

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL
Held at ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL
Monday, 28th April 2025 at 11.00am

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

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill: Comh. /Cllr. S. Broderick, I. Canning, J. Charity, D. Collins, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, S. Cunniffe, T. Ó Curraoin, P. Feeney, G. Finnerty, D. Geraghty, T. Grealish, L. Harney, M. Hoade, C. Keane, P. Keaveney, D. Kelly, P. Killilea, G. King, M. Lee, P. Mac an Iomaire, M. Maher, E. Mannion, S. McHugh Ryan, M. McNamara, E. F. Parsons, A. Reddington, M. Regan, N. Thomas, O. Turner, S. Walsh and T. Welby.

Baill ar líne: Comh. /Cllr. G. Donohue, A. Harney, D. Killilea, M. Leainde, J. McClearn, K. McHugh Farag.

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. D. Mitchell, A/Director of Services, Mr. K. Coyne, A/Director of Services, Ms. J. Brann Meetings Administrator, Ms. L. Keady, A/Senior Executive Officer, Ms. S. Lawless, Administrative Officer, Mr. M. O Donnchadha, Oifigeach Forbartha Gaeilge, Ms. H. Riordan, Staff Officer, Ms. L. O'Donnell, Assistant Staff Officer.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

The Cathaoirleach offered her condolences to the Chief Executive, Michael Owens Director of Services and Kevin Kelly former Interim Chief Executive of Galway County Council. To the Chief Executive on the passing of his mother Elizabeth Conneely. To Michael Owens on the recent passing of his mother Mary Owens and to former Interim Chief Executive Kevin Kelly on the passing of his mother Mary Kelly.

The Members of the Council joined with the Cathaoirleach on expressing their condolences. The meeting was adjourned for 5 minutes as a mark of respect for the deceased.

ITEM NO.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

4542

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Comh. O Curraoin the minutes of the Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 24th March 2025 were **AGREED**.

ITEM NO.2 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4543

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Canning the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group held on 18th March 2025 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty the minutes of the Housing Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 12th December 2024 were **NOTED**.

It was agreed by the Members, as per recommendation from the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) that Galway County Council would hold a Civic Reception to honour Athenry Rounder Team.

ITEM NO.3 TO FILL A CASUAL VACANCY IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL ARISING FROM THE ELECTION OF CLLR. P.J. MURPHY 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. **4544**

Report dated 10th April 2025 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. P. Killilea **SECONDED** by Cllr. Keaveney it was **AGREED** that Laurie Harney, Lisnagranchy, Ardrahan, Co. Galway be co-opted as a Member of Galway County Council and the Municipal District of Loughrea following election of former Cllr. PJ Murphy to Seanad Éireann.

Senator Murphy offered his condolences to the Chief Executive and Mr. Michael Owens. He thanked his Council colleagues for the support he received from them during his Seanad election campaign. He pledged to work hard on behalf of all the people of Galway. He encouraged the Members to contact him if he can be of any assistance. He enjoyed his 6.5 years on the Council. He thanked the members of all political parties and the staff of the Council. He congratulated Cllr. Laurie Harney on his appointment to Galway County Council. He described Cllr. Laurie Harney as honest, decent, hardworking and a person of great integrity. He was confident that Cllr. Laurie Harney will be a great representative for Ardrahan and South Galway.

Cllr. Laurie Harney thanked the Members for their welcome to the Council. He outlined his hope to progress the interests of his constituents, particularly in the areas of agriculture, health and education. Education is the most important gift that we can give to our young people to help them achieve their ambitions.

The Chamber and Cathaoirleach joined in welcoming Cllr. L. Harney to the Council and looked forward to working with him. The Chief Executive welcomed Cllr. L. Harney to the Council on behalf of the Executive. He assured him that the Executive will assist him in every way possible.

ITEM NO. 4 FILLING OF A CASUAL VACANCY IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CLIMATE ACTION, BIODIVERSITY & HERITAGE STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE. **4545**

Report dated 10th April 2025 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. P. Killilea **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher it was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. L. Harney to the Climate Action, Biodiversity & Heritage Strategic Policy Committee.

ITEM NO. 5 FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF WESTERN INTER-COUNTY RAIL COMMITTEE. **4546**

Report dated 10th April 2025 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. P. Killilea **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher it was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. L. Harney to the Western Inter-County Rail Committee.

ITEM NO.6 FILLING OF A CASUAL VACANCY IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS ASSOCIATION (LAMA). **4547**

Report dated 7th April 2025 was published on the Extranet and circulated at the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty it was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. Regan to the Local Authority Members Association (LAMA).

ITEM NO. 7 FILLING OF CASUAL VACANCY ON COMHAR NA NOILEÁN C.R.T . **4548**

Report dated 14th April 2025 was published on the Extranet and circulated at the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Mannion **SECONDED** by Cllr. Reddington it was **AGREED** to appoint Comh. Mac an Iomaire to the Comhar na Noileán C.R.T.

ITEM NO.8 TO CONSIDER AND ADOPT THE UNAUDITED ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 2024. **4549**

The Unaudited Annual Financial Statement for Galway County for the year ended 31st December 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

Ms. O'Connor, Head of Finance spoke on the Annual Financial Statement for 2024 that was circulated to the Members in advance of the meeting. She confirmed that the report had been prepared within the Accounting Code of Practice and Accounting Regulations for Local Authorities in Ireland and the directions of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage. She outlined the primary financial statements that make up the Annual Financial Statement. She drew the Members attention to the financial review on pages 3 to 6, which shows that the Council recorded a small surplus of just over €1,553 for 2024.

The key figures from the statement are the gross expenditure of €181m, which is an increase from €170m in 2023. The Council currently have a cumulative surplus on the General Revenue Reserve of nearly €48,000 and Net Assets of €3.9bn.

Ms. O'Connor was available to respond to any queries from the Members. She informed them that she is asking for them to adopt the enclosed figures and to formally close the accounts for 2024. To approve the transfers to / from reserves as detailed in Note 14 of the accounts and to approve the over / under expenditure by division as per Note 16 of the accounts.

Ms. O'Connor emphasised that this statement is unaudited and confirmed that the auditor will audit the accounts. Following this, the audited accounts will be presented to the Chamber at the September meeting.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the audited accounts would be before them at the September plenary meeting and that the figures are a reflection that the Council accounts are in good order.

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Unaudited Annual Financial Statement for Galway County Council for the year ended 31st December 2024:

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade it was **AGREED** to adopt the figures as detailed in the Unaudited Annual Financial Statement for Galway County Council for the year ended 31st December 2024 to formally close the accounts for 2024.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade it was **AGREED** to approve the transfers to / from reserves as detailed in Note 14 of the accounts.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade it was **AGREED** to approve the over / under expenditure by division as noted in Note 16 of the accounts.

ITEM NO. 9 TO FIX A VENUE FOR THE MAY ORDINARY MEETING OF PLENARY COUNCIL. **4550**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Regan **SECONDED** by Cllr. Mannion it was agreed that the May Ordinary Meeting of Plenary Council will be held on the 26th May at 11am in the Maree Community Centre, Maree, Oranmore, Co. Galway.

The Cathaoirleach said that it is fitting to hold the May plenary meeting at the Maree Community Centre as it served as a Community Hub during Storm Éowyn. The Members were informed that this meeting will be an in-person meeting and it would not be possible to attend remotely.

ITEM NO. 10 TO CONSIDER AND ADOPT THE ANNUAL REPORT 2024 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 221 (1)(A) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001. **4551**

The Annual Report 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher the Annual Report 2024 in accordance with section 221(1)(A) of the Local Government Act 2001 was **AGREED**.

The Members and the Cathaoirleach complimented Ms. Ruane Director of Services on an excellent and very detailed Annual Report.

The Chief Executive thanked Ms. Ruane and Ms. Keady on producing the 2024 Annual Report. It is a report on the activities and inputs from each of the directorates, in line with the clear priorities that the Members set out for the Council for 2024. It aligns with the Corporate Plan that the Members adopted in December 2024.

ITEM NO. 11 DIRECTOR'S UPDATE ON THE N6 GALWAY CITY RING ROAD.

4552

The Chief Executive described the N6 Galway City Ring Road as one of the most critical pieces of infrastructure for the County & City of Galway and is referenced in every Council policy document. It is listed as a priority in the National Development Plan, National Planning Framework and our County Development Plan. It is critical for the Galway Metropolitan area and for the West of Ireland. Mr. Finn, Director of Services and the National Roads Office have prepared a comprehensive report in the submission of the Further Information to An Bord Pleanála (ABP).

Mr. Finn, Director of Services gave an update on the N6 Galway City Ring Road, details of which had been circulated to the Members in advance of the meeting. The Council, as the lead authority for the project, submitted a comprehensive response to An Bord Pleanála's Request for Further Information regarding the N6 Galway City Ring Road on 14th April 2025. It included a full update of the development consent application. An updated Environmental Impact Assessment Report, an updated Natura Impact Statement, updated Compulsory Acquisition Schemes and submissions in relation to the Climate Action Plan 2024 and the new Galway City Development Plan. He confirmed the commitment of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), Galway City Council and Galway County Council to the delivery of the N6 Galway City Ring Road as a key enabler in supporting the economic and population growth of Galway. It will be part of Galway's transport solution and will enable employment and

residential growth. It will remove heavy goods vehicles and traffic from the city centre. It will support sustainability and improve quality of life for residents and visitors.

The final decision from An Bord Pleanála is expected towards the end of 2025. If approved, the project may still face further Judicial Review proceedings. However, assuming a successful outcome, detailed design and tendering are anticipated in 2026-2027, with construction of advance works expected to commence in 2027. The main contract which will take approximately 36 months, will then commence in 2028.

He concluded his presentation by thanking Mr. Sean Devaney, Senior Engineer, the Project Office and Steering Group for the huge amount of work carried out. He welcomed any questions from the Elected Members.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The team involved in the project were thanked for their work on the submission.
- The submission of the Request for Further Information was welcomed.
- The commitment of Galway County Council to the project was emphasised.
- The benefits of the ring road to the city, surrounding areas and Conamara was stated.
- A call was made to the Galway representatives in Dáil Éireann and the Seanad to ensure the project is prioritised.
- It was asked if the detailed design element of the project could take place while the decision is being made by ABP, in order to speed up the process.
- The budget for the project must include the cost of the design and contract elements.
- Other road projects such as the N84 are on hold until a decision on the Ring Road is made.
- Funding must be secured and ready for when ABP make their decision.
- We need to continue planning for the future and further potential increase in traffic.
- If the decision was appealed, it was asked how long the project could be held up for.

- The chosen route for the ring road was criticised and the affect that it will have on the homeowners that will lose their homes was highlighted. It was stated that North Conamara will not benefit from the ring road at the proposed location.
- Baile Chláir by-pass is also required.
- The Western Rail Corridor needs to be re-opened for passenger and freight.
- The project is needed to open up the west of the County for commuters, business and tourists.
- If an Oral Hearing is called it was asked if it will only address the matters addressed in the further information submitted or could the entire project, including the carbon element be re-examined.
- A request was made of the Executive to provide an outline of the proposal that Elected Members could provide to the national politicians for submission to the Department of Transport.

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

- He welcomed the overall support of the Members for the N6 Galway City Ring Road project.
- There is a joint transport strategy, the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) between Galway County Council, Galway City Council and the National Transport Authority (NTA).
- Three significant projects under the GTS are at planning, the Cross City Link, the Dublin Road Transport Corridor and the N6 GCRR are at planning with ABP.
- The longer the process goes on the more impact it is having on landowners.
- It is positive that the previous project was granted by ABP. It was the decision by ABP that was quashed and not the scheme itself. We can take confidence that hopefully the project will be granted again.
- The further information submitted is a robust application. He is confident that if a Judicial Review was called again that it can be defended.
- As the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) element was not updated in the further information he would not expect that element to form part of an oral

hearing. However, the planning element could. It will be up to ABP to decide if there will be an oral hearing.

- He would expect public consultation to take place. Information would then be published on our website. All landowners will be written to.
- Agreed that TII be asked to provide funding for the design element of the project, which would enable funding to be in place in advance of a decision is being made.

The Cathaoirleach proposed that the Galway Oireachtas Members be approached to ensure funding is ringfenced for the project under the multi-annual budget, Cllr. Mannion seconded.

The Chief Executive informed the Members that he will be meeting with the Galway Cabinet Members to update them on the N6 Galway Ring Road project status and to seek their support for the project's inclusion in the new National Development Plan. He expects a positive planning decision will be made before the end of 2025, with detailed road design to be provided in 2026. He again emphasised that the N6 Galway City Ring Road is the most critical piece of infrastructure for Galway and thanked the Members for their support of the project and that he will keep them appraised on progress.

**ITEM NO. 12 TO CONSIDER THE PURCHASE OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS
CATHAOIRLEACH CHAINS OF OFFICE AND THE DRAFT CHAIN OF OFFICE
PROTOCOL.** **4553**

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 circulated to the Members. At the March plenary meeting the Members requested that the Executive explore the possibility of using the 3 existing Town Council instead of purchasing new ones. She explained that the Tuam Town Council chain is not available. A display case for the Tuam chain was donated by the family of the last Town Commissioner and this chain is currently on display in the Tuam library. She outlined that the 3 Town Council chains are a legacy from the

previous Urban District Councils. To ensure equal treatment and to reflect the geographical areas of the Municipal Districts, she proposed the purchase of 5 new chains at a cost of €1,000 each, a total of €5,000. A chain for each Municipal District Cathaoirleach would emphasise the importance of the Municipal District and facilitate the holding of civic receptions at Municipal level. This approach has been agreed at Corporate Policy Group. The Draft Chain of Office Protocol has also been circulated to the Members.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- A Municipal District chain will promote the Municipal District and will enable civic receptions to be held in the municipal area, which will be more convenient for those being honoured.
- It was asked if the Municipal Districts will receive their own budget to hold civic receptions.
- The purchase of the chains is a waste of taxpayers money.
- Chains of office are not necessary at Municipal level. It is not appropriate to spend money on chains of office following recent increases in Local Property Tax and Rates charges.
- Conamara does not have a civic space to hold civic receptions.

A vote was proposed by the Cathaoirleach '*To consider the purchase of Municipal Districts Cathaoirleach Chains of Office.*'

The following was the result:

For 23

Cllr. Broderick
Cllr. Donohue
Cllr. Grealish
Cllr. Hoade
Cllr. P. Killilea

Cllr. Canning
Cllr. Feeney
Cllr. A. Harney
Cllr. Keane
Cllr. Kinane

Cllr. M. Connolly
Cllr. Finnerty
Cllr. L. Harney
Cllr. D. Killilea
Cllr. King

Cllr. Lee	Comh. Mac an Iomaire	Cllr. Maher
Cllr. McHugh Farag	Cllr. McHugh Ryan	Cllr. Dr. E. F. Parsons
Cllr. Regan	Cllr. Welby	

Against 10

Cllr. Charity	Cllr. Collins	Cllr. D. Connolly
Cllr. Cunniffe	Comh. Ó Curraóin	Cllr. Kelly
Cllr. Mannion	Cllr. McNamara	Cllr. Reddington
Cllr. Thomas		

Abstain 1

Cllr. Geraghty

No-Voting 5

Cllr. Keaveney	Cllr. Leainde	Cllr. McClearn
Cllr. Turner	Cllr. Walsh	

The Cathaoirleach confirmed that the proposal to purchase the Municipal District Cathaoirleach chains of office and the Draft Chain of Office Protocol was carried.

ITEM NO.13 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). **4554**

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. Maher to attend AILG March Training Module – ‘Embracing Equality – Cultivating Inclusive Local Communities’ at Falls Hotel, Ennistymon on 20th March 2025. (Retrospective Approval).

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

ITEM NO.14 TO NOTE THE SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF CONFERENCES ATTENDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 142 (5F) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED). **4555**

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

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

ITEM NO. 15 TO CONSIDER THE MANAGEMENT REPORT – APRIL 2025 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 136(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED). **4556**

Report dated 23rd April 2025 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

The Management Report – April 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 Summit Steps Hillwalking Programme was welcomed.
- The recruitment of lifeguards and their presence 7 days a week for 2 months over the summer was welcomed. It was asked how many were to be recruited this year.
- An update was requested on the affordable housing schemes in Raheen and Páirc na hAbhainn, Athenry.
- It was requested that Scoil Chroi Naofa and the Boys School in Athenry Safe Routes to School applications be prioritised and that they be extended to include Kingsland and Our Lady's Holy Well.

- That Scoil Sailearna in Indreabhán and Scoil Na bhForbacha in Furbogh schools be contacted in relation to their Safe Routes to School applications.
- The concern of parents for the safety of children accessing Bearna National School was raised.

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

- Updates on the Safe Routes to School programme are included in the Management Report. An Taisce carry out the assessments of the schools that apply under the scheme. Their recommendation is made to the National Transport Authority (NTA), the works are implemented by Galway County Council. The Council do not have an input in the Safe Routes to School prioritisation stage.
- An Active Travel application in South Conamara has been passed to the NTA, he will follow up with them.

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

- Confirmed that contracts were signed that morning for the 2 affordable housing schemes in Athenry, at Raheen and Páirc na hAbhainn, with a view to deliver the units by the end of 2026.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- An update was sought on the roll out of the temporary Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) to combat anti-social behaviour and illegal dumping.
- Clarification was sought on the Notice to Quit process. Delays in serving the notices is causing anxiety for the people impacted.
- Disappointment was expressed that only 21 Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) projects were envisaged to be completed this year. It was asked if there was a mechanism to seek additional funding from the Department.
- Funding for the Tenant-in-Situ scheme was enquired.

- A circular is to issue to Local Authorities from the Minister in relation to Tenant-in-Situ scheme.
- As works to the N84 are on hold until a decision on the GCRR is made, it was asked that the section between Luimnagh to Shrule be addressed as a matter of urgency.

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

- Interviews are being held today to recruit 52 Lifeguards for the 16 designated bathing areas

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

- The Minister of Housing as part of the County Development Plan review, agreed in April to increase population targets for each area, these figures will be with us by the end of June.
- Correspondence will issue from the Department regarding the zoning of additional land in the County to meet this population uplift.
- The 2025 Tenant in Situ funding allocation of €6m is welcome. However, the Council estimate when all the 2024 commitments are progressed, and refurbishments and pending claims are dealt with, the remaining balance of the 2025 allocation will be approximately €500,000.

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

- 30 units are required to address the Tenant-in-Situ scheme, however the funding of just over €6m will only facilitate the provision of 16-17 units.
- The Department have been informed that this funding is inadequate to provide homeless services.
- CCTV has been installed in Tirboy, Gilmartin Road and Parkmore in Tuam and in Crowe Street in Gort. The Council are currently looking at introducing it to other sites in Tuam and Ballinasloe.

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

- In 2024 the Council received a LIS budget of €1m. 260 applications were received during the summer of 2024. 21 LIS projects have been approved in 2025, plus 4 additional on the Islands. There is a waiting period for projects to receive funding.
- The May 2024 Management Report explained that Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) informed Galway County Council that the works on the N84 Bunnaconeen to Shrile Pavement Scheme were not to proceed to tender until they reviewed their overall available budget. He undertook to follow this up with TII.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It was asked how the figures for the cost rental scheme as outlined in the Management Report are calculated.
- It was asked if there would be a Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) for 2025.
- Every school should be written to informing them of the process to apply for the Safe Routes to School Scheme.
- The Ballinasloe MD have written to the Minister calling on him to retain the previous Tenant-in-Situ policy.
- The current Council situation regarding the welfare of animals since the transfer of the role to the Department of Agriculture was enquired of.
- Works carried out on paths on Beechlawn, Ballinasloe was welcomed.
- It was asked if stage payments under the Croi Conaithe Scheme could be considered. It was added that the process needs to be streamlined.
- It was said that the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) has too much influence in decisions on the zoning of land.
- Modular Homes legislation is due back before the Oireachtas at the end of September.
- Services and facilities need to be put in place before lands are rezoned for housing.

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

- The focus of the OPR is to expand existing urban centres. The County and City Management Association (CCMA) are of the opinion that evenly spread development should be the focus (Urban/Rural).
- The Department issue population targets. They are varied into our County Development Plan. While the OPR may make observations in relation to it, it is unlikely that they will object to Ministerial direction.
- The current planning approval rate shows that County Galway is open for business and is pro-development.
- Galway County Council awaits the Government Framework on modular homes legislation.

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

- There is no facility for stage payments in the Croi Conaithe Scheme. He can answer any specific queries after the meeting.
- Legislation governing the control of horses is currently under review. Any changes in bye-laws will have to follow the introduction of new legislation.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It was asked to which date in May have An Bord Pleanála granted the extension to respond to further information, regarding the redesign of the Long Point swimming area in Loughrea.
- It is unacceptable that the toilets at the Long Point, Loughrea are not open.

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

- The queries relating to the Long Point Loughrea were raised at the Loughrea MD meeting. She will revert to Cllr. Regan on his queries.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- If CCTV can only be installed following instances of anti-social behaviour.
- How is population growth calculated.
- That more social houses are being provided than affordable houses. A balance is required.
- Is it a different process to install CCTV to combat illegal dumping than to combat anti-social behaviour.
- More cost rental homes are required.
- Tribute was paid to Rachel Lowe Senior Engineer and her contribution to Galway was acknowledged.
- The lack of a left-hand turning lane at the car park junction at Bridge Street, Athenry was questioned.
- A left-hand turning lane is required for traffic turning from the old N6 towards Athenry, at Derrydonnell. There is no hard shoulder at the junction.
- Lack of response from Uisce Éireann was raised.
- The circular from 2021 that sets out the Affordable Housing Scheme is outdated, due to the increase in inflation.

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

- Installation of CCTV is an easier process where there is an issue of public order & safety. There are different codes of practice for its installation depending on if it is to be used to deal with anti-social behaviour or illegal dumping, etc.
- Agreed with the need for a mix of tenures housing developments.
- New housing developments over the next 10-15 years will be dependent on the backing of Local Authorities.
- He has met with the Chief Executive of City Council and Uisce Éireann Management. There is now an equal focus on compliance and growth, and housing is a top priority for the Government over the next 5 years.
- Population figures are taken from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) figures from the 2022 census. They take into account the rates of births, deaths, and inward and outward migration. We will receive new figures and will be

required to provide for an increase in residential zoning. We need to ensure that the services are available for the increase in population. A Ministerial circular is expected to be received from the Department at the end of June.

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

- He does not know the particulars of the roads in Athenry but will speak to Cllr. Feeney following the meeting.
- The junction at Derrydonnell, Athenry is similar to other junctions on national roads. There were concerns from the public that traffic was not yielding at the end of the slip line. The change in the junction was in answer to submissions made.

ITEM NO. 16 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE. 4557

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

- Letter dated 04.03.25 to OpenEir – Resolution – EIR's Plan to futureproof it's Network.
- Email dated 21.03.25 from Paul Callaghan OpenEir – Reply to Resolution Letter dated 4.03.25.
- Letter dated 04.03.25 to ESB Head Office – Resolution – Ireland's Energy Grid & Challenges of Climate Change
- Email dated 28.03.25 from Seán Murphy, Manager, Public Affairs – Reply to Resolution letter dated 04.03.25
- Letter dated 09.04.25 from Sligo County Council – Resolution – Right to Housing
- Letter dated 10.04.25 from Donegal County Council – Resolution – Wearing of Hi Vis Vests.
- Letter dated 04.03.25 to Mr. James Browne, Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage – Resolution – Tenant in Situ Scheme 2025
- Email dated 16.04.25 from Jack Savage, Private Secretary to Minister Browne – Reply to Letter dated 04.03.25 – Resolution -Tenant In Situ Scheme.

ITEM 17. QUESTION

4558

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

'To ask the Chief Executive to confirm the total number of employment vacancies - job opportunities available within Galway County Council and set out in Tabular format the job title etc.'

The following reply issued:

Galway County Council vacancies are advertised on Galway County Council's website, Galway County Council's social media, Localgovernmentjobs.ie, publicjobs.ie and in local papers.

The current live vacancies can be accessed at the following links: www.galway.ie, www.Localgovernmentjobs.ie, www.publicjobs.ie

There are approximately 50 positions that are at various stages of the recruitment process e.g. in the competition pipeline, on offer to candidates, on offer to staff from Water Services through reassignment. The job opportunities are across a number of different disciplines/departments and include technicians, assistant scientist, analyst developer, engineers, planners and retained fire fighters.

ITEM 18. NOTICE OF MOTION

4559

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

'I propose that Galway County Council introduce one hour free parking for people who support businesses in Ballinasloe town. Retailers in Ballinasloe town are very supportive of this initiative as retail is hit extremely hard in Ballinasloe and need this to happen in order for them to compete against towns of similar size with no parking fees.'

The following reply issued:

The motion proposes the introduction of one hour's free parking in Ballinasloe town, representing an amendment to the existing pay-parking arrangements governed by the Parking Bye-laws currently in force.

I wish to clarify that the amendment or suspension of provisions within the adopted Parking Bye-laws cannot be implemented by way of a Notice of Motion. Any change to the Bye-laws must follow the statutory process as set out under the relevant legislation, including public consultation and formal adoption procedures.

As such, the proposal, in its current form, is not lawful and cannot be progressed through this process. I therefore recommend that the motion not be adopted by this Council.

Cllr. Geraghty expanded on his motion explaining that it was intended to facilitate consumers that wished to carry out quick errands. It will help retail businesses in the towns that are under pressure and competing with nearby towns where there are no car parking fees. It is something that could be implemented in all County Galway towns.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Implementation of this proposal will make town centres viable. It was asked if the decision is an Executive or Reserved function.
- It is a scheme that works well in Westport.

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

- Changes to parking Bye laws is a reserved function. Any changes to Bye-laws requires public consultation. It is a decision that would impact each Municipal District and should be initiated at Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee.
- The income from parking fees is approximately €300,000 per annum.

- The resulting budget deficit from the adoption of this motion would need to be examined in the discussion on Budget 2026.
- Current parking fees represent good value.
- Cars tend to be left longer where there is free parking. This results in less turnover which will lead to a decrease in business.
- The proposal should be considered as part of the budgetary process.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The proposal should be deferred and discussed at CPG.
- The proposal should form part of budgetary discussions.
- It should be a County wide initiative.
- The proposal should be discussed at Strategic Policy Committee (SPC).
- Ballinasloe is at a disadvantage as neighbouring Roscommon towns do not have parking charges.
- Extended casual trading licences need to be addressed as rate paying businesses are losing trade.
- It would be a welcome initiative in Tuam.
- It will be too late to leave a decision until budget time as the bye-laws will still need to be updated. We need to work on the bye-laws now to ensure that they are ready for budget time.
- Free parking encourages people to park for longer which reduces footfall for businesses.

At the suggestion of the Cathaoirleach, it was agreed to refer the matter to the Physical Development, Transportation & Emergency Services SPC.

ITEM 19. NOTICE OF MOTION

4560

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

'I am writing to propose a motion for consideration at the upcoming Co Council meeting regarding the urgent need to enhance road safety in areas approaching schools. I have significant concerns regarding the safety of children, cyclists and motorists alike.

I urge the Council to consider the following measures to improve road safety.

Increased signage and markings

- *Installation of clearer and more visible road signs and pavement markings*

Traffic calming measures

- *Implementation of speed bumps, raised cross walks to slow down traffic.*

Safety at our schools should be our top priority and it is imperative that we take proactive steps to address these concerns.'

The following reply issued:

I refer and reply to your Motion concerning the enhancement of road safety in areas approaching schools. Your concerns regarding the safety of children, cyclists, and motorists are fully acknowledged and shared.

I would like to advise that measures such as traffic calming infrastructure (including speed ramps and raised crossings) are considered under the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Programme, which is administered nationally by the National Transport Authority (NTA). This programme aims to support active travel to school by improving the safety and accessibility. In addition to infrastructural improvements, there is a standard suite of signage that is installed in the vicinity of schools, these include advance school warning signage and other measures as appropriate.

Galway County Council continues to work closely with the NTA, school communities and An Garda Síochána to deliver and implement appropriate safety measures in line with national policy and funding frameworks.

If further detail or a specific school location requires assessment, we would be happy to examine it under the relevant programme and through the Municipal District Work Programme.

Cllr. Regan spoke on his motion. He called for speed ramps to be installed outside every school. Ramps are the cheapest and safest way to reduce speed. The Gardaí do not have the manpower to enforce speed limits and other methods are not effective.

The Cathaoirleach said that if a school has specific requirements, they should make an application to the NTA.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The motion received support from the Members.
- It was asked how motions are prioritised on the agenda.
- Signs are ignored by motorists.

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

- There are 290 schools in County Galway. Applications are processed by An Taisce, the Council do not have a direct input into the application process. The Council implement the measures that are approved for the school. If there is a school of concern, then it may be examined under the relevant programme or through the Municipal District Work Programme.

The Cathaoirleach asked that any specific information be forwarded to the Director. She informed the Members that the order of Notices of Motions on the meeting agenda is decided by the order in which they are received by the County Secretary.

ITEM 20. NOTICE OF MOTION

4561

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

'In order to create awareness of Lyme Disease that Galway County Council would install signage in parks and recreation areas (provided free of charge from the Lyme Resource Centre) that could help raise awareness, inform people on how to protect themselves, and provide guidance on proper tick removal—particularly for children, who are especially vulnerable.'

The following reply issued:

Galway County Council acknowledges the concerns raised in relation to Lyme Disease and the importance of increasing public awareness. This Council is open to exploring this proposal further, including consideration of suitable locations, messaging and engagement with the HSE and Lyme Resource Centre.

Cllr. Welby asked that the SPC receive a presentation on Lyme disease. The Cathaoirleach advised him to contact Cllr. Ivan Canning, the chair of the Climate Action, Biodiversity & Heritage SPC.

ITEM 21. NOTICE OF MOTION

4562

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

*'That Galway County Council urgently recognises the ongoing and serious safety risks posed to children, parents, and school staff during peak drop-off and collection times at schools across the county. It is now imperative that safety works be carried out at every school in County Galway without further delay.
We call on Galway Co. Co. to request immediate consultation with TII and the department of education for financial support for these works.*

The burden of funding these vital measures cannot rest solely with the local authority. We call on Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and the Department of Education to directly contribute to the cost of implementing meaningful traffic safety solutions around schools.

We can no longer accept tokenistic measures – such as signage and flashing lights – as sufficient. There must be physical infrastructure in place to slow down traffic, including but not limited to:

- *Traffic calming bays*
- *Raised ramps*
- *Pedestrian crossings*
- *Reduced speed zones with enforcement support*

Furthermore, Galway County Council must adopt a standardised set of safety requirements for all new school developments entering the planning process to ensure consistent, proactive traffic management and child safety.'

The following reply issued:

I refer and reply to your motion highlighting the safety concerns at schools across County Galway. Galway County Council continues to engage actively with the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Programme, administered by the National Transport Authority (NTA), which is the national framework through which safety measures are assessed and introduced at schools. The programme is designed to implement meaningful, child-centred solutions that promote active travel while addressing safety concerns. In addition to infrastructural improvements, there is a standard suite of signage that is installed in the vicinity of schools, these include advance school warning signage and other measures as appropriate.

Galway County Council continues to work closely with the NTA, school communities and An Garda Síochána to deliver and implement appropriate safety measures in line with national policy and funding frameworks.

For any newly proposed school development, Galway County Council engages proactively with the Department of Education and the school's Board of Management during the planning process to ensure that matters relating to school safety, traffic management, and sustainable development are fully considered and appropriately addressed from the outset.

Cllr. Thomas was not satisfied with the response to his Notice of Motion. The funding of these measures should be shared with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and the Department of Education. He asked the Council meet with TII and the Department of Education to organise a funding stream. The Safe Routes to School scheme has a long application process.

The Chief Executive said that safe driving practices and law enforcement are vital in improving road safety. He explained that the Department of Education is responsible for the site of the school. The public road outside the school is in the remit of the Local Authority. If the NTA provide funding, the Council will install the traffic calming measures. He committed to liaise with the Department of Education and the TII in an effort to get increased funding for 2026 and beyond.

ITEM NO. 22 CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

4563

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty:

'That Galway County Council contact the TII to request funding for section of N84 from Luimnagh to Shrule – following on from representation I made at a Regional Assembly meeting last week.'

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty the above motion was **AGREED**.

The Cathaoirleach reminded the Members of the Cathaoirleach Charity Ball which will be held on 7th June in the Raheen Woods Hotel, in Athenry. The monies raised are for 2 very worthwhile charities, the Oranmore Maree Coastal Search Unit and Hand in Hand- Children's Cancer Charity.

She informed the Members that the Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 20th June at 14:30.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- A call was made to carry out a traffic assessment in Monivea as the signs that were erected are not deterring excessive speed. Physical interventions are required to slow the traffic.
- Clarification was requested on the planning status of The Misunderstood Herron.
- Road works in Bearna near the Fr. Griffin monument have caused concern locally. It was asked why the works will take a month to complete.

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

- He will discuss the road safety issues in Monivea at Municipal District.
- No submissions were received following the advertised road closure in Bearna, e-mails have been received since. He has spoken to the local area office. The works are to facilitate connection to sewerage and water scheme. E-mails will be responded to.

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

- The Misunderstood Herron has never had the benefit of planning permission. Action was taken following a complaint received by the public. A planning enforcement file has been open since 2019, when the proprietors were advised to make a planning application. Last November the Council were left with no choice but to continue with a planning enforcement notice.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The anomaly of speed limits on the roads between Ballinasloe and Ahascragh was raised. The regional road has a lower speed limit than the local road. It was asked if there is a mechanism to change speed limits.
- A clear message should be sent out to road users reminding people to take care as it is a busy time of year with large sileage contractors on the roads.

- A clear message needs to be circulated on the requirement of planning permission when building sheds.

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

- If there is a particular planning issue, then the case can be brought to the attention of the planning department.
- Pre-planning meetings are available for anyone with queries on planning requirements or exemptions.
- The CCMA are reviewing planning exemptions. Until new guidelines are issued, Local Authorities operate under the current regulations.

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

- The roads referred to in Ballinasloe, one is a regional road and the other is a local road. The new speed limit designations changed the speed limit on local roads to 60kph. During the process it was sought to maintain some roads at the 80kmp. A number of roads in Ballinasloe were maintained. If this particular road was missed at MD level it will need to be assessed to ascertain if it meets the criteria for 80kmp road.

The Members were reminded that the May plenary meeting will be held in Maree Community Centre at 11:00am on 26th May.

ITEM NO. 23 VOTES OF SYMPATHY / CONGRATULATIONS

4564

A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:

- Mary and Anne Farrell, Carrowshanbally, Gurtymadden, Loughrea, Co. Galway
- Bernie McCormack, Cartron, Kinvara, Co. Galway
- Miko Fahey, Caherlinny, Kilchreest, Loughrea, Co. Galway
- Michael Fahy, Caherdevane, Craughwell, Co. Galway

- Karen Mullins, Drumin, Ballyturn, Gort, Co. Galway
- Rita Furey, Glenrue, Dublin Road, Oranmore, Co. Galway
- Martina Loftus & extended Loftus Family, Brierfield, Moylough, Ballinasloe, Co Galway
- Mrs. Mary Somers & extended Family, Moylough, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- John & Denise Flanagan, Frenchfort, Oranmore, Co. Galway
- Grainne Faherty, Ross, Demesne, Rosscahill, Co. Galway
- Patsy Collins, Castlegar, Co. Galway
- John Michael Coyne, Westquarter, Inishbofin, Co Galway
- Nora Mullen, Sky Road, Clifden, Co Galway
- Paul Murphy & Family, Gurteencahill, Clontuskert, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- Loretta Brennan & extended family, Windfield, Menlough, Ballinasloe, Co Galway
- Michael Fahy, Caherdevane, Craaughwell, Co Galway
- Pierce O Malley, Magherabeg, Oughterard, Co. Galway
- Mary Cunningham, Grouse Hill House, Kilnadeema, Loughrea, Co. Galway
- Larry Murray & extended Murray family, Derrymore, Ballinamore Bridge, Ballinasloe, Co Galway
- Francy Hayes, Newtown, Abbey, Loughrea, Co. Galway
- Bridie Callanan, Knockauncoura, Loughrea, Co Galway
- Brendan Murray Junior & family, St Brendans Road, Portumna, Co Galway
- Pat & Catherine Crowe, Carheeney, Gort, Co. Galway
- Mary & Paul Kennedy, Aille, Loughrea, Co Galway
- John Joe & Kathleen Forde, Earlsparck, Loughrea, Co Galway
- Maura Larkin, Liss, Kylebrack, Loughrea, Co. Galway
- Marie Tunn, Woodford, Co Galway
- May Burke, Lackagh, Turloughmore, Co Galway
- Michael Owens & extended Owens family, Castlegar, Mountbellew, Ballinasloe, Co Galway
- Kevin Kelly, Craughwell, Co. Galway.
- Chief Executive Liam Conneally.

Chriochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Submitted, Signed and Approved

Cathaoirleach:

Martina Kinnear

Date:

26th May 2025.

