

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE**

**Galway County Council**

**Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Átha an Rí Órán Mór**

**Municipal District of Athenry Oranmore.**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Municipal District of Athenry Oranmore held in the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae, on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2018.

I LATHAIR:

BAILL: Cllr. M. Noone (Cathaoirleach)  
Cllr. G. Cronnelly  
Cllr. J. Cuddy  
Cllr. P. Feeney  
Cllr. M. Kinane  
Cllr. F. Kearney  
Cllr. J. Charity.

OIFIGIUGH: Mr. M. Owens, A/Director of Services.  
Ms. P. Higgins, Senior Executive Engineer,  
Mr. P. Gavin, Executive Engineer,  
Ms. E. Dolan, Administrative Officer,  
Mr. S. Kilroy, A/Staff Officer,  
Ms. G. Cooley, Assistant Staff Officer,  
Ms. G. Healy, A/Administrative Officer.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed all present to the Meeting.

**Item No. 1: To confirm Minutes of the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District Meeting held on 20th February, 2018. (AOMD 1807).**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cuddy and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Kearney, the Minutes of the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018 were **AGREED**.

**Matters arising from the Minutes:**

In reply to Cllr. Cuddy, Ms. Higgins informed the Members that no response had been received to date to the Council's request for additional funding for roadworks.

Cllr. Kinnane said that there was an inconsistency regarding the allocation of roads funding between the Municipal Districts, stating that it was necessary that the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District be allocated a fair share of the roads budget consistent with the volume of traffic from other Municipal Districts travelling to Galway City on a daily basis. Cllr. Kinane referred to the Motion which had been passed by the Members at the September 2017

Meeting of the Plenary Council “that 10% of any additional roads funding allocated from Central Government be allocated to roads within 25km of Galway City”. She said she wished to ensure that 10% of any additional funding for roads be allocated to roads within the 25km catchment area of Galway City.

Cllr. Cronnelly asked if there was a reply from the Joint Policing Committee on his request for additional Gardaí for the Athenry area. Mr. Owens replied that Cllr. Cronnelly’s proposal *that staffing levels in Athenry Garda Station be reviewed with a view to reinstating the levels to full strength* was discussed by the Joint Policing Committee at its recent Meeting. He said that Superintendent Glynn responded that Chief Superintendent Curley had stated that Athenry Garda Station was adequately staffed at present, but clarified that staffing in all Garda Stations within the Galway District is under constant review, taking into consideration crime levels and trends for each area.

Cllr. Cronnelly stated that while he welcomed the allocation of funding towards the link road in Athenry for 2018, he felt that more needs to be done to encourage development into the east of the town in particular.

In reply to a query from Cllr. Cronnelly regarding staffing, Mr. Gavin said that the replacement of outdoor staff following retirement is an important issue to be addressed.

Cllr. Kearney said he was receiving representations from the public on a daily basis concerning the poor state of the roads following the harsh weather of recent months, and he complimented the staff in the area for their work in keeping potholes under repair to the best of their ability. However, he said the repairs are only lasting a week due to the high volume of traffic and continuing rainfall.

Cllr. Noone said a velocity patcher should have been made available for the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District, due to the high volume of traffic on the roads, in line with other Municipal Districts.

Mr. Gavin said that a velocity patcher had been procured for the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District and had commenced operation during the week.

A discussion took place regarding the merits of using a velocity patcher and Cllr. Cuddy expressed the view that the Municipal District was at a disadvantage when compared with other Districts who had their own velocity patcher.

Mr. Gavin replied that the use of a velocity patcher is more beneficial during the warmer weather than in cold winter months as it uses tar and chips. He said it is appropriate to commence using the machine now when the weather is a bit warmer. He also said that the weather was a major factor causing the deterioration of the roads over this winter.

Cllr. Cuddy expressed the view that the public have been very patient to date in relation to the poor state of the roads and it is the responsibility of the Executive to ensure that adequate funding is provided for roadworks.

In reply to Cllr. Cuddy, Mr. Owens said that the Executive has continually acknowledged that funding and resources are not adequate for the upkeep and repair of the roads in the County. He said that the Roads Programme 2018, which had been approved by the Members in February, was not near the level that the Executive would have liked, however it was the best possible given the funds available to the Council. He said that the decision made by the Members in 2017 to reverse the increase of 10% on the Local Property Tax, which they had agreed in 2016, resulted in a reduction of funding for services in 2018, including for roads and this, coupled with insufficient Departmental funding, brought challenges in terms of expenditure on road maintenance and repair works.

He said that the Minister for Transport has visited the County and had met with the Chief Executive and Roads Staff and has been made fully aware of the resources needed for roads due to the severe weather this winter. He said that no decision has been received in regard to the request for extra funding and he said that the Council is endeavouring to maximise the resources provided.

Cllr. Noone said that if the decision to increase the local property tax had not been reversed, more funding would be available and he expressed the view that the amount raised in the County is not sufficient to meet need.

**Item No. 2: To discuss funding of new and existing Playgrounds in the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District. (AOMD 1808)**

Mr. Owens said that the need for playgrounds in the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District had been identified and the best framework to move forward in this regard needed to be progressed. He said that matters of policy in relation to playgrounds would be considered by the Strategic Policy Committee, as the appropriate forum.

Ms. Dolan addressed the Members and outlined the background and current position in relation to playgrounds in the County. She said that the Council had allocated considerable funding towards playgrounds in 2006 and 2007 and that monies were also made available through a variety of funding sources including Town and Village Renewal Schemes, Clár and Leader funding. She said that there is an extensive network of 65 playgrounds across the County, which is an example of the culture of volunteerism and community leadership which exists. She said that Galway Rural Development and other Local Development Agencies had helped fund playgrounds, supported by the Council through providing insurance cover and facilitating playground inspections, to ensure that equipment is fit for use and safe for children. She said that the Council operates and maintains 15 public playgrounds within an annual maintenance budget.

Ms. Dolan said that the Council's policy in relation to play is focused on engagement and enjoyment and child friendly facilities that are accessible, open and free.

She acknowledged the work of the Members and local communities in relation to funding opportunities for the provision of playgrounds, and also the work of the Community Wardens and the Area Engineers in relation to inspections and maintenance works.

Ms. Kinane thanked Ms. Dolan for her presentation and she welcomed that the Council is committed to support a child friendly environment. However she said that the absence of a playground in the village of Clarinbridge is depriving hundreds of children of the right to play, as outlined in the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child. She said that rather than being critical of the Council in this regard, she wished to find some solution to the funding of playgrounds. She asked that the Council's Capital budget be used to fund playgrounds, particularly a playground for Clarinbridge to serve the 700 children attending school there and 130 attending the local crèche.

Cllr. Kearney said that it is important that Community Groups work together in order to ensure that playgrounds are provided in their area.

Cllr. Feeney said that both Clarinbridge and Claregalway are in need of playgrounds. However, he said there is an issue to be addressed in relation to existing playgrounds which require upgrading due to outdated equipment. He said the Play Policy should not focus on new playgrounds alone, but should also focus on existing playgrounds, their maintenance and upgrade.

Cllr. Kinane made the following **PROPOSAL**: "I wish to propose that a request be forwarded to the Housing, Culture and Recreational SPC from the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District seeking that a policy be developed to allow financial support be reinstated to support the development of new playgrounds within the County". This proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr. Cuddy and **AGREED**.

Cllrs. Cronnelly, Kearney, Feeney and Noone also expressed their support for the Motion.

Ms. Dolan said that the Council has invested a lot in play through support services and funding and further progress would benefit through an agreed Framework and a robust Policy with a shared vision.

Cllr. Feeney said that the policy of Galway County Council around play was one of the Council's most successful over the past number of years, however one result of that success is the necessity to maintain the playgrounds into the future. He said that the Play Policy is needed to renew existing playgrounds and maintain play equipment and he said that this is expensive to achieve.

Ms. Dolan said that maintaining the resource would be part of policy going forward and also the Council recognises the importance of keeping local interest in playgrounds alive through support. One example of this is National Play Day which takes place annually where groups can meet together and network and this is supported by Staff of the Council.

In reply to Cllr. Cronnelly who asked if playgrounds were included in the Council's Disability Strategy which had been adopted in 2017, Ms. Dolan said inclusive play was referenced in the Strategy which specifically talked about *Play for All* as a Core Principal of the Council.

Cllr. Charity said that in 2008, funding from Development Contributions towards playgrounds across the County had been allocated, including for Claregalway and Corrandulla. Mr. Owens replied that existing commitments in place would be honoured by the Council.

### **Item No. 3: Municipal District Director's Business & Correspondence (AOMD 1809)**

In reply to Cathaoirleach Noone, Mr. Owens said that no response had been received to the Council's correspondence to Minister for State at the Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht in relation to the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District Members' Resolution "*That the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District Area write to the appropriate Minister seeking a Ministerial Order permitting signage for "Claregalway" in its English language format be placed on the Motorway – Junction 19.*"

The Cathaoirleach said that the absence of bilingual signage for Claregalway exiting off the motorway is causing great distress for people and is adding hours to journeys as people are getting lost. He said that the Languages Act needs to be amended to stipulate that signage for Gaeltacht placenames be bilingual when the sign is located outside of the Gaeltacht.

Cllr. Noone made the following **PROPOSAL**: "*that the Languages Act be amended so that the directional signs for Gaeltacht Placenames located outside of the Gaeltacht be bilingual*". This proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr. Feeney, and **AGREED**.

### **Cathaoirleach's Business (AOMD 1810)**

Cllr. Cuddy said that he would like that a discussion on speed limits take place at the next Meeting of the Municipal District.

Cllr. Charity said at the recent meeting with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), the issue of resurfacing the village of Claregalway was raised, however it was said that the funding would not be available until 2019. Cllr. Charity said that Claregalway should not have to wait until 2019 and should be given priority.

Cllr. Charity said he wished to raise an issue which had come to light that An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, when he was Minister for Transport, had not progressed an application for funding for the west of Ireland, including Galway Airport. He said the Members of the Municipal District needed to highlight their disappointment that this funding application had not been put forward by the Minister at the time. Cllr. Charity said that the airport is a vital part of the infrastructure for Galway City and County and the decision to close the airport was very short-sighted.

Cllr. Charity made the following **PROPOSAL**: "*that this Municipal District pass a Vote of no Confidence in An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar in light of the revelation that he, as Minister for*

*Transport, did not apply key funding application for infrastructure in the West and in particular the Galway Airport facility, in the functional area of this Municipal District, and further that a similar Motion be place on the Agenda of the Monthly Meeting of Galway County Council for its April Meeting”.*

This proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr. Cronnelly.

The Cathaoirleach asked if all of the Members were in agreement with the proposal and as they were not all in agreement, he called for a Vote on the proposal.

The result of the Vote was as follows:

For: Cllr. Charity, Cllr. Cronnelly, Cllr. Cuddy, Cllr. Kinane, Cllr. Noone [5].

Against: Cllr. Feeney [1]

Abstain: [0]

Not voting: Cllr. Kearney was not present when the vote took place.

As a result of the Vote, the Cathaoirleach declared the Motion **CARRIED**.

Cllr. Cuddy said he fully supports Cllr. Charity's proposal, stating that the City and County need an airport due to the ongoing traffic problems in the City and from a business point of view.

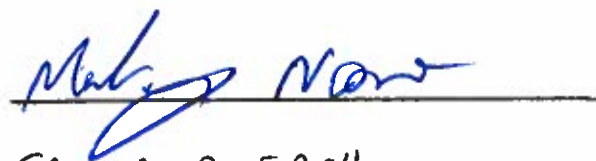
Cllr. Cuddy referred to the National Planning Framework 2040, stating that he was aware that only 8% funding under the Framework to 2040 was being allocated to rural Ireland. He expressed his grave concern at this level of funding and expressed the view that rural Ireland is being abandoned.

Cllr. Kinnane raised the problem of litter in the Municipal District, the litter on the dual carriageway, and the fact that the bins were overflowing in the villages.

Ms. Higgins replied that the bins in Oranmore are emptied three times weekly, however there has been an increase in fly tipping, dumping and filling bins with household waste. While road crews pick up litter as much as possible, they cannot cover every occurrence of littering. She also said the expense of a litter pick on the dual carriageway, due to the traffic management requirements, poses a big challenge as it costs between €3,500 and €4,000 to complete a litter pick.

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SIGNED:



CATHAOIRLEACH. 15/5/18  
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