

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Ceantar Bardasach Chonamara *Municipal District of Conamara*

Minutes of the Meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara held at the Council Chamber, Aras an Chontae, Galway on 14th July 2015 @ 2.00 p.m

ILATHAIR:

Baill: Cllrs. E. Mannion Cathaoirleach ,S. Walsh, T. Welby, S. Ó Tuairisg, N. Thomas, S. Ó Cualáin, T Ó Cuarraoin, T. Healy, N. Byrne.

Oifigigh: E. Molloy, Senior Engineer, Roads
P.Breathnach S.E.E Conamara
K. Finn, Area Engineer S. Conamara
T. J Redmond Area Engineer N. Conamara
S. Groarke, Meeting Administrator.

Minutes of the Meeting held on the 25-5-2015

CMD 15020

The adoption of the Minutes of the meeting held on the 25-5-2015 was proposed by Cllr S. Walsh and seconded by Comh. S. O’Cualáin .

Presentation-Local Economic & Community Plan

CMD 15021

The presentation on the Local Economic & Community Plan-Socio Economic Statement (LECP) for County Galway was given by Brian Barrett CEED Unit. (See attached copy of the presentation.) Following the presentation-the elected members discussed the proposals for the Local Economic & Community Plan. Cllr. E. Mannion referred to the geographical spread of the membership of the current Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) which will oversee the preparation of the 6-year plan and enquired if more people can be added to it to give it a better geographical balance. B. Barrett advised that the membership of this committee was decided by the SPC’S and that CEED can revert back to request them to review the current membership. Comh. S.’Cualáin also advised that he was not content with some of the current nominations to the LCDC. Cllr. N. Thomas stated that need for more balanced representation on the LCDC. Cllr. Mannion also enquired if the public can still

engage in the preparation of the plan to which B. Barrett replied that the public consultation process was ongoing at present. Cllr. N. Byrne referred to her NOM concerning the development of a map of Conamara to be distributed free of charge at the Tourist Office in Galway and at tourism information points around Conamara. B. Barrett responded by advising that the Council may undertake the publication of this map itself or in partnership with Failte Ireland. Comh. S. O'Tuairisg referred to the need for UNESCO recognition of the unique geology associated with the Joyce Country and in particular the development of a Geological Park at this location. He advised that this area had a richer geological composition than the Burren and that there was a current requirement to employ a geologist for a year to assist in the formulation of a plan to advance the concept of a Geological Park. B. Barrett advised that the LECP process would involve the consideration of specific projects like this and that it was important that this concept be placed on the table as there may be funding available at a later stage. Cllr. T. Welby advised that Conamara required projects like the Geological Park as it was a distinct region. He stated that communities in Conamara should be linked in a sustained way in order to attract visitors to stay in the area rather than using the area for daytrips while staying in the larger urban areas like Galway City. He cited as an example the distinct regions of France which work together as regards sustained development. He stated that Conamara should build to its strengths and its communities should work together to promote sustained development. B. Barrett advised that the plan will recognize the particular strengths of a district and may even use the Municipal District Areas as they are a defined structure. Comh. S. O'Cualáin agreed with the comments made by Cllr. Welby and referred to the fact that Dun Aengus charges a lower fee if visitors stay on Inishmore. Cllr. Healy referred to the fact that the tourism product, the fishery resources and agriculture was underdeveloped in Conamara- he cited the fact that there is no tourism for 3 months of the year. He stated that Enterprise Ireland would need to put more industry into Conamara and he cited the example of towns in other areas like Tuam which has a car safety products manufacturing center. B. Barrett responded by stating that Whitaker Consultants have been engaged by the Council to identify business opportunities for County Galway based on the balanced development of the County and the need to locate manufacturing in areas outside Galway City. He advised that the Council would have to state its case for funding on the basis of its LECP proposals. Cllr. S. Walsh advised that the Economic Baseline Study undertaken by the Whitaker Institute in NUI would be jointly launched by the County & City Councils next week. He stated that the Government has cut the budgets available to community groups in the county and cited the 40% reduction in the funding for the LEADER Program. He stated his opinion that Udaras na Gaeltachta never failed to support a worthwhile initiative in the past. It now appears that the Council is competing with community groups for funding and the Leader Program should not have been tampered with. He stated his opinion that the LECP was a second County Development Plan. Comh. S. O'Cualáin advised that the reduction in funding for LEADER was due to the the requirement on the EU to provide funding for East European countries. Cllr. N. Thomas enquired as to how the funding would actually be allocated in regard to the LECP. B. Barrett responded by stating that different funds would be channeled down to different programmes and that CEED may examine the projects at the Municipal District level to ascertain that areas are not disadvantaged as regards funding proposals. Cllr. E. Mannion stated that there are a number of positive developments in Conamara at present including the upgrade works on the N59 and the construction of the Visitor Center adjacent to Teach an Phiarsaigh at Rosmuc. B. Barrett then advised that he

would revert back to the Municipal Councils in the late Autumn with draft proposals for the LECP.

Update on the N59 Upgrade Works

CMD 15022

A report on the upgrade works on the N59 was circulated at the meeting by E. Molloy. He advised on the current status of the following:

1. **N59 Moycullen Online**: Construction works are ongoing and are expected to be completed by October 2015.
2. **N59 Moycullen Bypass**: The land acquisition is ongoing and the site fencing is completed. It is anticipated that the contract documents will be prepared by November 2015 but no date is set for the main construction contract.
3. **N59 Maam Cross to Oughterard**: The acquisition of land is ongoing and the site investigation contract is expected to commence in September 2015. It is anticipated that the contract documents for the main contract will be prepared by Quarter 1 in 2016 and that construction would commence in Quarter 2 of 2016.
4. **N59 Clifden to Maam Cross**: The CPO, EIS and NIS were published on the 11-7-2014. Additional information was requested by Bord Pleanala to be sent to them by the 31-7-2015. It is anticipated that the Oral Hearing by Bord Pleanala will commence in the 3rd Quarter of 2015.

Cllr. S. Walsh enquired if there was slippage on the timeframe for the N59 Maam Cross-Oughterard to commence. E. Molloy advised that there a rollback on the timeframe due the fact that a lot of site investigation has to be undertaken. He also advised that the Council has held discussions with the NRA in regard to the situation at Letterfrack and also in regard to the approach road to Leenane. Cllr. T. Healy enquired in regard to the land acquisition and whether a letter should be sent from the Municipal District to the NRA. A proposal was made by Comh. S. O'Tuairisg and seconded by Cllr. Healy that the Council should write to the NRA in regard to the N59 road at Leenane.

Update –Coastal Protection/Storm Damage Repair

CMD 15023

A report on the coastal storm damage repairs was circulated by E. Molloy at the meeting. He advised that there were 2 schemes currently under construction.(1) Inishboffin South Facing Shore to be completed by September 2015 and (2) Frenchman's Strand Inishmore to be completed by the end of 2015. He stated that funding has been allocated by the OPW for an analysis of Clonamore and other areas of Inishboffin and quotations are being sought from a pre-qualified list of companies with the intention of awarding a contract in September 2015.

He advised that repairs had been completed at the following locations: Aillebrack, Ervallah, Dogs Bay, Gurteen, Roundstone, Roundstone Harbour, Baile na hAbhainn, An Spideal, Inis Moir, Inis Mheain, Inis Oirr and many other locations He stated that there are a number of locations such as Caladh Golam and the Skye Road where the actual works to progress are currently been assessed. He stated that the Council had spent the €1.44 million it received for coastal repairs which is the remit of the OPW. He advised that the Council is working in partnership with the OPW to advance projects and studies to identify and prioritise future

protection measures. This is similar to the partnership developed in regard to the flood relief measures a few years ago. He advised that this will be a long term programme and an ongoing process over the coming years and represents a clear pathway towards assessment and delivery of future coastal protection measures.

Cllr. S. Walsh enquired if the erosion of the area adjacent to the burial ground at Leenane would be a priority. E. Molloy responded by advising that this would be included in a Coastline Study which would be required by the OPW for an assessment which would include a cost benefit analysis. This type of analysis will be undertaken on a series of coastline projects. Comh. S. O'Tuairisg advised that the Maunee Pier Road needs to be assessed. Comh. S. O'Cualain welcomed the progress to date and acknowledged that this was an ongoing process and stated that representations should be made to the local T.D s to highlight the necessity of the Government providing adequate funding to the OPW. He stated that houses were isolated at Caladh Golam due to the storm damage. Cllr. T. Healy complimented E. Molloy for his consultations with the inhabitants of Inishboffin and stated that it was a good idea to undertake a study of the whole coastline. Comh. Tomas O'Curraoin welcomed the works to date but highlighted the fact that there was no funding for damage to private property and blocked drains caused by debris which originated from public property. Cllr. E. Mannion raised her concerns in regard to the damage to Turbot Island burial ground and the old burial ground at Ballyconneely.

Public Lighting- Baile Aird, Spiddal

CMD 15024

E. Molloy confirmed that these lights have been installed and the Council has paid the connection fee to the ESB. The Council is currently awaiting the connection certificate from the ESB.

Safety/Warning Signs-Barna N.S to the Children's Playground

CMD 15025

Comh. S. O'Tuairisg advised that all the Councillors received letters about this matter. He stated that the community in Barna sought the installation of a safety barrier as the school and the playground are very near the R-336 and it is very dangerous for children. Comh. T. O'Curraoin stated that this may have to be funded from the NOM allocation next year. Comh. S. O'Cualain referred to the fact that the Department of Education should be aware of potential safety issues in regard to the location of schools.

Delivery of Petrol to Inishmore

CMD 15026

Comh. S. O'Tuairisg referred to the deputation from the Comharchumann last September who raised this issue. It appears that petrol intended for lawnmowers /strimmers is being transported in jerrycans by boat to the island but that it cannot be left on the harbour under Department of Marine regulations. The Councillors discussed the matter and agreed that the solution to the problem was that the petrol cans should not leave the boat until the owners come to collect them. This motion was proposed by Comh. S. O'Cualáin and seconded by Comh. T. O'Curraoin.

Damage to Droichead na Tráchtá, Lettermore.

CMD 15027

Comh. S. O'Cualáin advised that this bridge requires repairs as soon as possible as it is located near the tide. E. Molloy stated that it was his intention to repair this bridge and that

temporary repairs will be undertaken in 2 weeks time. He also raised the issue concerning the need to undertake an assessment of the causeways.

Damage to Kilkerrin Bridge

CMD 15028

E. Molloy advised that this bridge was repaired by the Council but was subsequently damaged again. He confirmed that it will be examined with the intention of re-building the wall again.

Cathaoirleacht's Business

CMD 15029

Cllr. T. Healy expressed his appreciation to E. Molloy for the work done on the carpark at Cleggan. Cllr. N. Thomas raised his concerns in regard to the timing of the main traffic lights in Moycullen and the poor state of repair of the footpath adjacent to the playground. Comh. T. O'Curraoin referred to a letter he received from a lady in Inishmeain concerning the difficulty for the islanders in arranging for the CVRT test for small goods vehicles. Cars on the islands are exempt from the NCT test but small goods vehicles are not exempt from the CVRT test. A proposal was made by Comh. S. O'Tuairisg, seconded by Comh. T. O'Curraoin to send a letter to the Minister for Transport requesting that he consider granting an exemption to the small goods vehicles on the islands. Comh. S. O'Cualáin raised the issue concerning the poor reception for mobile phones in Conamara- improving the reception was vital as many people had replaced the landlines. Cllr. E. Mannion referred to the fact that Vodaphone were undertaking upgrading work at present. A proposal was made by Comh. S.O'Cualain , seconded by Cllr. S. Walsh for the Council to send a letter to the Minister for Communications concerning this problem.

AOB

CMD 15030

The 9 Conamara Councillors paid tribute to Evan Molloy, Senior Engineer on his imminent retirement from the Council. They expressed their appreciation for his work and dedication and stated that his knowledge and experience would be missed. It was stated that he was always available for consultations, knew Conamara well and was active in community work. They wished him an active and enjoyable retirement. Cllr. E. Mannion, Cathaoirleach presented him with the book "This is Conamara" on behalf of her colleagues. Evan Molloy thanked the Councillors for their kind words and complimented them, his fellow staff members and the press and stated that it was a pleasure for him to have known and worked with them throughout his career.

CHRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN