
- Delivering affordable housing through Part V.

The challenges facing the local authority

- Cost to build is very high and there are almost no construction projects occurring outside of the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) which includes Claregalway

Oranmore and Barna. The cost to building in small towns exceeds open market value. This issue has been highlighted to the Department.

- Affordability gain cannot be achieved outside the MASP area. For fewer than 35 units per hectare, €50,000 per unit is the limit; for more than 35 units and fewer than 50, it's €75,000; and for a density of more than 50 units per hectare, the subsidy is €100,000. The density of the sites in Claregalway and Athenry allow for a subsidy of €75,000 per property.
- Cost of finance is a major issue for developers and in rural areas planning doesn't cater for that density.
- Demand for private dwellings is very strong in county Galway.
- In recent Expression of Interest with developers for turnkey and affordable housing, only one application for 5 houses was received.

Mr. Hanrahan said that there were targets to meet with the "Housing for All" programme. The Council is negotiating with the Department who acknowledged that Galway County Council didn't have land banks available for the housing schemes. The Department's targets were set for when the necessary land bank would be in place.

He said that the affordable scheme is a great opportunity for private developers but with the high cost the developer has to have the finance in place upfront.

There is also a target for social housing and sites purchased for social housing can also contain affordable units.

Cllr McNamara highlighted that the Council has not met its targets set out by the Department. He said that he appreciated the Council's difficulties. He said that cost was an issue and houses are not affordable and should be rebranded.

Cllr Broderick asked if it was possible to have a copy of the presentation sent to the Members.

In reply to a query from Cllr. Broderick on increasing the percentage of social housing from 20% Mr. Waters said that the percentage is set out in the Part V legislation.

Mr. Waters said that an increase in the subsidies outside the MASP area would be welcome. The model works where prices are high.

In response to a query on the playground in the estate Mr. Hanrahan said that there would be one in the open space north of the estate.

In response to a query on the right to apply for affordable housing if living abroad Mr. Waters said that applicants need to have a right to reside in the Country.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the housing schemes and said that the Council was changing people's lives. He said that the cost of Finance needs to be examined.

Mr. Waters said that in an expression of Interest from builders to build social housing there were six sites proposed, affordable one site and land available six.

Mr. Waters said that some Local Authorities front load the subsidies to the developer, but this is a risk to their finance.

In reply to a query from Cllr Collins Mr. Hanrahan said that the Local Authority can borrow to fund the schemes, but it has to be within their budget. He said that Dublin and Cork Local Authorities have a Capital reserve.

Agree Date for Annual General Meeting.

AMD 45

On the proposal of Cllr Keane, seconded by Cllr Broderick it was agreed that the AGM would be held on the 10th June 2025.

Municipal District Director's Business & Correspondence.

AMD 46

Mr. Whelan said that works were ongoing with TII and Lidl in Claregalway in relation to traffic layout. These works will be carried out at night.

Cathaoirleach's Business.

AMD 47

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the works carried out at Churchgate and Swan gate.

In reply to a query from Cllr Keane, Mr Whelan said that the crossing at Monivea would be completed within weeks.

In relation to a query on the surface dressing micro surfacing Mr Gavin explained that it involves filling potholes and better alignment and will be surface dressed after.

In relation to a query on the Clarin River Mr Whelan said that there is an application with the OPW on minor works on the Clarin river. There will be a feasibility study and then a hydrological study. The OPW to give Galway County Council funding for the Hydrology Study. It stretches from Athenry to Chainbridge and requires a lot of surveying. Mr Gavin said that if the Members had any queries to let him know.

Any other business (AOB).

AMD 48

There were no items under this heading.

Criochnaigh an Crinniu Ansin

Approved by



Cathaoirleach

Date: 8/7/25