

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL
Held at ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL
Monday, 24th March 2025 at 1.00pm

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. M. Kinane
Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill: Comh. /Cllr. S. Broderick, J. Charity, M. Connolly, S. Cunniffe, T. Ó Curraoin, G. Donohue, P. Feeney, G. Finnerty, D. Geraghty, A. Harney, M. Hoade, C. Keane, D. Kelly, D. Killilea, P. Killilea, G. King, M. Lee, P. Mac an Iomaire, M. Maher, E. Mannion, J. McClearn, K. McHugh Farag, S. McHugh Ryan, M. McNamara, A. Reddington, M. Regan, O. Turner, S. Walsh and T. Welby.

Baill ar líne: Comh. /Cllr. I. Canning, D. Collins, D. Connolly, P. Keveney, M. Leainde, Dr. E. F. Parsons, N. Thomas.

Oifigh: Mr. L. Conneally, Chief Executive, Mr. L. Hanrahan, Director of Services, Mr. U. Finn, Director of Services, Ms. E. Ruane, Director of Services, Ms. K. O'Connor, Head of Finance, Mr. M. Owens, Director of Services, Mr. K. Coyne, A/Director of Services, Ms. J. Brann Meetings Administrator, Ms. L. Keady, A/Senior Executive Officer, Ms. M. McGann, Administrative Officer, Ms. H. Riordan, A/Staff Officer, Ms. L. O'Donnell, Assistant Staff Officer.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

ITEM NO.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

4524

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. D. Killilea **SECONDED** by Cllr. Walsh the minutes of the Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 24th February 2025 were **AGREED**.

ITEM NO.2 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4525

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. McHugh Ryan the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group held on 17th February 2025 were **NOTED**.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Instead of purchasing new MD Cathaoirleach chains, could the existing Town Council chains be brought back into use.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Ms. Ruane:

- The existing chains were Town Council chains, the Municipal Districts cover different geographical areas. It can be discussed further during item 10 of the agenda.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Walsh **SECONDED** by Cllr. Lee the minutes of the Community, Irish Language, Gaeltacht, Tourism & Integration Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 11th November April 2024 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. Ó Curraoin **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher the minutes of the Physical Development, Transportation & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 11th November 2024 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Geraghty **SECONDED** by Cllr. D. Killilea the minutes of the Economic Development, Enterprise & Planning Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 4th December were **NOTED**.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It was enquired which Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) has the responsibility for beaches. The limited facilities at beaches in Connemara needs to be addressed.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Finn:

- Confirmed that the beach issues raised are on the working programme for the SPC for this year. There is an overlap with the Environment SPC.

ITEM NO.3 TO FILL A CASUAL VACANCY IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL ARISING FROM THE ELECTION OF CLLR. SHANE CURLEY TO SEANAD ÉIREANN IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 19 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED) AND STANDING ORDER 75 OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS.

4526

Report dated 13th March 2025 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. M. Connolly it was **AGREED** that Michael Regan, Kylebrack, Loughrea, Co. Galway be co-opted as a Member of Galway County Council and the Municipal District of Loughrea following election of former Cllr. Shane Curley to Seanad Éireann.

Senator Curley addressed the Chamber bilingually. He thanked the Council for their work and assistance over the 6 years that he was an Elected Member of Galway County Council. For their guidance and patience and for the work the Council

undertakes in the best interests of the people of Galway. He was honoured to be elected to the Seanad and represent Loughrea. He acknowledged the support he received in his bid to be elected to the Seanad. He pledged to help every Elected Member in any way that he can. He expressed his love of the Irish language and encouraged everyone to use it as much as possible. He congratulated and wished Cllr. Regan the best of luck going forward.

Cllr. Michael Regan addressed the Chamber expressing his honour and delight at returning to the Council Chamber. He previously served as an Elected Member between 1991 and 2009 and is now returning 16 years later. He congratulated Senator Curley on his new position and noted that Cllr. McClearn was the only remaining Elected Member in the Chamber since his last term. He is looking forward to working with the Chief Executive and Management Team and to supporting the people of Loughrea and Portumna. In his time away from the Council he continued to work on behalf of his local community. Issues he will be prioritising are housing, lack of serviced land and a swimming pool for Loughrea. He asked that the road between Loughrea and Woodford be included in the Roads Programme.

The Chamber joined in welcoming Cllr. Regan and looked forward to working with him.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Cllr. Charity was welcomed to the Fine Gael party.
- Senator Curley was congratulated on his election to Seanad Éireann.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:

- Welcomed the newly co-opted Cllr. Michael Regan to Galway County Council and informed him of the work to increase resources and decision making within the Municipal Districts.

ITEM NO. 4 FILLING OF A CASUAL VACANCY IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMUNITY, IRISH LANGUAGE, GAELTACHT, TOURISM & INTEGRATION STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE. **4527**

Report dated 13th March 2025 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. M. Connolly it was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. Regan to the Community, Irish Language, Gaeltacht, Tourism & Integration Strategic Policy Committee.

ITEM NO. 5 TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE ADOPT THE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL ANNUAL SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2025, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 134(A) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED). **4528**

Draft Annual Service Delivery Plan 2025 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. D. Killilea **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher it was **AGREED** the Galway County Council Annual Service Delivery Plan 2025, in accordance with section 134(a) of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) was **AGREED**.

The Chief Executive informed the Members that this plan is the first of the five year plans to implement the adopted Corporate Plan. The Members views were considered in preparing the plan and it is this plan that will be used to review the progress of the Council at the end of the year. He thanked the Members for approving the budget to fund the programme of works, of which housing is a priority budget focus.

ITEM NO.6 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE, THE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCHEMES 2025 PROPOSED LIST OF APPROVALS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE

PERFORMANCE OF ITS FUNCTIONS UNDER SECTION 67 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 AS AMENDED. **4529**

Report dated 24th March 2025 was published on the Extranet and circulated at the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher the Galway County Council Community Support Schemes 2025 proposed list of approvals, in accordance with the performance of its functions under 67 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) was **AGREED**.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The work of the team in preparing the scheme and for providing training for those wishing to apply was praised. It was asked if those that did not receive funding will be given feedback on their application.
- This funding stream is vital to keep clubs alive.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:

- Confirmed that the unsuccessful applicants would receive feedback to enable them to re-apply for the next round of funding.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Ms. McGann was praised for her work with community groups.
- Volunteers are the lifeblood of communities and groups should be supported as much as possible.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Coyne:

- Applicants from Community groups that were unsuccessful in receiving funding, have been diverted to other appropriate funding schemes.

The Cathaoirleach informed the meeting that nominations for the Cathaoirleach awards are open, the closing date to make a nomination is the 8th April. The Cathaoirleach Awards will be held as a separate event to the Cathaoirleach Ball.

ITEM NO. 7 TO CONSIDER THE LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LCDC) ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE OF FUNCTIONS FOR 2024, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 128B (1) (I) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM ACT 2014.

4530

The LCDC Annual Report was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. M. Connolly **SECONDED** by Comh. Mac an Iomaire the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) Annual Report on performance of functions for 2024, in accordance with Section 128B (1)(i) of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014 was **NOTED**.

Cllr. M. Connolly acknowledged the work carried out by Cllr. Charity and Comh. Mac an Iomaire and all the Members of the LCDC.

ITEM NO. 8 TO CONSIDER THE AUDIT COMMITTEE 2024 ANNUAL REPORT UNDER SECTION 15 LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AUDIT COMMITTEE) REGULATIONS 2014.

4531

The Audit Committee Annual Report was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Feeney the Audit Committee 2024 Annual Report under section 15 Local Government (Audit Committee) Regulations 2014 was **NOTED**.

ITEM NO. 9 PRESENTATION OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 291 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (AS AMENDED) ON SCEIRDE ROCKS OFFSHORE WINDFARM. **4532**

The Chief Executive's Report was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

Mr. Hanrahan gave an overview of the Chief Executive Report on the proposed development at Sceirde Rocks offshore windfarm. A presentation was previously given to the Members of the Conamara Municipal District (MD). The report and presentation were published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

The proposed development will be situated north of the Aran Islands and consist of 30 offshore wind turbine generators. The offshore export cable will pass to the west of the Aran Islands and will come onshore at Doonbeg, Co. Clare. It will join the grid at the Moneypoint Substation. Concern has been raised regarding the array area of the turbines.

A foreshore licence was granted for site investigations in 2001 and the licence extended until 2008. In 2020 Sceirde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm was confirmed as a 'Relevant Project.' A Maritime Area Consent (MAC) is required to lodge an application for development under Section 291 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). A MAC was granted by the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) with a commencement date of 23rd December 2022.

The Array Area of 37.22km² is between 5km and 11.5km off the coast of Conamara and encompasses 30 Wind Turbine Generators, an Offshore Substation and cabling. Pre-planning meetings were held in June 2023; 4 with Galway County Council and 4 with Clare County Council. The planning application was lodged with An Bord Pleanála (ABP) on 17/01/25. The tip height is 324.9m at low tide, they have a rotor diameter of 292m. The height of the substation will be 55m. 73km of cabling will connect the 30 turbines to the offshore substation and 63.5km of export cable will be laid in and on the seabed from the offshore substation to landfall in Killard, Co. Clare. A Natura Impact Assessment (NIS) has been submitted as part of the application. The application is available to view on the Galway County Council and Clare County Council's websites, also ABP's website and to view in Carna Community Centre. A Community Liaison Officer has been appointed, they will be the first point of contact

for stakeholders and residents and will discharge information in relation to the projects to the residents.

The role of the Council is not to determine the application, but to provide the Chief Executive Report based on the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan. The views of the Elected Members will be contained as an appendix to the report. If permission is granted for the development, the Council will recommend conditions be attached to the permission.

The visual impact of the proposed development will be significant. There has been community engagement. Submissions can be made up until 17:30 this evening via the ABP website. Comments made by Councillors today will be included with the Chief Executive Report which will be submitted on Friday.

ABP may modify, grant or refuse the application and may attach conditions. The application has been discussed in great detail at Conamara MD meetings.

The Chief Executive added that this is a strategic development proposal. It will be necessary to balance the renewable energy dividend against the visual and environmental impacts. The comments of the Members will be attached to the appendix of the report submitted to ABP. It is not a decision for Galway County Council to make. He thanked the planning staff for their work in preparing the report and welcomed comments from the Elected Members.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The application came in under the radar. It is the wrong location for a windfarm.
- It was asked why a windfarm is being proposed while an existing one at Derrybrien is not in operation.
- Concern was raised on the impact of the development on shellfish and marine life in the area.
- It was commented that ABPs decision making can be inconsistent.
- The operational lifespan of this windfarm is 38 years, after which planning may be sought again.

- The development if it proceeds, will negatively impact the tourism of Galway Bay.
- It was asked that the Conamara MD minutes be amended to reflect that Cllr. Mannion agreed with one point, but not all points raised by Cllr. Walsh.
- The Community Development Fund should be run for the lifetime of the development. It should be used to provide amenities and housing in the area.
- ABP when making the decision must strike a balance between the negative and positive impacts.
- The Executive were thanked for the 2 meetings that were held on the proposed development. The first to discuss the process and the second to consider the proposed project.
- The Community Benefit Fund could have a positive impact on the local area.
- This development would have devastating consequences for Ros an Mhíl.
- It was expressed that all submissions and observations should be considered by ABP.
- It was welcomed that there would not be exclusion zones and that fishing would still be permitted.
- The length of time that ABP take to make decisions was criticised.
- It was asked if the Community Fund indexed to inflation.

The Cathaoirleach informed the meeting that An Bord Plenála's decision is due on 28th July, however this date could be extended.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:

- Confirmed that the Community Benefit Fund is indexed to inflation.
- The comments expressed today will be included in the appendix of the Chief Executive Report, subject to the amendment raised by Cllr. Mannion.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- An update was requested on the Windfarm at Derrybrien, which consists of 70 wind turbines and is not generating any power.
- Which body will make the planning decision regarding Derrybrien.
- What process will be used to remove the windmills at Derrybrien.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Hanrahan:

- The Electricity Supply Board (ESB) are working towards decommissioning the site at Derrybrien.
- ESB need to go through the planning process to decommission. The planning decision will be made by ABP and not Galway County Council.
- The process of the decommissioning is a decision for ESB.

**ITEM NO. 10 TO CONSIDER THE PURCHASE OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS
CATHAOIRLEACH CHAINS OF OFFICE AND THE DRAFT CHAIN OF OFFICE
PROTOCOL.** **4533**

Report dated March 2025 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

Ms. Ruane spoke on the report that was recommended by the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) and published for the Members. The request to provide chains of office for Municipal Districts (MDs) stemmed from a commitment to strengthen the role of the 5 MDs. There are 3 existing Town Council chains. The geographical area of Municipal Districts is broader than the previous Town Councils. A chain of office for each MD would signify the equal status of the MDs. The cost of providing 5 new chains is €5,000.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- A chain of office would enhance the role of the MDs. A chain would enhance the role, status and visibility of the Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District.

- MD chains will only provide a veneer of decentralisation. Important decisions are made in Dublin and not at a local level. Extra staff would be of more benefit to the MDs.
- Monies raised from increasing the Local Property Tax (LPT) and Rates should not be used to purchase chains of office. The MD Cathaoirligh need more support in their role and not a chain.
- The re-establishment of Town Councils is included in The Programme for Government.
- The existing 3 chains should be brought back into use and not replaced with new chains.
- There are urgent matters that need addressing before we consider chains of office.
- An increase in number of chains from 2 to 7 will devalue the importance of the Cathaoirleach chain.
- A chain of office is symbolic.
- The Tuam Town Council chain is on display in the Tuam library, the presentation of which was made by Mr. Miko Kelly's family.
- A chain is important in providing status when attending twinning events and official functions.
- The MD Cathaoirleach should be renamed Mayor, also Leas Cathaoirleach renamed Deputy Mayor.

The Cathaoirleach said that a vote should be taken due to the differing opinions. She expressed her view that a chain would strengthen the role of the MDs.

It was decided that the condition and cost of repairs to the existing Town Council chains be sought and the item deferred until the April plenary meeting.

ITEM NO.11 TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE AUTHORISE THE ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 142(5A) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED). **4534**

Report dated 14th March 2025 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. McHugh Farag it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. King to attend AILG February Training Module 'An Overview of Wind Energy: Contribution to Economy, Climate Action and Future Potential' at Fairways Hotel, Dundalk on 20th February 2025. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Hoade and McHugh Ryan to attend AILG Annual Training Conference 2025 at Limerick Strand Hotel, Limerick on 2nd & 3rd April 2025.

ITEM NO.12 TO NOTE THE SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF CONFERENCES ATTENDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 142 (5F) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED). **4535**

Report dated 14th March 2025 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finnerty **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher the Summary of Proceedings at conferences attended were **NOTED**.

ITEM NO. 13 TO CONSIDER THE MANAGEMENT REPORT – MARCH 2025 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 136(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED). **4536**

Report dated 18th March 2025 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

The Management Report – March 2025, in accordance with Section 136(2) of the Local Government Act 2001 (As Amended) was **NOTED**.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The newly installed bus stop at Labane was welcomed.

- It was asked why an assessment of work carried out on the Galway to Athlone cycleway was only being carried out now.
- Clarification on the meaning of 'call-of competitions' in relation to the Galway to Athlone cycleway was asked.
- Landowners affected by the Galway to Athlone cycleway have not been kept informed.
- Concern was raised in relation to the pricing structure of the Dunlo Running track, following the introduction of a new access system.
- Issues of anti-social behaviour and the toilet facilities at Dunlo Running Track were raised. It was asked if CCTV could be installed.
- It was enquired as to the remit for the €20,000 Creative Places Tuam Cultural Growth funding from the Council Arts Office and to whom the funding is to be provided to.
- A timeline for the Tuam Town Hall building to be back in service was enquired.
- It was requested that thanks be conveyed to the Dog Warden in Tuam for their assistance in relation to sheep attacks in the area.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Finn:

- Updates on the Galway to Athlone cycle way are provided in the Management Report and to the relevant MD. The scheme is split between 2 local authorities. Galway County Council have responsibility for 114km, the other 83km is managed by Westmeath County Council. Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) are currently reviewing the project, it will go to tender to appoint new contractors. The Project Manager will attend the next meeting of the MD. Any queries can be directed to the Project Office in Ballinasloe.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Ms. Ruane:

- She will revert to Cllr. Harney on the pricing structure at Dunlo Running Track.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Coyne:

- He will revert to Cllr. D. Killilea on the Creative Places Tuam Growth funding query.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:

- The words of thanks will be conveyed to the Tuam Dog Warden.
- We will revert to Cllr. D. Killilea regarding Tuam Town Hall.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- An issue regarding the wrong date on a Commencement Notice was raised.
- When will the Galway.ie website be updated.
- The bus stops at Mountbellew, Moylough and Ballymoe were welcomed.
- It was asked why approval was required from the National Transport Authority (NTA) to carry out works for pedestrian crossings and bus shelters and why the Council do not carry out the works.
- It was asked if it is necessary to recalibrate the system after a power outage in retrofitted houses. Have the systems been reviewed following recent power outages.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:

- The Commencement Notice waiver scheme is strict, if a genuine error has occurred a case can be put to the Department.
- The new Council's new website will be in place by the end of June 2025.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Finn:

- Where funding is available from outside the Council's own resources an application will be made for funding approval. If works are funded by the Council, then approval is not required from the NTA.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Owens:

- Confirmed that following a power outage the system does need recalibrating in retrofitted houses.
- Pre-paid electricity is not recommended to be used in houses that were retrofitted. If credit runs out the system will need to be recalibrated.
- Council staff are being trained to recalibrate systems.
- An audit has been carried out on the systems following the recent power outages and a significant number have been identified as requiring recalibration.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The demand for affordable housing in Claregalway hugely outstrips the housing being supplied.
- Further information was requested on the Affordable Housing Working Group of the Galway Housing Delivery Taskforce.
- It was asked if there is any information from the Department following Storm Éowyn.
- A full list of Local Improvement Schemes (LIS) was requested in November, but has not yet received.
- The Affordable Housing scheme is no longer fit for purpose.
- Lack of confidence in the Galway to Athlone cycleway was expressed.
- If the sections of the greenway that run on publicly owned lands as part of Scheme 2 of the Portumna to Athlone cycleway, could be progressed.
- If windows and doors in older Council houses could be replaced.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Owens:

- The Council are committed to delivering mixed housing developments.
- The current affordable housing scheme with requirements for discounted market value, means that affordable housing can only be provided in limited

areas, which is generally in MASP area. The Council are advancing projects where it is viable to do so.

- Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 requires change at national level.
- The next meeting of the Galway Housing Delivery Taskforce will be on 22nd May, details of which will be contained in the following Management Report.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Finn:

- Will give an update on the LIS in the next Management Report.
- TII are reviewing the works carried on the greenway, to date.
- The Council are carrying out its own review of Storm Éowyn and will feed into the national review.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The Burke family were thanked for their assistance in the provision of the bus shelter in Moylough.
- Bus shelters should be provided under the Active Travel Scheme.
- Bus shelters are required in Glenamaddy, Kilkerrin and Williamstown to encourage people to use public transport.
- Uisce Éireann must upgrade their facilities to enable the provision of housing.
- The problem of illegal dumping on N84 was highlighted. It was asked how many cases have been brought to court. CCTV in the area was called for.
- The events held by the Council for Seachtain na Gaeilge were praised.
- The Members were called upon to continue the Irish lessons that the Council are providing.
- A report on the aftermath of Storm Éowyn was requested and detail on how the Council can future proof for further potential events.
- If the remaining LIS applications from the previous scheme will be prioritised on the new list.
- The document governing the affordable housing scheme is 45 months old
- The refused Part 8 application for Moycullen needs to be revisited.

- Planning decisions along the Headford Road are being refused while exemptions are being granted for unauthorised developments that were built over 7 years ago.
- An audit on roadside trees was requested.
- Calls were made to address the litter around the Tuam Leisure Centre.
- Affordable housing is needed in Tuam, it is hard for businesses to attract employees due to lack of housing.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:

- Work is in progress on our review of the impact of Storm Éowyn and we will feed into the national response. These learnings will determine how we will plan going forward.
- Littering is personal responsibility. Huge resources are expended annually on clean ups. Where we have evidence, we will prosecute.
- There are GDPR issues with installing CCTV.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Finn:

- Westmeath County Council are the managing authority for Scheme 2 of the cycleway between Portumna and Athlone.
- The existing applicants for the LIS scheme have been informed that they are not required to re-apply.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Hanrahan:

- There was an issue of historic fill on the Headford Road, going back further than 7 years. A number of sites are re-opening and the Planning Department are engaging with the landowners that are opening sites without planning permission.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:

- He and Infrastructure Director of Service are meeting with the Chief Executive of Uisce Éireann in 2 weeks time. He will raise the issue of unserved towns and villages. We need a commitment from Uisce Éireann that unsewered towns will be prioritised in their investment plan.
- The Government are demanding an increase in residentially zoned land which is reflected in the County Development Plan. The County Development Plan will be back before the Members for approval for variation.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Owens:

- All zoned and serviced land in the ownership of the Council are being progressed to supply housing, including Oughterard.
- Moycullen R1 land will be in the work programme 2027-2029.
- Additional lands will be acquired under Housing for All scheme thereafter.
- 220 units have been proposed for Tuam, of which all are social housing.
- We will engage with the Department on the masterplan for Sun Street, Tuam.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It was asked that the Executive meet with Údarás na Gaeltachta to explore lands that they may have available to develop housing.
- To ask the Department to update the affordable housing scheme funding model.
- If the felling of roadside trees can be brought within the remit of the Community Involvement Scheme (CIS).

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:

- There has been contact with Údarás na Gaeltachta and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has forwarded us details of properties to be investigated. The servicing of this land will be raised.
He will revert to members when we have more information on due diligence.

- All County towns should be included in the affordable housing scheme, we will write to the Department for their inclusion.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Finn:

- A full review of the issues and solutions following Storm Éowyn will be included in a report for the Members.

ITEM NO. 14 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE. 4537

The following items of correspondence which were published on the extranet prior to the meeting were **NOTED**:

- Letter dated 06.02.25 from Limerick City & County Council – Resolution – Financial Support Scheme.
- Letter dated 07.02.25 from Limerick City & County Council – Resolution – Replenish Local Authority Financial Resources.
- Letter dated 07.02.25 from Limerick City & County Council – Resolution – Uisce Éireann install generators at pumping stations
- Letter dated 27.02.25 from Donegal County Council – Resolution – Dogs on Leads.
- Letter dated 04.03.25 from Sligo County Council – Resolution – Notes used in Gender based violence counselling.
- Letter dated 04.03.25 from Sligo County Council – Resolution – Places in Schools for additional needs pupils.
- Letter dated 04.03.25 to Mr. James Browne, Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage – Resolution -Tenant in Situ Scheme 2025.
- Email dated 11.03.25 – Acknowledgement email from Eoghan McCarthy, Private Secretary, of letter to Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage – Tenant in Situ Scheme 2025.

- Letter dated 04.03.25 to OpenEir – Resolution – EIR's plans to future-proof it's Network.
- Email dated 04.03.25 – Acknowledgement of Resolution letter – EIR's plan's to future-proof it's Network.
- Email dated 12.03.25 – Reminder to OpenEir on Resolution letter – EIR's plan to future proof it's network.
- Email dated 12.03.25 – Reply from Paul Callaghan Open EIR – Reply to Resolution letter to follow.
- Letter dated 04.03.25 to Uisce Éireann – Resolution – Aftermath of Storm Éowyn.
- Email dated 12.03.25 – Reminder to Uisce Éireann for reply to Resolution letter – Aftermath of Storm Éowyn.
- Letter dated 04.03.25 to ESB – Resolution – Ireland's Energy Grid & Challenges of Climate Change.
- Email dated 12.03.25 to ESB – Reminder to ESB to reply to Resolution Letter dated 04.03.25.
- Email dated 14.03.25 from Seán Murphy, Strategy Innovation & Transformation, ESB – reply to reminder email to ESB re Resolution letter.
- Letter dated 11.03.25 from Clare County Council – Resolution – Early Years Educators.
- Mayors for Peace News Flash – February 2025.

ITEM 15. QUESTION

4538

Cllr. Donohue submitted the following Question prior to the meeting:

'To ask the Chief Executive - Director of Housing are Galway County Council tenants notified in writing on an annual basis of their responsibility as tenants that if there are any changes in the tenant's income/circumstances that they are supposed to notify the Council.'

The following reply issued:

The Galway County Council Tenancy Agreement provides as follows:

- a) The Tenant shall furnish to the Council all full particulars of the income of the Tenant and the members of his family living with him/her in the dwelling and shall forthwith inform the Council of any subsequent change in his/her income or the income of any such member of his/her family.

In accordance with the above, the obligation to inform the Council of any subsequent change in the income of the Tenant or any member of his/her family, is the obligation of the Tenant.

The Tenant is made aware of this obligation as part of the tenancy induction programme and on signing their tenancy agreement.

ITEM 16. NOTICE OF MOTION

4539

Cllr. Donohue submitted the following Notice of Motion prior to the meeting:

'To ask the Chief Executive to set out in tabular format the following for the Derelict Site Register for Galway County.

1. *Derelict Site Reference*
2. *Location*
3. *Owner for the Derelict Site.'*

The following reply issued:

Definition of Derelict Site

Under the Derelict Sites Act, 1990, a 'Derelict Site' means any land which detracts, or is likely to detract, to a material degree from the amenity character or appearance of land in the vicinity of the land in question because of:

1. The existence on the land in question of structures which are in a ruinous, derelict, or dangerous condition; or

2. The neglected, unsightly, or objectionable condition of the land or any structures on the land in question; or
3. The presence, deposit, or collection on the land in question of any litter, rubbish, debris or waste, except where the presence, deposit or collection of such litter, rubbish, debris or waste results from the exercise of a right conferred by statute or law.

of derelict sites are reported to the Environment section by members of the public, our community warden service and area office personnel. Each report is logged and assessed per the criteria set out in the derelict's sites act.

The Council endeavours to work closely with owners of identified derelict properties and encourage owners of such properties to co-operate in addressing the dereliction, thus preventing any unnecessary expense. During 2023, 11 derelict sites reported to the Environment Section were dealt with satisfactorily through owner engagement and did not require entry on to the derelict sites register. The number of sites on a register is not necessarily a portrayal of the section's activity regarding this function.

When the section cannot advance the matter on a co-operative basis, procedures as set out under the derelict sites act are initiated.

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage initiated a review of the Derelict Sites Act in 2022 and invited local authorities to make submissions on potential improvements to the legislative provisions and their application. A working group was established to investigate the submissions received and the outcome of their recommendations is awaited.

Some of the issues encountered in dealing with dereliction in the County which hinders remediation include: -

- Identification of owners and control of derelict land or sites. This is the most common obstacle encountered. Often sites are unregistered, registered owners may be deceased and passing of title has not been established or banking institutions have registered burdens on the folio. Considerable resources can be expended on unwinding these scenarios.

- Construction challenges. Where owners are identified their ability to carry out work today is challenged by their own means, escalating constructions costs, availability of tradesmen and in some cases restrictions where buildings are protected structures.

The Environment Section is currently engaging with the Housing Unit and Urban Regeneration Unit regarding the CPO Activation Programme.

As a final note, per the definition of a derelict sites, the objective of the act is to address the detracting *from amenity, character, or appearance of land in the vicinity*. The expectation sometimes can be formed that the process will lead to a property being brought back to a habitable condition or a commercial operation which may co-incidentally arise but is not required in this process.

Derelict sites can be reported to the Environment Section on 091-509510 or by contacting environment@galwaycoco.ie.

Procedures under Derelict Site Legislation

This is a highly administrative process and involves the following once the local authority has deemed a site to be derelict.

Section 8(2) notice –Council gives notice of intention to put on the derelict sites register and the owner may make representations within a specified period in response to same.

Section 8(7) notice – Where the property owner does not submit an appropriate response, the local authority serves notice on the owners that the site has been entered on the derelict sites register.

Section 11 notice – Following entry on the register, this notice is served on the owner which states the measures required to address the dereliction and gives an appropriate period within which the specified measures must be taken.

Section 22 - Where the measures as listed in the Section 11 have not been complied with and where the property continues to be in a derelict state, the local authority must determine the market value of the land. A Section 22 notice is issued to the

owner of the land of the valuation which has been placed on the land by the Council. The Notice informs the owner that they may appeal to the Valuation Tribunal against the determination made by the Council within 28 days from the day on which the notice is received by them.

Section 23(3) – The levy demand is served on the owner of the property. Levy is 7% of the market value of the land. Levy can only be applied in an 'Urban Area' (i.e. an area prescribed by the Minister under section 21 of the Act).

Cllr. Donohue questioned why only 5 properties appear on the derelict site register and questioned why the Shannon Oaks Hotel in Portumna was not included. She queried the amount of revenue that has not been collected due to the non-registration of derelict properties. The outcome of the 2022 review of the derelict sites is still awaited.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Coyne:

- Will link directly with Cllr. Donohue on the matter.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The Oyster Manor Hotel in Clarenbridge should be included on the register.
- Concern was raised regarding the site of the Shannon Oaks Hotel in Portumna. It was questioned why it is not included on the Derelict Sites Register. There are open manholes and trip hazards on the site, it is easy for anyone to access the swimming pool which is full of water. It was asked why the hotel is no longer on the register.

ITEM NO. 17 CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

4540

The Cathaoirleach gave an account of the recent trip to America by herself and the Chief Executive for business meetings and St. Patrick's Day. The first part of the trip was to Dexcom on the west coast, they had a positive and fruitful meeting with the Vice President of Dexcom. They also met with the Industrial Development Agency

(IDA), Enterprise Ireland and Tourism Ireland. During these meetings their objective was to find out what requirements the companies have of Galway County Council. New York was a wonderful experience and the trip helped to strengthen connections with the Galway diaspora. They met with representatives from Clare and Tipperary Councils.

The Chief Executive said the agencies that they met with on the east coast have prospective job creation sites located in Galway. A socio-economic profile of the county was created in advance of the meeting, and there was a significant transfer of information to the agencies to promote Galway. Follow up queries are anticipated. Our presence was appreciated by the Galway Association and diaspora at the St. Patrick's Day Mass and parade. Business opportunities will arise from the trip and we'll continue to work on the follow up tasks.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- How has the extra revenue from the increase in Local Property Tax (LPT) has been allocated and spent.
- How much extra funding the increase in LPT created and what services are being supported by it.
- It was queried why the former site of St. Brigid's Hospital in Ballinasloe is not on the derelict sites register.
- Did the multi-national companies in America discuss the housing situation in County Galway.
- There are 850 households without broadband following storm Éowyn. There are elderly people that are still without working emergency buttons and phones.
- How many Irish Water Staff will remain in working for the Council following the transfer of services to Uisce Éireann and of them, how many are caretakers and how many are operators.
- Bearna National School urgently need a pedestrian crossing. Can a lollypop person be recruited there until one is provided.
- It was asked that Safe Home Ireland houses be assigned for returning emigrants.

- The Safe Home Ireland Scheme will be discussed at the May meeting of the Housing SPC. The impact that it could have on the Scheme of Letting Priorities needs to be examined.
- Details of the upcoming Cathaoirleach Ball were enquired of.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:

- The Members comments on the Derelict Sites Register will be taken on board.
- The Regeneration Team may link in with the MDs to add sites to the register.
- Eir will be contacted to urge them to restore services to those still without broadband access as a matter of urgency. Emergency and panic buttons are crucial for independent living. The Council will provide any assistance it can to Eir to reinstall these services.
- The Safe Home Ireland is a policy for the Housing SPC.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Finn:

- An e-mail has been received concerning Bearna School. There are over 200 schools in the County and there are limited resources in the Safe Route to Schools Programme. The area office will see what can be done to address the concerns of the school.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Ms. Ruane:

- The process of transferring staff from Irish Water to the Council is ongoing.

The Cathaoirleach informed the meeting that the launch of the 2025 Cathaoirleach Awards was taking place. An online facility for making applications will be open shortly and the contact address is awards@galwaycoco.ie. The closing date for nominations is 8th April. She is looking forward to a night dedicated to community volunteers to acknowledge their invaluable work.

The Cathaoirleach Ball will be held in the Raheen Woods Hotel, Athenry on 7th June. The Ball will support 2 worthwhile causes, Oranmore Maree Coastal Search Unit and Hand in Hand charities.

The Members were reminded that Public Sector Duty Training is being held on Thursday 27th March on Teams between 10:00 and 11:30.

The Members were also reminded of the Civic Reception that will follow at 6pm. It is being held to honour Sarsfields Senior Camogie Club, Kilkerrin-Clonberne Senior Ladies Football Club and An Cheathrú Rua Intermediate Football Team, as All-Ireland Champions.

ITEM NO. 18 VOTES OF SYMPATHY / CONGRATULATIONS

4541

A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:

- Majella Moylan, Lisnagranshy, Ardahan, Co. Galway
- Brendan Hogan, Carroreagh, Kilconnell, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- Paddy Barry, Ballylennon, Gort, Co. Galway
- Florence Dick, Furrymelia East, Barna, Co. Galway
- Hubert Geoghegan & Family, Lackan, Ardahan, Co. Galway.

Chriochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Submitted, Signed and Approved

Cathaoirleach:

Martina Keane

Date:

28/04/25