

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL
Held at ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL
Monday 21st July 2025 at 11.00am

CATHAOIRLEACH:

Cllr David Collins

Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill:

Comh. /Cllr. S. Broderick, I. Canning, J. Charity, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, S. Cuniffe, T. Ó Curraoin, G. Donohue, P. Feeney, G. Finnerty, D. Geraghty, T. Grealish, A. Harney, L. Harney, M. Hoade, C. Keane, P. Keaveney, D. Kelly, D. Killilea, P. Killilea, G. King, M. Lee, P. Mac An Iomaire, M. Maher, J. McClearn, K. McHugh Farag, M. McNamara, E. F. Parsons, M. Regan, N. Thomas, O. Turner, S. Walsh and T. Welby.

Bail ar line:

M. Kinane, E. Mannion, S. McHugh Ryan

Oifigh:

Mr. L. Conneally, Chief Executive, Mr. Michael Owens, Director of Services, Mr. Uinsinn Finn, Director of Services, Ms. K. O'Connor, Head of Finance, Mr. D. Mitchell, Director of Services, Ms. A. Dolan, Acting Director of Services, Ms. V. Loughnane, Acting Director of Services, Ms. L. Keady, Meetings Administrator, Ms. S. Lawless, Administrative Officer, Mr. M. O Donnchadha, Oifigeach Forbartha Gaeilge, Ms. H. Riordan, Staff Officer, Ms. T. Costello, Assistant Staff Officer

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

ITEM NO. 1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS 4564

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Regan **SECONDED** by Cllr. King the minutes of the Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 23rd June 2025 were **AGREED**.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It was asked on behalf of the Chairman of Gluas, why the Gluas programme is not on the agenda for this meeting. It was asked if it could be placed on the agenda for the next plenary meeting.
- It was requested that a meeting take place in September to discuss the Summer Ready Programme. To have plans in place for facilities in advance of summer 2026.
- Following the June plenary meeting, it was asked if engagement had taken place between the Council and Offaly County Council regarding the provision of lifeguards at Banagher. It was requested that consultation take place between the two Councils to make plans in advance of the opening of the outdoor swimming pool next year.
- An update was requested on a previous proposal to introduce one hour's free parking in Ballinasloe.
- It was asked if the Council have made an application for emergency funding to trim hedges at dangerous junctions.
- Hedge cutting should commence earlier in the year than it presently does. 2 or 3 contractors should be assigned to each Municipal District (MD).
- Clarification was sought on page 5 of the draft June plenary minutes on the 'procedural error' that occurred regarding the amendment of the Social Housing Allocation Scheme.
- The Physical Development, Transportation & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) need to create a hedge cutting policy.

- A stock-take on hedge cutting equipment owned by the Council is required, in order to address the equipment deficit. The Council should have their own staff and equipment to carry out hedge cutting works.
- Community groups are being prevented from carrying out hedge trimming works because of health & safety and insurance requirements.
- Public safety should be prioritised over obligations under the Habitats Directives.
- Clarification was sought on the definition of a 'derelict site'. It was noted that neither the Shannon Oaks Hotel in Portumna or the Oyster Manor Hotel in Clarenbridge are listed on the register.
- An update was requested on Dunguaire Castle.
- It was suggested that a mail shot should be issued to inform landowners of their responsibility regarding hedge trimming.

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

- Gluas were invited to the Physical Development, Transportation & Emergency Services SPC meeting on 16th June.
- Following the May plenary meeting, a report on parking was discussed at the June meeting of the Physical Development, Transportation & Emergency Services SPC. This item will be brought back to the SPC and considered within the context of the budget.
- He noted the comments made by the Members on hedge trimming. With the agreement of the Chair of the SPC, they can be included in the SPC Work Programme. A report will be presented to the SPC in September, it will be considered within the context of the budget.
- The work of the Summer Ready Report overlaps with the Tourism section. He agreed that it needs to be prepared earlier in the year and be more flexible when good weather occurs. Budgetary factors must also be considered.

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

- Explained that the matter in the June plenary minutes referring to the Social Housing Allocation Scheme, was a timing issue and not a procedural error.

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Kinane **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher.

'I propose that the phrase "procedural error " be replaced with "timing issue" The term "procedural error " may imply a breach of protocol whereas "timing issue" reflects the actual circumstances.'

The above motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Kinane **SECONDED** by Cllr. Maher and **AGREED**.

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

- Adding sites to the Derelict Sites Register can be challenging, as it can be difficult to establish ownership of properties. There are ongoing talks with The Shannon Oaks Hotel, she undertook to provide Cllr. Donohue with an update.

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

- The Council are happy to engage with Offaly County Council regarding the provision of lifeguards at Banagher. It will be considered within the context of the budget for 2026.
- Regarding Dunguaire Castle, the Government have been asked to make this a priority for funding. A copy of the related National Development Plan submission has been circulated to the Members. There has been a meeting between the Council and the Shannon Group, since the last plenary meeting. Further correspondence will issue to the Department, a copy of which will be circulated to the Oireachtas Members.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It was requested that the vacant houses in Dunlo Hill, Ballinasloe be renovated.
- Eir cables on the roadside are a danger and prevent hedge trimming works being carried out.

- Regarding the proposal to provide free parking to carers, it was requested that the burden of paperwork not be placed on the carers themselves.
- It was asked if private individuals may clear overgrown hedges at junctions.
- Clarification was sought on the status of a derelict notice at the St. Brigid's Hospital Site.
- It is the intention of the Housing SPC to address the retention of local authority houses that are beyond repair. When completed, the report will be brought to the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) and plenary.
- Other counties use small community grants to address overgrown hedges. This should be considered by Galway County Council as the current system is not working.
- It was asked that a broken Eir pole on the N59 be reported by the Director of Services to Eir, as it could potentially cause an accident.
- An update was requested on the current situation of the Corrib Hotel regarding the Derelict Sites Register.
- It was asked if the Galway County Council website has an up-to-date Derelict Sites Register listing.

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

- Each derelict house is looked at on its merit. Dunlo Hill is included in the Town Regeneration Scheme. The Council currently have 58 rural derelict houses. These houses were built for a specific purpose. Some were built in areas that no demand currently exists. Where private wells cannot be connected to a public system, the Council will look to dispose of the dwelling.
- The voids programme only provides funding of €11,000 to refurbish a house.
- He undertook to bring a report to the Housing SPC with a breakdown of each derelict dwelling's location and the Council's plan for each dwelling.

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

- The existing Bye Laws of other Authorities that support care workers with free parking will be consulted.

- The comments made on hedge trimming have been noted and they will be brought to the SPC.
- He will contact Eir regarding the broken pole on the N59.
- The Roadside Act allows roadside verge cutting either by a privately employed contractors or by private individuals themselves.

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

- A letter of intention was issued to the Health Service Executive (HSE) a month ago, we are awaiting their response. If there is no response in 2 weeks, the Council will contact them again. She will seek external advice on the matter.
- She will revert to Cllr. Welby with an update on the Corrib Hotel.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Regan **SECONDED** by Cllr. King the amended minutes of the Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 23rd June 2025 were **AGREED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. Mac An Iomaire **SECONDED** by Comh. O Curraoin the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 20th June 2025 were **AGREED**

ITEM NO. 2 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS **4565**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. Mac An Iomaire **SECONDED** by Cllr. Canning the minutes of Corporate Policy Group held on 16th June 2025 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Grealish **SECONDED** by Cllr. Donohue the minutes of Joint Corporate Policy Group held on 25th February 2025 were **NOTED**.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It was requested that the minutes from the Joint Corporate Policy Group (CPG) meeting held on 14th May be provided to the Members.
- Improvements in the Galway Transport Strategy were called for.

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

- A Joint CPG meeting was held on 2nd July. Once the minutes are agreed at the following Joint CPG meeting, they will be included on the next plenary agenda.

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

- The Galway City Ring Road was discussed at the Joint CPG meeting. The Executive are hopeful of a positive decision being made. The ring road will remove Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) traffic from the city, this will increase road space for public transport.
- The BusConnects Galway: Cross-City Link Scheme that will connect University Road to Dublin Road and BusConnects Galway: Dublin Road project will contribute to a safer and more efficient public transport system.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kinane **SECONDED** by Cllr. Broderick the minutes of the Climate Action, Biodiversity & Heritage Strategic Policy Committee held on 27th November 2024 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. O Curraoin **SECONDED** by Cllr. Feeney the minutes of the Physical Development, Transportation & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee held on 3rd March 2025 were **NOTED**.

It was agreed by the Members, following recommendation from the Corporate Policy Group that Galway County Council would hold a Civic Reception to honour the following after the September plenary meeting:

- U15 Turloughmore Camogie All Ireland Féile Champions
- U15 Claregalway Girls Football All Ireland Féile Champions

- U23 All Ireland Camogie Champions 2025.

Nomination process of potential candidates for the Office of the President of Ireland

Mr. Owens Director of Services spoke on the nomination process of potential candidates for the Office of the President of Ireland, including the scheduling of a special meeting and associated protocol. He drew the Members attention to the circular that was previously circulated to them and the Reserved Function requirements asked of the Members. He informed them that the Council are awaiting the Presidential Election Order to be issued. At the CPG meeting held on 14th July, it was agreed to recommend a single special meeting to be held in September, to which the potential candidates will be invited to. The potential candidates will be seen in alphabetical order by surname, and be allotted 10 minutes each. After which, the meeting will adjourn for the Members to consider the potential candidates, upon resumption of the meeting the Members may agree by prior resolution whether to nominate a Presidential candidate.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It was asked that all eligible potential candidates be afforded the opportunity to address the Chamber.
- It was stated that the Fine Gael party Members have decided as a group that they will only support a Fine Gael candidate for the Office of President.
- It was asked what the Fianna Fail party's intention is regarding nominating a Presidential candidate.
- It was asked if another person may represent a potential candidate in the Chamber.
- It was stated that Irish Citizens in the 6 counties should be allowed a vote in the Presidential election.

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

- The current Presidential term will end on 10th November. The election must take place within the 60 days before the current President's term of office expires. The

actual date will be determined by the date that the Presidential Election Order is signed.

- Previous elections would indicate that the Presidential Election Order would be signed on a date in early September.
- Up until last week, Galway County Council had received correspondence from 7 potential candidates. Not all of whom have requested to present themselves to the Council.
- It is open to the Members to determine if potential candidates will be invited to attend in person only or afford them the option to attend online
- It is also open to the Members to decide if they will accept a representative of a candidate in place of the candidate themselves.
- The protocol as written, can be amended to reflect the decision of the Members.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Welby **SECONDED** by Cllr. Canning the Nomination process of candidates for President, including the scheduling of a special meeting and associated Protocol, to include attendance in person by the candidate, was **AGREED**.

ITEM NO. 3 TO CONSIDER REPORT UNDER SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001, TO LEASE OF LAND AT OLD GARDENFIELD SCHOOL, TUAM, CO. GALWAY **4566**

Statutory Notice issued in accordance with Section 183(1)(b) and report dated 7th July 2025 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McHugh Ryan **SECONDED** by Cllr. McHugh Farag it was **AGREED** to lease land at old Gardenfield School, Tuam, Co. Galway.

ITEM NO. 4 REPORTS ON ACTIVITIES AND OPERATION OF BODIES ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 141 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED BY SECTION 53 OF THE 2014 ACT) FOR THE PERIOD JUNE 2024 TO MAY 2025 INCLUSIVE **4567**

Report dated 11th July 2025 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** Cllr. Regan **SECONDED** by Cllr. Canning it was **AGREED** to approve report on the activities and operations of the following body in accordance with section 141 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended by section 53 of the 2014 act) for the period June 2024 to May 2025 inclusive:

(a) Local Authority Members Association (LAMA) Committee

ITEM NO. 5 TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE TO APPROVE A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE OPERATION OF IRISH WATER SAFETY IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 67 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001. 4568

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Donohue **SECONDED** by Cllr. King it was **AGREED** to approve a contribution of €6,100.00 towards the operation of Irish Water Safety in accordance with Section 67 of the Local Government Act 2001.

ITEM NO. 6 TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE ADOPT MINOR AMENDMENTS TO THE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 22 OF THE HOUSING (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 2009 AND THE SOCIAL HOUSING ALLOCATION REGULATIONS 2011 (S.I. NO. 198 OF 2011) AS AMENDED. 4569

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Parsons **SECONDED** by Cllr. Welby it was **AGREED** to adopt amendments to the Galway County Council Housing Allocation Scheme in accordance with Section 22 of the housing (miscellaneous provisions) Act 2009 and the Social Housing Allocation Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 198 of 2011) as amended.

Cllr. Parsons expressed her delight at the inclusion of returning Irish born emigrants as a category in the Galway County Council Housing Allocation Scheme and described it as a symbolic gesture. She thanked the Members for their support and the housing staff for their assistance. She stated that we as leaders are addressing a social policy gap and reintegrating those returning to their communities.

ITEM NO. 7 TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE ADOPT THE HOMELESS ACTION PLAN 2025-2027. **4570**

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McClearn **SECONDED** by Cllr. Kelly it was **AGREED** to adopt the Homeless Action Plan 2025-2027.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The needs of the homeless in areas without homeless services must be considered.
- The lack of emergency accommodation must be addressed urgently.
- Homeless accommodation is currently only provided in Galway City, leading those in north and east Galway having to relocate to avail of services. Funding must be sourced to provide homeless services in other geographical areas outside of Galway City.

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

- Agreed that there is insufficient homeless accommodation at present.
- The plan before the Members sets out the future plans to develop medium-term supported housing for people needing higher support, to expand Community Based Housing and Youth Housing, to enhance housing-led Family Support Scheme, develop a Cold Weather facility and a family hub in a County town, establish domestic abuse refuge and post-abuse housing and to evaluate the need for women only high support services.
- Work is ongoing in the Housing Section to advance these plans in 2026.

- He acknowledged the work of Galway City Council, COPE and the Simon Community in their work to assist the homeless.

ITEM NO. 8 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). **4571**

Report dated 12th July 2025 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. O Curraoin **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr M. Connolly to attend AILG March Training Module – “Embracing Equality – Cultivating Inclusive Local Communities” at the Clayton Hotel, Galway on Saturday 22nd March 2025. (Retrospective Approval)

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Regan **SECONDED** by Cllr. L. Harney it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. M. Regan to attend AILG Induction Training (In-Person for Newly Co-Opted Councillors) in the Athlone Springs Hotel on Thursday 29th May 2025. (Retrospective Approval)

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finnerty **SECONDED** by Cllr. Lee it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. L. Harney to attend AILG June Training Module – “A New Approach to Planning – the Revised National Planning Framework & Planning Act” in the Hillgrove Hotel, Monaghan on Saturday 21st June 2025. (Retrospective Approval)

ITEM NO. 9 TO CONSIDER THE MANAGEMENT REPORT – JULY 2025 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 136(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED). **4572**

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

The Management Report – July 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 Local Government Electoral Registration System (LGERS) project on the Electoral Register was welcomed.
- The number of urban houses without a voter registered at the address was raised. A leaflet drop campaign was suggested to inform the electorate how to register to vote and to encourage them to exercise their right to vote.
- The lodgment of a Part 8 planning application for residential development at Farrannamartin, Galway Road, Tuam was warmly welcomed.
- The staff that organised the Aleen Cust Symposium at Mountbellew Agricultural College recently were thanked.
- Gratitude was expressed to the Galway Sports Partnership group that took part in the Ballinasloe Multicultural Midsummer Festival.
- The Destination Experience Development Plan was referenced. It was asked that proper focus and attention be given to East Galway as part of the Hidden Heartlands.
- The newly installed bus stop in Caltra was welcomed.
- The restrictions on gaining approval for a septic tank grant was criticised.
- A call for the change to the mapping system that dictates the awarding of septic tank grants was made.

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

- The Director referred Members to the workshop facilitated by the Electoral Team held the previous week, noting that feedback and comments from Members during that session will be relayed to the Electoral Commission.
- He advised that print and social media campaigns are currently active, aimed at encouraging the electorate to register to vote and to update their unique identifiers on the electoral register.
- He also confirmed that the comments in relation to the Destination Experience Development Plan for East Galway will be conveyed to the Regional Development Manager of Fáilte Ireland.

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

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) determine the zone areas that govern septic tank grants. The Council are obliged to inspect 110 septic tanks per year. Numerous requests to inspect septic tanks are received. The inspections are concentrated on areas with vulnerable water bodies. The Environment section endeavour to help vulnerable people but are constrained by the requirements of the Department and EPA.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Concern was raised at the proposed solar panel farm on agricultural land in Belville, Monivea.
- The new bus shelters in Athenry were welcomed.
- It was requested that consideration be given to installing bus shelters in small towns.
- Bus shelters were called for in Bearna and An Spidéal and Williamstown.
- It was asked that the Council follow up with community groups following the consultation meeting on the Athenry Town Centre Plan.
- It was called upon the Chief Executive of Galway County Council and the Chief Executive of Roscommon County Council to attend a meeting with the Ballinasloe Elected Members to address the closure of the fire station at Castlerea.

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

- Bearna and An Spidéal are included in the next bus shelter installation phase. Lackagh, Dunmore, Oughterard, Caltra, Glenamaddy, Oranmore Village, Bearna, An Spidéal and Letterfrack are included in the current plan. The MDs can inform him of other locations that are require bus shelters.
- From an operational point of view, the Chief Fire Officer is satisfied that all areas of Galway County are adequately serviced by the Fire Service. Response times to incidents are recorded from mobilisation time to their attendance at the scene. The National Oversight Audit Commission (NOAC) indicators show that the response of the Galway Fire Service is good.

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

- The Council will not be the decision-making authority on the proposed solar farm in Monivea. The Members will be kept informed. The proposal will be examined in line with the County Development Plan. The Council will give its recommendations and submit the Members comments in the report that will be submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The future of Castlerea Fire Station should not adversely affect the fire station at Mountbellew.
- It was asked if the Council will be making a submission regarding the former windfarm at Derrybrien.
- A recent public meeting was held on the proposed solar farm in Monivea. The community are very concerned about the proposed development. There has been a serious lack of consultation with the local community.

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

- Highlighted the necessity of public consultation on proposed large Strategic Infrastructural Developments such as the solar farm in Monivea. Public consultation in parallel with pre-planning meetings is encouraged.
- The Council received a notice from An Coimisiún Pleanála regarding Substitute Consent and an application to decommission Derrybrien. The Council have 6 weeks to return a submission, the draft of which will be circulated to Members for their comments in advance.
- An Coimisiún Pleanála was established to expediate the decision-making process for all planning applications and in particular large strategic infrastructural planning applications.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Concern was raised and information sort on a reported proposed Biogas facility in Ballinasloe. An online meeting has been arranged, but only those within 1km of the proposed development have been invited.
- The removal of the bases of the windmills in Derrybrien would cause environmental damage.
- Bord Gáis have proposed a gas line corridor to service a power station in the Loughrea MD area. Concern was raised that due process is not take placing. The role of the Planning Regulator in these cases was queried. This project is not contained in the County Development Plan of Galway County Council.
- Contact details are not available for Community Liaison Officers for the corporate entities behind the Biomass station in Kellysgrove, Ballinasloe.
- Elected Members should be proactively informed of proposed developments, rather than having to rely on media reports
- The lack of power of the Council in these matters was raised.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Ms Loughnane:

- Applications for Strategic Infrastructure Developments (SID) of this scale are made directly to An Coimisiún Pleanála. When the Council are informed of a development we inform the Members. If the application is not an SID we can inform the Members at the pre-planning stage.
- Galway County Council always encourage public consultation take place for these developments.
- The comments made by Members regarding the Coolpowra Power plant application were included in the Council's submission to An Bord Pleanala at the time of the application.
- In that application the proposed gas pipeline was not part of the original application.
- The members indicated that Bord Gáis should engage in public consultation.

- The decommissioning application for Derrybrien is currently with An Coimisiún Pleanála for determination. She will clarify and revert regarding the Substitute Consent element.
- She will enquire as to the closing dates for submissions.

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

- The approach that Galway County Council have adopted and will continue to operate under, is that Members views will be included as part of the Executive Report submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála.

ITEM NO. 10 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE

4573

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

- Letter dated 12.06.25 to Mr. James Brown TD, - Resolution – Review of Affordable Housing Policy.
- Email dated 20.06.25 from Jack Savage, Private Secretary to Mr. James Browne T.D. Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage – Acknowledgement of Resolution letter dated 12.06.25
- Letter dated 25.06.25 to Department of Transport – Resolution – Guidelines for Bus Drivers over 70 years of age
- Email dated 25.06.25 from customer services Department of Transport – Acknowledgement of Resolution letter dated 25.06.25
- Letter dated 25.06.25 to Department of Education & Youth – Resolution – Guidelines for Drivers over 70 years of age
- Letter dated 26.06.25 from Department of Education & Youth – Reply to Resolution – Guidelines for Drivers over 70 years of age
- Email dated 02.07.25 from Michael Moynihan TD, Minister of State for Special Education & Inclusion – Acknowledgement of Resolution letter – Guidelines for Drivers over 70

- Letter dated 01.07.25 from Waterford City & County Council – Resolution – Discontinue facilitating the sale of Israeli Bonds
- Letter dated 25.06.25 to Department of Climate, Energy & Environment – Resolution – Increased Climate Action Fund Funding
- Email dated 25.06.25 from Customer Service Team Department of Climate, Energy & Environment – Acknowledgement of Resolution letter dated 25.06.25
- Letter dated 01.07.25 to Department of Housing & Local Government – Resolution – Affordable Housing in Rural Areas
- Email dated 15.07.25 – Acknowledgement of Resolution Letter to Department of Housing & Local Government – Affordable Housing in Rural Areas
- Letter dated 01.07.25 to Department of Housing & Local Government – Resolution – Stage Payments Affordable Housing
- Email dated 15.07.25 – Acknowledgement of Resolution Letter to Department of Housing & Local Government – Stage Payments Affordable Housing
- Letter dated 25.06.25 to Bus Éireann School Transport Office – Resolution- Guidelines for Bus Drivers
- Email dated 10.07.25 from Suzanne Altman, Corporate Communications, Press Officer, Bus Éireann – Reply to Resolution letter
- Letter dated 11.07.25 from Claire Gavin, Head of Secretariat, National Oversight and Audit Commission – NOAC Performance Indicators Validation Visit
- Letter dated 14.07.25 from Wexford County Council – Resolution – Amend Section 12 residential Tenancy Act 2004
- Mayors for Peace Joint Appeal – June 27 2025

ITEM 10(a) UPDATE ON THE SUMMARY REPORT ON INFRASTRUCTURE DEFICITS IMPACTING RESIDENTIAL ZONED LAND IN COUNTY GALWAY 4574

The Chief Executive explained that Galway County and City Councils are working together on this project. Each parcel of zoned residential land is being examined to identify the infrastructural deficits that exist and to establish the cost to rectify them. The final draft will be circulated to the Members. The completed report will be submitted to the Housing Activation Office.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Land that is used for farming should not be subjected to the Residential Zoned Land Tax. Farmers with live herd or flock numbers, should be exempt from the tax.
- The zoning of lands is a function of the Elected Members.
- There is a deficit in water and wastewater facilities in Ballinasloe which is hindering housing development.
- An enquiry was made regarding the process of compiling the report
- The project was welcomed, as it will facilitate the addressing of the infrastructural deficits which will allow for more land to become available for development.
- This approach needs to be carried out forensically in each town.
- This will prevent developers from sitting on land and not developing it.
- There will be an opportunity to make changes to the County Development Plan during the review period.
- The housing crisis must be addressed, it is essential that houses be built on zoned land.
- A previous Notice of Motion response informed the Members that the Council currently have 7 zoned sites with a tax liability of €315,000 per annum. Tax is charged at 3% of the market value of the land. The Council have not collected any monies under the Derelict Sites Levy, which is charged at a rate of 7% of the land's market value.
- There are farmers with zoned land, the deeds of which are tied to loans.
- Housing and energy deficits must be addressed, but not at the expense of the vulnerable farming sector.
- A clash of Housing Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) and Loughrea Municipal District meeting was highlighted.
- This project is a proactive step by Galway County Council. Projects cannot proceed if we do not know the infrastructural deficits that exist.
- Not enough money is being invested in rural areas by Uisce Éireann to address infrastructural deficits.

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

- This is a progressive proposal from the County and City Chief Executives. The Council will initially concentrate on achieving quick wins, where small interventions can quickly progress projects. There will be short, medium and long-term projects identified, which will be both strategic and targeted to avail of funding. Currently, there are very few viable sites located outside the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) area, due to high development costs relative to open market values. Rising house prices continue to drive demand for social and affordable housing. However, there is no quick solution, as housing delivery typically takes 2–3 years.

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

- The first Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) maps were prepared in 2022, with a supplementary map prepared in 2023. The maps went on public display in 2024. 38 submissions were received from the original map and 3 submissions on the supplementary map. Of the submissions received, 14 related loosely to rezoning. Some respondents were asked if they were requesting a rezoning of lands. Some respondents were requesting exemptions, others did not respond.
- Land must satisfy six criteria to be liable to pay the RZLT. The Department of Local Government and Planning issued the circular with respect to the criteria. The Members can look at the zoning of lands during the discussions on any potential variation to County Development Plan. The Department have requested a synopsis of the submissions received. The RZLT will be collected by the Revenue Commissioners.

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

- This is a complex area. The RZLT is governed by the Finance Act 2001, this is separate to the Planning process. The planning system is being used to implement the tax.
- There is an opportunity for landowners to make submissions.

- It is a useful tool to encourage zoned lands in towns to be utilised in the provision of housing. At the moment, the Council is the biggest provider of housing and this will continue to be the case for the next few years. The cost of land and lack of serviced land is an issue. The Council cannot finance this by themselves and will require the state to front load funding. If the Housing Activation Office provide the funds we will deliver the houses. The only supply of houses that we can control is on our own sites. We are being strategic - Galway are leading the way.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Private individuals building their own homes are spending thousands on the provision of services to sites.
- It was asked when the updated Rural Housing Guidelines will be published.
- Two specific cases were raised, where landowners are being charged the Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) on lands that are not suitable for building residential units. In one case only one house could be built on the site and there is no access to the other site. It was asked that these lands be rezoned.

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

- The statutory process of rezoning land cannot occur at a plenary meeting. Cases can be examined during the alteration to the County Development Plan. Each Elected Member and members of the public will have their say during the process which will commence in Q4 of this year.
- Further to the query on the rural housing guidelines, the CE advised that as the guidelines are a matter for the Minister and any change in the qualification and or approach will form part of a significant national process and invited Cllr. Thomas to discuss his particular queries with the Planning Executive after the meeting.

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

- There is a process that must be followed to rezone land. We are awaiting a circular from the Minister. Once received the process can begin. It will form part of the Variation to the County Development Plan discussions.

ITEM 10(b) LOCAL PROPERTY TAX AND BASELINE FUNDING UPDATE 4575

The Chief Executive informed that while an increase in baseline funding has been received from the Department, it is not enough to meet the Council's needs. He is consistently in correspondence with the Assistant Secretary with responsibility in this area and he pledged to continue to do so. Galway County Council are underfunded, he will continue to lobby Government on this matter. He will be meeting with group leaders this week. Budget engagement will commence early this year. Workshops for the Members are scheduled to commence in September.

The Head of Finance welcomed the increase in baseline funding of €1.3m. This increase incorporates the 15% uplift that was voted through the Chamber last year. It is an overall uplift to the Council of €1.5m for 2026. This increase will help to fund the continuing implementation of the strategic workforce plan, Project Management Office, and the office accommodation plans of the Council. Recent legislative changes mean that from 2027, local authorities will have the discretion to apply an uplift of up to 25% on the standard LPT rate.

ITEM (c) INCREASED COST OF BUSINESS RECLASSIFICATION UPDATE 4576

The Increased Cost of Business Scheme is undergoing a reclassification appeal process. This will allow businesses in the retail, hospitality and beauty sectors to correct their initial classification and potentially qualify for grant assistance. It is anticipated that businesses will be given the opportunity to log into the MYCOCO portal to correct their classification status. They may then be eligible to apply for the Increased Cost of Business and Power Up grants.

The Chief Executive encouraged all businesses in County Galway to avail of this opportunity. The Local Authority will assist and provide any information available to its rate payers.

**ITEM 10(d) CORRESPONDENCE FROM NOAC THE NATIONAL OVERSIGHT AND
AUDIT COMMISSION (NOAC), FOLLOWING THEIR VALIDATION VISIT ON
MONDAY, 30TH JUNE 2025** **4577**

The Chief Executive drew attention to the correspondence published on the Extranet prior to the meeting from NOAC. The Chief Executive and Management Team met with the National Oversight and Audit Commission on 30th June.

ITEM NO. 11 QUESTION **4578**

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

'To ask the Director of Housing to give an update on the proposed development at Courtneys Lane Gort'.

The following reply issued:

The developer has completed all necessary preliminary surveys (topographical, flood risk and ecological) and has prepared a preliminary design layout. A pre-planning meeting is proposed in the coming weeks prior to formal planning submission.

ITEM NO. 12 NOTICE OF MOTION **4579**

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

'The Galway County Council Housing Section would consider the approval of PVC windows as part of the Housing for the Elderly grant if the windows in question fail a report from a reputable window dealer.'

'At this moment in time, Galway County Council is only allowing the grant for windows if they are teak or aluminium. However, in some cases, PVC windows have been installed in houses for more than 30 years and are now beyond repair.'

The following reply issued:

The Housing Section of Galway County Council will consider the approval of PVC windows as part of a Housing for the Elderly grant application, iteration under S.I. No. 612 of 2024. The approval of same will follow an inspection by the technical staff from the Housing Section.

ITEM NO. 13 NOTICE OF MOTION

4580

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

Photographs were submitted with the Notice of Motion and circulated to the Members prior to the meeting.

'This is a typical ash die back all over Galway and the whole country. This is a typical one located on a country road at Kilbeacanty Gort. I am requesting Galway Co Co to immediately put a road safety officer in place who will contact landowner where these types of situation arise and advise the land owners that he must immediately or in no longer than a six week period remove same from or face prosecution plus the cost of removing same. I ask that the photos be included to show the extent of damage on the tree. These situations are tragedy awaiting to happen any day any weather condition types. I believe the Cllrs can play a vital role in identifying where these situations are the worst and most dangerous'.

The following reply issued:

I refer and reply to your Motion concerning dangerous trees posing a risk to the roadway.

Galway County Council powers in relation to the matter raised reside in Section 70 of the Roads Act 1993. Under that legislation the Local Authority have power to issue

notices to landowners requiring the removal of dangerous trees on their lands that pose a risk to the roadway.

Galway County Council annually publishes notices in Local Papers and on Social Media advising landowners of their obligations in this respect, in particular in relation to dead or dying trees that could become a danger to people using the public road.

Notices under Section 70 are issued by Galway County Council where risk to road safety from roadside trees is observed by its own staff or where such instances are brought to its attention by third parties. Galway County Council through its MD staff and Community Warden cohort continuously monitors the roadside in this respect and takes action where warranted.

In instances such as the examples provided to highlight current concern, Section 70 notices will be served on the relevant landowners in accordance with existing procedures. All such similar cases notified and/or observed will similarly be actioned in accordance with the legislative provisions.

Cllr. Finnerty spoke on his motion, he said that he had been informed that the Municipal District staff would deal with this issue. However they are too busy with other duties and Community Wardens are not based in rural areas. In the past an officer inspected and marked trees that required removal.

ITEM NO. 14 NOTICE OF MOTION

4581

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

'Making our villages and towns safer. Galway County Council write to Department as a matter of urgency to provide money to Galway County Council to install speed ramps in all our villages and towns.

As we can see from all surveys traffic are exceeding speed limits by over 85%. We cannot expect our Garda Siochana to be at every town and village and also they don't have the staff.

Most car users are ignoring speed limit signs slow down signs and school signs.

It's only a matter of time before we have a number of fatalities in our towns and villages and I ask Galway County Council in the interest of safety to provide speed ramps'.

The following reply issued:

Galway County Council receives funding from the Department of Transport under a number of grant schemes. In respect of road safety; the Department provides a scheme called Safety Improvement Works where funding is targeted at improving road safety by providing interventions at locations with a history of collisions or clear safety issues. Those funding supports measures to provide traffic calming (including speed ramps), enhance pedestrian safety, increase visibility, improve signage and road markings.

In 2025 Galway County Council received funding in the amount of €523,500, which was an increase of 22% on the previous year. The scheme is generally over subscribed and Galway County Council meets with the Department regularly and continues to advocate for additional funding.

As with all road engineering interventions, proposed traffic calming measures must be considered holistically, in accordance with design standards, subject to the road safety audit process, and subject to the statutory provisions of the Road Traffic Act 1994 and the relevant planning processes.

Cllr. Regan spoke on his motion; the installation of speed ramps would be more cost effective than erecting signs to slow traffic.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- There was support from the Chamber on this motion.
- It was asked if there is a Council policy that speed ramps can only be installed where raised footpaths are in place.
- Corrandulla is treated as a rural rat run and requires speed ramps be installed.
- Motorists do not pay attention to speed signs or ramps.

- Speed ramps should be installed at schools and community centres.
- Speed ramps are required in locations at Roscahill, Bearna, An Spidéal, Newtown, Mountbellow, Menlough and Moylough.

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

- Confirmed that he will write to the Department as per the request of the Notice of Motion.
- The reduction of speed limits in urban areas to 30km/h will be signed off in September.
- There is no hard policy regarding installation of speed ramps, each site is assessed and a safety audit is carried out. The approved sites are included in Active Travel and Safe Routes to Schools programmes and form part of conditions of planning.
- The schemes are funded by the Department.
- Works are carried out on a priority basis with regard to the available funding. Safety schemes are currently oversubscribed.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- The absence of the Joint Policing Committee to address these matters was lamented.
- Speed vans are placed in the wrong locations. The most cost-effective way to prevent speeding is through enforcement by the Gardaí.
- It was asked if lighting is required to be present for a speed ramp to be installed.
- When will the review of speed limits be carried out by the Council.
- How much money was spent on erecting the new speed limit signs in County Galway.

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

- Lighting is not a specific requirement for the approval of safety schemes. However, they are generally installed in lit up locations. A safety audit is independently carried out for each proposal.
- The second part of the national review will see secondary roads reduce from 100km/h to 80km/h and also reduce to 30km/h in urban areas.
- The guidelines that the Council expect to receive in September will start this process. Agreement will be sought from the SPC and MDs.
- He did not have the cost of the installation of 60km/h signs to hand as they were centrally procured. The cost of the signs and their installation was paid by the Department. He will however provide the amount following the meeting.

ITEM NO. 15 CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

4582

Concern was raised at a letter issued to the Local Authority by the 'Oughterard Community Council.' Apprehension was raised at its contents and the intentions of the 'Oughterard Community Council.' The Chief Executive affirmed that he is responsible to the 39 Elected Members of Galway County Council who are democratically elected as such, would not be responding further to the correspondence beyond formally acknowledging its receipt.

Cllr. Parsons addressed the Chamber on the recent announcement by the Health Service Executive (HSE) to downgrade maternity services at Portiuncula University Hospital in Ballinasloe. She outlined her concerns for the hospital and the town of Ballinasloe following the downgrading of services. She called for accountability, transparency and the objective basis underpinning decisions which impact communities.

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Parsons **SECONDED** by Cllr. Geraghty:

'Galway County Council reaffirms its strong support for Portiuncula University Hospital, as recognised under Special Policy Objective H4 of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, and acknowledges PUH's long term strategic importance in the County and beyond as a provider of essential healthcare services and also as a major employer and economic driver in Co Galway.

-Galway County Council calls on the Minister for Health and CEO HSE to support PUH's critical role in maternity care provision in the county and to recognise Portiuncula UH's strategic location as the most accessibly located maternity unit in the country just 800 meters off the M6 in providing crucial timely accessible maternity care for mothers infants and families across a wide and rural catchment in County Galway and to communities in Roscommon, Westmeath, Longford, Leitrim, Offaly, North Tipperary and beyond. Restriction of maternity services poses serious risks to women and infants, especially those in rural and socioeconomically disadvantaged areas with poor transport where they are now facing much increased travel times and reduced local access to crucial maternity services.

-Galway County Council calls on the Minister for Health and CEO HSE to seek development of an immediate plan for reinstatement of high quality safe maternity services at PUH, with allocation of the necessary funding & resources for full implementation.

-Galway County Council asks the Minister for Health if she will commission a fully independent external review of maternity services across the county and comprehensively examine risk assessments and consequences of any maternity care downgrade in the wider area served including the ability of receiving maternity units to safely absorb additional patient load, given capacity, staffing, and infrastructure challenges.

A copy of this motion is sent to the Oireachtas Joint Health Committee, all Oireachtas Elected Representatives for the area, and all local authorities.'

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Parsons **SECONDED** by Cllr. Geraghty the above motion was **AGREED**.

There was widespread support from the Chamber for this motion. The lack of investment

in resources and staff in Portiuncula Hospital was criticised and its importance in the hinterland that it serves was highlighted. It will compound the problems in Galway University Hospital. It was questioned why this announcement was made during the summer recess of the Dáil and why recommendations from the 'Walker Report' in 2018 have not been implemented.

ITEM NO. 16 VOTES OF SYMPATHY/CONGRATULATIONS

4583

A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:

- John Hooban, Moyglass, Kylebrack, Loughrea, Co. Galway
- Frank & Bridie Gannon & Family, Belmont, Milltown, Co. Galway
- Mary Treacy, Gurteen, Co. Galway
- Pauric, Kathryn & Mary Finnegan, Fiddane, Kilkerrin, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- Máire Áine Ni Chuig, Culleen, Carna, Co. Galway
- Bridget Burke, Maree Cross, Maree, Oranmore, Co. Galway
- Christina Mulryan, 210 Bluebell Woods, Oranmore, Co. Galway
- Staff of Walnut Grove, Glentaun, Creagh, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- Brendan & Lorna Downey, Kiltartan, Gort, Co. Galway
- Mikie Callanan, Easterfield, Cappa, Ballyshrule, Portumna, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- Greg Foley & Family, Ashlawn, Athenry Road, Loughrea, Co. Galway
- The Duddy Family, Danesfort, Loughrea, Co. Galway
- The Donnellan Family, Westbridge, Loughrea, Co. Galway
- Iomar Whelan, Killimor, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- Michael Keating, Tinageera, Kilnadeema, Loughrea, Co. Galway
- John Tuohy & Family, Coose, Whitegate, Co. Galway
- Colette Kennedy, Abbey Street, Portumna, Co. Galway
- Michael Moran, Crowe Street, Gort, Co. Galway
- Donal Earls, Ballyturn, Gort, Co. Galway

Chriochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin

Submitted, Signed and Approved

Cathaoirleach:



Date:

22/9/2025.
