

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 the 7th of June 2018 @ 11.00 a.m

ILATHAIR:

Baill:

Cllr. N. Thomas Cathaoirleach,
S. Walsh, E. Mannion, T. Ó Cuarraoin,
N. Byrne, T. Welby, S. O'Tuairisg, T. Healy

Oifigigh:

G. Mullarkey, Head of Finance
P. Breathnach, S.E.E Conamara
M. Kerrigan, Area Engineer, S. Conamara
S. Groarke, Meetings Administrator

Apologies:

Cllr. S. O'Cualáin

1. Minutes of the MD of Conamara Meeting held on the 4-5-2018 **CMD 18024**

The adoption of the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 4-5-2018 was proposed by Cllr. S Walsh and seconded by Cllr. N. Byrne.

2. Matters arising from the Minutes **CMD 18025**

Cllr. E. Mannion referred to the 6 km stretch of Greenway between Athry-Cloonbeg near Ballinahinch Castle and Ballinafad Graveyard which was officially opened by her as Cathaoirleach on Monday 28-5-2018. She acknowledged and praised the cooperation of the 19 landowners which was vital to the development of this recreational and tourism amenity- and also acknowledged the role of Council staff including Kurt Lydon and others. She also referred to item 11 of the Minutes where her name was mentioned in error instead of Cllr. N. Byrne in regard to the proposed footbridge at Oughterard. Comh. S. O'Tuairisg referred to item 10 concerning the completion of the shore walk at An Spidéal. He referred to the fact

that a delegation from the local Community group have requested a meeting with the Council concerning its completion. He advised that it is a fine walkway but the last 100 yards cannot be completed due to the refusal of the landowner to cooperate. He requested that the Council examine the position again and a suggested solution was to go offshore up to the high tide mark in order to complete it. He acknowledged the cooperation of the other landowners but emphasized that the Council cannot leave it uncompleted. Cllr. N. Byrne referred to her discussion with the local Community group who wish to send a delegation to the Council. She requested more information regarding the feasibility of using the Part 8 procedure and whether the landowner can compel the Council to get a Foreshore license. M. Kerrigan advised that the Part 8 procedure applies to property that is in the possession of the Council. Comh. T. O'Curraoin stated that in his opinion the section up to high water mark belongs to the public and is not part of this landowner's land-he cannot claim the shore. Cllr. N. Thomas agreed that the Council may need to move the path out towards the highwater mark and recommended the placing of rock armor as part of the solution. He requested the Council to investigate the feasibility of moving the pathway out. M. Kerrigan advised that this option will be examined. Cllr. T. Welby referred to the requirement for a Foreshore license for the section covered by the high water mark. Cllr. T. Healy referred to item 2 regarding repairs to the N59 and advised that he is seeking more details for his constituents concerning the ongoing works at Leenane, the subsidence at Streamstown and the resurfacing work out from Maam Cross. Cllr. N. Byrne referred to item 6 and enquired whether D. Mitchell had any further information regarding the consultations between TII and NPWS in regard to the feasibility of the proposed Footbridge for Oughterard.

3. CFRAMS (Catchment Flood Risk Management) CMD 18026

It was decided to defer this item as there was no official available from the Infrastructure & Operations Directorate to make a presentation.

4. Proposed Footbridge at Oughterard CMD 18027

It was decided to defer this item as there was no official available from the Infrastructure & Operations Directorate to make a presentation.

5 Re-establishment of the Islands Committee CMD 18028

It was decided to defer this item as there was no official available from the Infrastructure & Operations Directorate to provide an update. Comh. S. O'Tuairisg advised that the Comharchumann & people on Inis Meáin are not satisfied with the notification they received and this may have to be revisited. He will raise the matter with M. Ní Chionna.

6. Municipal District Director's Business CMD 18029

G. Mullarkey referred to the press release issued by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government on the 6-6-2018 concerning the proposed amalgamation of Galway City and Galway County Council. He advised that the report presented to the Government by the Minister of State for Local Government has endorsed the recommendations of the Expert Advisory Group and that legislation will be required to initiate the proposed amalgamation which is scheduled for no later than 2021. Cllr. E. Mannion enquired if the Boundary Revision process is premature in light of the 2021 proposed merger. G. Mullarkey advised that the 2019 elections to the 2 existing Local Authorities will still go ahead and explained

that a considerable amount of work is required to integrate the financial and other systems including staff resources- it took 36 months for the 2 Tipperary local authorities to complete its merger. Cllr. S. Walsh expressed his disappointment and opposition to the news and outlined how the Government made a mess of the Equalisation Fund Baseline calculations- there is a theory that the Council was deliberately deprived of funding so that this merger could happen. He advised that Fianna Fáil might take a different view of this and he urged party colleagues not to support it. He stated that the Council will do good work and provide services if it is funded properly-he cited the recent work on the Screeb/Glann road as an example. He explained that the proposed merger will be detrimental as regards the provision of services to Conamara -which is larger than counties such as Longford, Leitrim and Louth. He referred to what happened the LCDC program and the presentation concerning the SICAP program at the last meeting -the fact that Conamara was not offered a place on the GRB board. He stated that some essential staff were let go on early retirements in their 50s -there is not only a lack of financial resources but also staff resources such as planners. He cited the fact that while the Council was not properly funded- the Government can afford to waste millions on the Irish Water setup and will waste more on the cervical cancer scandal. Cllr. T. Healy advised that while the press release highlights the recommendations of the Expert Advisory Group in regard to the proposed merger -it fails to mention the review meetings held with the Councillors and he does not recall any elected member of the Council stating that it is a good idea. He stated that the views of the elected representatives appear to have been ignored and the people did not elect the Committee. Cllr. N. Byrne referred to the endorsement given by Minister Phelan to the recommendations of the Expert Group and advised that while she has concerns about it -she can see certain potential in the proposed merger. Her concerns would relate to the potential detrimental effect on the peripheral areas and the impracticality of a 57member Council. She advised that the Municipal Districts will have to be given more powers to be effective. She stated that the potential in the merger is that certain services such as Finance, HR and IT would be streamlined with the result that more resources could be made available and economies of scale achieved.

Comh. S. O'Tuairisg advised that the Fianna Fail Councillors had a meeting with Micháel Martin and the Galway T.Ds and they indicated that Fianna Fáil will not support the merger when the legislation is drafted. He also referred to the other scenario that Minister Phelan could extend the City boundary by Ministerial Order and the Council will be in dire straits financially if it loses Parkmore and Oranmore. He advised that the only positive thing on the Expert Committee's report was the recommendation that the funding issue will have to be addressed -the Council needs a proper permanent system of funding. He stated that the Councillors had meetings with the Committee and felt they did not heed them-the majority of them are opposed to the merger as it has no credence. He advised that the population in the outlying areas will be worse off with less effective representation in the proposed 57member Council in 2021. He stated that the merger will require Dáil support in order to proceed. Comh. T. O'Curraoin referred to the fact that both Councils operated under the one Manager in the past and why was it changed. He advised that the Council required its fair share of funding regardless of who is in charge. He is opposed to the merger as he is concerned with the effect on rural areas. Cllr. T. Welby stated that while no one wants to see change that will be disruptive he will keep an open mind at present in the hope that the proposed amalgamation will provide something better than the current situation. He advised that the Council has slipped backed considerably over the past few years by passing poor budgets. He stated that the Council has a case of not only more funding but also for more staff resources-it has lost 300 staff and Councils such as Mayo employ more planners. He referred to the fact that €280m was invested in Waterford and €70m in Limerick in regard to when their City and County Councils merged. He questioned as to what are we doing for the peripheral areas of

the County at the moment. He felt that the County has been let down by the politicians and questioned as to what Eamon O’Cuiv T.D proposes to bring in instead if he wants to prevent the merger-it will be interesting to see how the political thing will pan out. He referred to his attendance at meetings with the IDA and the need for more investment for the County. Cllr. N. Thomas stated that Cllr. Walsh is right in regard to the fact that the Council is being deprived of funding and referred to the deprived areas and the decline of the rural parts of the County. He explained that the elected members were fooled by Department officials in regard to the setup of the Municipal Districts in 2014 with the expectation of more funding and also in the decision to setup the LCDCs where the Gaeltacht lost out. He referred to the review process established by the DHPLG to consider the methodology used to determine the funding baselines of Local Authorities in regard to the distribution of the general funding available and the deadline of the 3rd of July for the receipt of submissions. He advised that the Council requires its fair share of funding and the need for strong proposals to secure this in the long run. He stated that a proper process has to be put in place as regards funding and a stronger role for the Municipal Districts is required before we can accept the merger. He referred to the meeting in Dublin where Michael Martin T.D advised that he was not going to support the merger. He stated that the result of the boundary revision may result in change for Conamara. Cllr. E. Mannion also referred to the baseline review for the distribution of funding to Local Authorities. G. Mullarkey advised that he will discuss this with the Chief Executive and the Management Team and it will be placed on the Agenda for the June Plenary Council meeting. Cllr. T. Healy recommended that a proposal to triple the NPPR charge on holiday homes should be made as regards the baseline review. Cllr. S. Walsh advised that people who were forced to emigrate to Australia and Britain are being made liable for the NPPR charge and penalties even though they were not aware of it.

7. Cathaoirleach’s Business

MD 18030

Cllr. N. Thomas referred to the planning permission which was granted for wind turbines at Rossaveal /Seanapheastín and enquired if the road opening license has been granted by the Council. He also enquired if ducting could be installed to connect to the gullies in order to clear the accumulation of water.

8. AOB

MD 18031

Cllr. T. Welby complimented the work done on the Greenway at Ballinahinch and stated that credit is due to the Council workers who did a good job. Comh. T. O’Curraoin referred to the R-336 and proposed that the existing routes be scrapped and a new route picked that would be accepted by everyone. He stated that people cannot get planning permission near these routes even though applications for wind turbines seem to get approval. He advised that the route should be examined in the context also of providing broadband and a railway line and consideration be given to upgrading the Spiddal road. He also referred to the number of houses proposed to be demolished in regard to the proposed GCOB route. Cllr. E. Mannion explained that the R336 was considered by the Councillors who voted for the Brown Route except for Cllr. Welby- the Council is awaiting funding from TII in order to reengage the Consultants. She advised that realistic decisions have to be made in regard to the R336 and proposed that the Council write to TII again in regard to this matter. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. S. Walsh. Cllr. S. O’Tuairisg referred to selection of the Brown Route and the fact that Bord Pleanála refused planning permission for the N59 Maam Cross-Clifden Route due to the SAC designations. He proposed that the Councillors have a proper discussion on this and requested it to be listed on the agenda as an item for the September

meeting. He advised that J. Cullen DOS had indicated at a previous meeting that he will consider this matter including whether some of the routes can be removed. Cllr. N. Thomas stated that it definitely time now to proceed with the selection and reduce the number of routes- he stated that J. Cullen DOS confirmed that the route for the GCOB has been selected even though it has not been submitted to Bord Pleanála. Comh. S. O’Tuairisg welcomed the progress on the works at Leenane -but enquired as to the extent of it and whether it is confined to the damaged areas. Cllr. N. Byrne referred to the lack of resources which prohibit the compilation of new Local Area Plans and Traffic Management Plans for towns like Moycullen and Oughterard. She spoke of the need for an update on the provision of bus shelters for Conamara and her query as regards processing road opening licences for the N59 in view of the condition of the road. Cllr. E. Mannion on behalf of the Council and G. Mullarkey on behalf of the Executive congratulated Cllr. N. Byrne in regard to her role as Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District.

9. Date & Venue for Next Meeting

MD 18032

It was agreed that the next Ordinary Meeting would be held at 11.00 a.m on Tuesday 11-9-2018 at the Council Chamber in Aras an Chontae, Galway. Cllr. N. Thomas advised that he will suggest holding a meeting in the Emigrant Center at Carna at a later date.

CROCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN