

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, BALLINASLOE, CO. GALWAY ON WEDNESDAY 12th MARCH 2025 @ 2.00 p.m.

CATHAOIRLEACH:

Cllr. M. Connolly

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill:

Cllrs. D. Connolly, D. Geraghty, A. Harney, P. Keaveney, E. Parsons

Oifigigh:

Ms. J. Carroll Director of Services, Ms. R. Lowe Senior Engineer, Mr. D. Troy Senior Executive Engineer, Mr. G. Scully Senior Executive Officer, Ms. E. Murphy Senior Executive Engineer, Mr. E. Mulvey Housing Liaison Officer, Ms. A. Monaghan Staff Officer, Ms. M. McGann Meetings Administrator.

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF BALLINASLOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12TH FEBRUARY 2025 AND MATTERS ARISING
MDB25013

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Ballinasloe held on Wednesday 12th February 2025 were approved by the Municipal District Members and signed by the Cathaoirleach on the proposal of Cllr. Parsons and seconded by Cllr. Harney.

Matters arising from the Minutes.

Cllr. Harney requested an update on the proposed footpath review to be undertaken in the Ballinasloe MD. Mr. Troy advised that this review had not commenced (MDB25008).

Cllr. Harney requested an update on public lights at the Bridge in Ballinasloe. Mr. Troy advised that he was waiting for the ESB to undertake works at the location (MDB25012).

Cllr. Parsons and Cllr. Geraghty enquired if a response had been received from the OPW following resolution passed in February Meeting regarding Ballinasloe Flood Scheme. Ms. Carroll confirmed that correspondence had issued to Minister Kevin (Boxer) Moran and the OPW and stated that no response had been received to date (MDB25007).

Cllr. Parsons expressed disappointment that the low-cost safety scheme application at Creggs Road, Ballygar had not been approved by the Department and asked if improvements could be progressed via another scheme (MDB25008).

Cllr. Parsons asked if footpath repair works on Dunlo Scheme would impact on the upcoming active travel scheme. Mr. Troy advised that minimum necessary works were to be carried out. Mr. Troy advised that this area may need to be re-done under active travel scheme (MDB25008).

Cllr. Parsons and Cllr. Harney expressed disappointment with the delay in setting up the Anti-Social Behaviour Taskforce. Ms. Carroll advised that the delay was requested by An Garda Síochána to enable the Local Community Safety Partnership be put in place and to avoid any duplication of structures. Ms. Carroll confirmed that the Council were waiting for the Department of Justice to confirm the Local Community Safety Partnership by Ministerial Order. In response to Cllr. Harney, Ms. Carroll confirmed that if there were further delays with the Department of Justice, then she had no objection to work commencing on Terms of Reference for the Taskforce. Mr. Scully advised that the Housing Department were in regular contact with the Chief Superintendent, Ballinasloe Division, An Garda Síochána and there was close collaboration between both Organisations pending set-up of the Taskforce. Mr. Scully further advised that he was available to meet with the Members for a scoping exercise with regard the Taskforce and get initial discussions underway. In response to Cllr. Parsons, Mr. Scully advised that the CCTV was now operational, and footage of damage caused to the CCTV had been handed over to An Garda Síochána for investigation. In response to Cllr. M. Connolly, Mr. Scully confirmed that the election of 3 Members of the Municipal District to the Taskforce was agreed (MDB25009).

Cllr. Parsons requested an update on when the midterm review for the Ballinasloe Local Area Plan would take place. Ms. Carroll advised that she would request an update from the Planning Department (25012).

Cllr. Parsons requested an update on the capacity of the Ballinasloe Town water and wastewater supply. Cllr. D. Connolly stated that he had flagged this issue previously and requested an update. Mr. Troy advised that he had requested an update from Irish Water (MDB25010).

Cllr. D. Connolly requested an update on staffing levels in Ballinasloe MD. Ms. Lowe advised that ten general operative positions had been offered throughout the county and two of those were for the Ballinasloe MD area.

Cllr. D. Connolly requested an update on safety measures for Sarsfield Road and Deerpark Road (MDB25008).

Cllr. D. Connolly requested an update on bus shelters in Dunlo Hill and at the Marina. Ms. Lowe advised that these locations form part of the upcoming Ballinasloe Cycle Scheme. Cllrs. M. Connolly, D. Geraghty and P. Keaveney welcomed the bus shelters in Mountbellew, Moylough and Ballymoe and thanked the staff involved in progressing same. Cllr. Keaveney asked that further locations be identified for bus stops and progressed. Cllr. M. Connolly stated that it should encourage the public to use public transport more often. Cllr. Parsons asked that a bus stop be considered at the Library on

Society Street. Ms. Lowe said that she would revert to the Bus Stop Team with this proposal (MDB25012).

Cllr. D. Geraghty requested an update on illegal dumping in Glinsk, Williamstown, and Dunmore (MDB25012). Cllr. D. Geraghty asked for an update on how Community Wardens were trained to deal with aggressive behaviour by members of the public when carrying out their work and how the Council were supporting them in this regard (MDB25012).

All the members expressed concern with the administration of the Humanitarian Assistance Scheme and asked for an update on same, particularly whether the scheme had been terminated. Ms. Carroll advised she would request an update on the status of the scheme from the Department of Social Protection and the number of applications under Stages 1, 2 and 3. Cllr. Keaveney expressed concern that some farmers may not receive compensation for damage to sheds via TAMS or the Humanitarian Assistance Scheme and would be badly affected by Storm Eowyn (MDB25009).

Cllr. Geraghty and Keaveney asked that a review take place of two local roads where they deemed the 60Km/hr. speed limit was too low – namely the Ballinalough to Clonberne Road and Ahascragh to Ballinasloe (via Killure). Mr. Troy outlined the criteria applied under the speed limit review (MDB25012).

REPORT UNDER PART 8 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001-2006 AS AMENDED – INFILL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT GARBALLY DRIVE, BALLINASLOE, CO. GALWAY

MDB25014

Ms. Murphy presented the report on the proposed Part 8 for Infill housing development at Garbally Drive, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. The members thanked Ms. Murphy for her presentation and welcomed the progress on this type of infill development.

Approval of the report was proposed by Cllr. Harney, seconded by Cllrs. Parsons, and agreed by all the members.

PRESENTATION ON HOUSING UNIT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

MDB25015

Mr. Scully, Mr. Mulvey and Ms. Murphy presented an update on Housing Unit Policies and Procedures along with an update on housing capital projects in the Ballinasloe Municipal District. They advised on the online dashboard system for accessing housing demand statistics and gave an overview of the current housing waiting list and categories of need. They also outlined the processes involved in tenancy and estate management, housing allocations, and how they liaise with other stakeholders.

The Members thanked them for their very comprehensive presentation, and the confirmation of housing data and statistics.

In response to a query from Cllr. M. Connolly on the status of the housing project in Moylough, Ms. Murphy confirmed it was hoped to have a contractor in place by mid-April.

Cllr. D. Connolly welcomed progress on the housing project in Dunlo Hill and asked that consideration be given to Eoin O'Tuairisc within the naming of the scheme. Ms. Murphy advised that she will refer this to the Naming Committee and consideration may be given to the erection of a plaque on this house. Cllr. D. Connolly queried whether this housing development would be categorized as housing for Older People or People with Disabilities, and in response Ms. Murphy stated that the houses in this scheme were two-storey so would not be categorized as such. Cllr. Harney asked that engagement would happen with bus companies with regard how the bus stop at Dunlo Hill would be managed during construction, and in response, Ms. Murphy confirmed that she was engaging with the Active Travel Team in this regard.

Cllr. Harney welcomed the positive developments on capital projects but asked that the issue of St. Brigid's campus be addressed. Cllr. Harney also referred to recent storm damage in towns and villages and how it has impacted on derelict sites within these villages, and the need for the Housing or Environment Sections to engage with householders re dangers. Cllr. Geraghty stated that there was lots of dereliction in Ballygar along with other towns and villages and asked for an update on derelict sites and dangerous buildings from the Environment Department. Ms. Carroll advised of the process involved with derelict sites under the Environment Department, with the purpose of remediation works by owners so that the building does not detract from the amenity of the area. In relation to Dangerous Structures, Ms. Carroll advised that an assessment was carried out by an Engineer, and where the report recommended action, a Notice was issued under the Dangerous Structure legislation.

Cllrs. D. Connolly, Geraghty and Parsons stated that the derelict HSE building in Ballygar was an eyesore and Cllr. Parsons advised that she would request the HSE via the Health Forum to engage with the local community and Galway County Council to discuss the future of the building. Cllr. Harney asked that the issue of CPO be addressed when dealing with derelict sites and input of Elected Members be sought to assist in reconciling ownership issues. Mr. Scully advised he would discuss the issue of dereliction in towns and villages and their possible use for social housing with the Housing Capital Section. Ms. Carroll advised that under the CPO Activation Programme, the Housing Unit could bring such dwellings back into the housing stock where a housing need was identified. Ms. Murphy advised that the Housing Department were working on identifying new sites for social housing and in this regard, were working with Irish Water on developing their own lands along with seeking expressions of interest from the public for lands.

Cllr. Harney and Cllr. Keaveney enquired if consideration could be given to including waste collection fees when setting and collecting rent. Ms. Carroll advised that under the polluter pays principle, all householders must take responsibility to pay for the waste they generate, and the local authority was not a waste collector in any case so there was no direct relationship to connect these services which were on a pay per weight basis. Ms. Carroll stated that there was a huge amount of activity being undertaken in

partnership with the Community Wardens with the service of notices to identify waste collection arrangements in place by individual householders. Ms. E. Murphy stated that the solution in these instances is not always enforcement action, and referrals may be required to promote tenancy sustainment and provide home management supports. In response to Cllr. Harney, Mr. Scully advised he would contact Skip Hire Companies to ask for more regular collection of skips where these were provided by the Housing Department. Cllr. Harney asked that more CCTV be rolled out in housing estates where there are anti-social behaviour issues. Cllr. Harney stated that persons on housing lists were refusing offers of housing in areas affected by anti-social behaviour which was impacting on their chances of obtaining housing and that further collaboration was required to address waste management and other anti-social behaviour issues.

In response to a query from Cllr. Parsons about staffing, Mr. Scully advised that a 3 -year workforce plan on staffing resources had been completed and that automation was helping in fast-tracking some services such as allocations and housing maintenance requests. Mr. Scully also advised on staffing available to deal with tenancy and estate management issues and the processes involved in allocating houses via multiple keyholders attending meet and greet days with input by staff from Housing Rents, Housing Maintenance and the Environment Department.

In relation to a query from Cllr. Parsons regarding opportunities for downsizing in social housing, Mr. Scully advised that applications for down-sizing were accepted and placed on a priority list, and in addition, these types of transfers could be facilitated through Approved Housing Bodies or dedicated Disability-Proofed Units.

In relation to a query from Cllr. Geraghty regarding inspection of HAP and private rental accommodation, Mr. Scully stated that the inspection requirements are to ensure minimum standards for each household in accordance with national regulations.

Cllr. Harney asked that a system be put in place whereby Councillors can represent members of the public and access information on their behalf if this is signed off on by the member of public. Mr. Scully advised that there was a consent form in place but that there were very stringent GDPR regulations relevant to provision of information.

Cllr. M. Connolly stated that he had received good feedback from the public on the new online housing maintenance request system. In relation to concerns by Cllr. D. Connolly regarding use of the system by individuals lacking digital skills, Mr. Scully advised that complaints could also be logged via phone. Mr. Scully advised that a lot of the housing maintenance issues reported were items that were the responsibility of the tenant. Cllr. D. Connolly expressed concern that the majority of repairs were carried out by private contractors and requested additional staff for housing maintenance. In relation to a query from Cllr. Geraghty, Mr. Scully advised he would relay concerns regarding the response times for housing maintenance queries back to the Director of Housing.

Mr. Scully outlined the different types of housing delivery projects through a range of schemes and delivery mechanisms. Cllr. Geraghty and Cllr. Harney stressed the need for more affordable housing schemes for those who are not on the national average wage

and do not qualify for social housing but are currently priced out of the private housing market. Cllr. Parsons raised the issue of the shortage of private-rental accommodation for the HAP Scheme. Cllr. Keaveney requested consideration for retirement village-style housing which would free up additional private units. In response to Cllr. Geraghty, Mr. Scully confirmed there was an annual demand for rural housing units but acquisition was subject to an assessment of repairs costs and a cost benefit analysis of the location and feasibility of repairs. Cllr. Parsons, Cllr. D. Connolly and Cllr. Keaveney asked for an update on the tenant in situ scheme and Mr. Scully advised that this scheme should be available later in the year.

Cllr. Geraghty stated that an emergency accommodation unit should be available in each Municipal District. Cllr. D. Connolly stated that emergency accommodation units should be available in Ballinasloe as the County Town. Mr. Scully advised he would raise these proposals for emergency accommodation with the Senior Team in Housing and they could be further discussed with the Housing SPC. Cllr. Parsons asked for an update on domestic violence refugees. Cllr. Parsons stated that consideration also needed to be given to support for Safe Home Ireland to facilitate emigrants right to return to their homeland. In response, Mr. Scully advised that he will check if this issue had previously been discussed by the Plenary Council and the outcome of same. Cllr. Keaveney asked that the issue of coordination of homeless services also be addressed by the Housing SPC.

AMENDMENT OF ADOPTED STANDING ORDERS OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE

MDB25016

The proposed amendments to the Standing Orders were outlined by Ms. McGann. The approval of the amended Standing Orders of the Municipal District of Ballinasloe was proposed by Cllr. Keaveney, seconded by Cllr. Geraghty and agreed by all.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE DIRECTOR'S BUSINESS

MDB25017

Ms. Carroll presented an update on the funding awards announced under Window 2 of the Community Recognition Fund and the specific allocations for Ballinasloe MD.

Ms. Carroll also confirmed that funding awards had been announced under the Community Centre Investment Fund and the Members welcomed the awards to facilities in the Ballinasloe MD.

Ms. Carroll thanked all the members and staff for all their help and courtesy throughout her time with Galway County Council. The members thanked Ms. Carroll for her service to Galway County Council and wished her well in her new position in Wexford County Council. On behalf of the members, Cllr. M. Connolly presented a gift to Ms. Carroll in recognition of her time as Manager of the Ballinasloe Municipal District.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

MDB25018

No business arising.

VOTES OF SYMPATHY/CONGRATULATIONS

MDB25019

Votes of Sympathy

The Flanagan Family on the passing of Fr. Benny Flanagan, Kilgarve Gardens, Creagh, Ballinasloe.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

MDB25020

Cllrs. Harney and Parsons asked that maintenance issues at the Dunlo Recreation Park be addressed, namely the cleaning of the toilets. Cllr. Parsons asked that the provision of CCTV at the facility be considered for safety reasons. Cllr. Harney expressed concern with the requirement to pay €10 per hour for the facility outside of the public hours and asked if this system can be reconsidered.

Cllr. Harney asked that Council Playground at the Leisure Centre in Ballinasloe be locked at night to avoid damage and prevent anti-social behaviour.

Cllr. Parsons asked that an update be provided to the members on the erection of a monument in Creagh Graveyard. Ms. Carroll advised that the work was carried out without prior approval and did not appear to be in line with guidelines. Ms. Carroll advised that a full examination would be carried out by the Environment Department.

Cllr. Parsons asked for an update on the Taughmaconnell aspect of the Creagh Junction as funding had not been provided for same under the Low-Cost Safety Scheme.

Cllr. Parsons asked that the Brackernagh access into Ballinasloe Soccer Club be assessed for safety measures.

Cllr. Geraghty asked if the issue of one hour parking be examined for Ballinasloe. Ms. Lowe advised that this will need to be examined by the Roads and Transportation SPC.

Cllr. Geraghty welcomed the upcoming Spring cleanup campaigns and asked that skips be made available to local communities. Ms. Carroll advised that Mark Molloy, Environmental Awareness Officer in the Environment Department, would be coordinating the National Spring Clean which could include provision of skips where required.

Cllr. Geraghty asked that traffic calming/speed control measures be assessed at Lisheen National School.

Cllr. Geraghty asked that projects funded via his NOM be completed.

Cllr. Harney asked for an update on provision of manhole covers at Creagh Junction to improve safety.

Cllr. D. Connolly stated that it was a massive achievement for Ballinasloe to host the Connacht Fleadh and reiterated that Galway County Council support the hosting of the Fleadh.

Cllr. D. Connolly asked that an update be provided on upgrades to tertiary roads and that the additional roads funding provided to Galway County Council be used for upgrading these roads.

Cllr. Keaveney and all the members condemned the damage done to the pitch at Tuam Stadium.

It was agreed that the next Ordinary Meeting of the Ballinasloe Municipal District would take place on 9th April at 2pm.

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Signed: Michael Connolly
Dated: 9/4/2025