



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Galway County Council
Monthly Management Report
January 2023

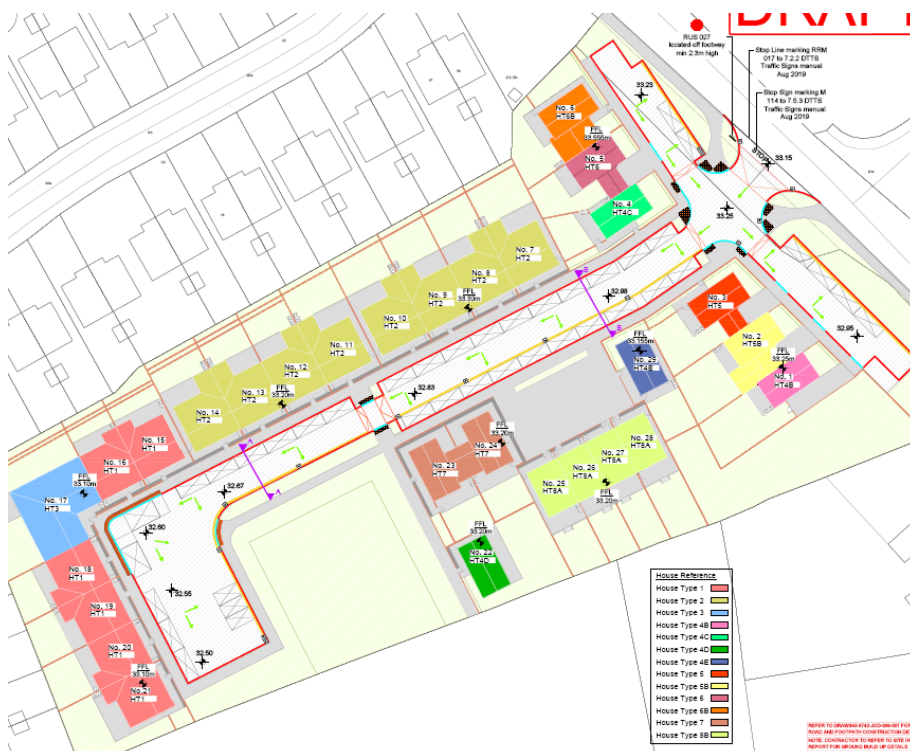
HOUSING & UKRAINE CRISIS

CONTRACT SIGNING – WEIR ROAD, TUAM



On Friday the 13th of January, the Cathaoirleach, the Housing Department and main contractor C&N Construction signed contracts for the delivery of 29 units at the Weir rd, Tuam. Construction of the units is to begin immediately with units planned for delivery within the year. C&N have just completed the estate at Fana Bhui in Tuam and the allocations team and Housing Liaison Officers have begun tenanting of these units.

WEIR RD – LAYOUT:



DERELICT UNITS

The maintenance team has identified 35 units in predominantly rural locations that have been classed as derelict. Over the coming months number of actions are being taken on these:

- Units at Parkmore, Tuam, classed as derelict due to court action will be knocked and an application will be made to the Department for new appropriate sized units.
- Units at Cloonlyon, Ballygar will be replaced as part of new Traveller accommodation scheme
- Units acquired near Gilmartin Rd, Tuam will be part of an application to the Department for return to use.
- Units acquired at St Brigid's rd, Portumna to form part of a regeneration application to the Department and Part 8 planning application to the Municipal District
- A number of units will be sold throughout 2023 as the cost of re-build is significant and the location of the property is not suitable for social housing (mainly houses built for specific families located adjoining to family land).

UKRAINIAN RESPONSE

30 units have been identified through the Offer a Home initiative. Inspections have been carried out on these and IOM (an NGO acting as a support organisation to displaced people) have been engaged to match people to the properties. The agreement for will be between the displaced persons and the landlord – rent is organised via Dept of Social Protection.

A number of large redundant buildings across the County have been identified as potential residential settings for the Ukrainian response. These privately owned premises have been assessed by a QS and discussions are ongoing with the Department to enter into the Existing Buildings programme.

CROI CONAITHE

The programme has ramped up activity throughout 2022 and into 2023 with the inclusion of Rural properties in the scheme. All rural applicants who were refused round 1 (Urban only) have been contacted and offered the opportunity to apply under the rural scheme launched in Nov 22.

The applications in progressed were mainly made for the rural scheme since November 2022.

A significant number of the applications will remain 'in progress' as they seek planning permission, other are undergoing a technical inspection presently.

Refusals and enquiries are still coming in regarding the conditions of the scheme with applicants predominantly being refused as they do not intend to reside at the premises.

An online public workshop will be held on the 16th of February 2023 to discuss the application process, good examples of projects etc. Details of this will be emailed to Councillors in early Feb.

Year	MD	Number of Applications Received	Status				Reason for Refusal		
			withdrawn	Approved in principle	in progress	Refused	Prior to Rural Scheme	Incomplete application	Not eligible- Not vacant for 2 years, Applicant not going to reside in it, etc.
2022	Athenry	2		0	1	1	1	0	0
2022	Ballinasloe	14	1	0	10	3	1	1	1
2022	Conamara	11		0	9	1	1	0	1
2022	Loughrea	14		0	11	3	2	1	0
2022	Tuam	11		1	8	2	1	0	1
2023	Athenry	0		0	0	0	0	0	0
2023	Ballinasloe	1		0	1	0	0	0	0
2023	Conamara	1		0	1	0	0	0	0
2023	Loughrea	1		0	1	0	0	0	0
2023	Tuam	0		0	0	0	0	0	0

HOME LOANS – 2022

Galway County Council received 88 applications for the Local Authority Home Loan Scheme in 2022

88 applications were received

24 were turned down by the credit committee – reasons include: Advice from Housing Agency on income/repayment ratio, credit checks and other outstanding loans unpaid.

18 applications with a monetary value of €3.5m approved

40 going through application process; issues to be resolved include 3rd party insurance cover, self builds seeking planning permission, financial returns outstanding. 2 applications also withdrawn.

HOMELESSNESS UNIT

HOMELESS STATS:

Families – 13 family households currently in PEA (B&B's) including 30 dependents

- 5 of these families have been allocated LA properties and are awaiting move on, delay as a result of ENP grant delays.

Singles – 13 Singles in full time beds with 3 rotational CWR beds in use every night.

- 2 Full time females in Osterley Lodge with 1 rotational CWR bed in use nightly.

- 4 Full time males in Fairgreen with 2 rotational CWR beds in use nightly.
- 7 Singles in PEA (B&B's & Hostel accommodation) 3 Female & 4 Male. 2 of these have been allocated LA properties and are awaiting move on.

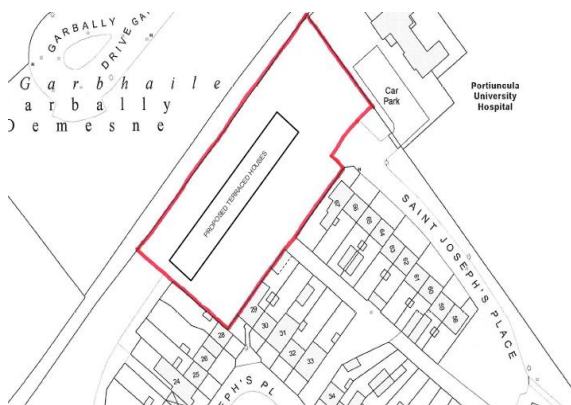
Galway County Council has progressed plans to develop its own long-term hostel and step down facility in the County by seeking funding from the Department to support the Capital and revenue expenditure required to run the services.

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENTS

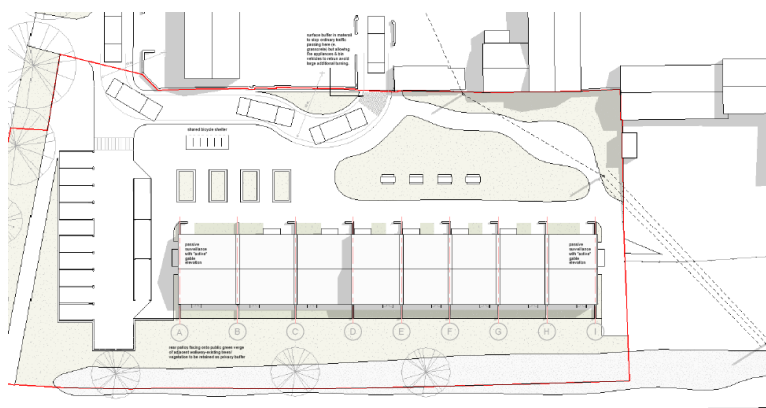
St Joseph's Place & Dunlo St – preferred option drawings were presented at the MD meeting last week:

ST JOSEPH'S PLACE

Location:



Design:



DUNLO ST:

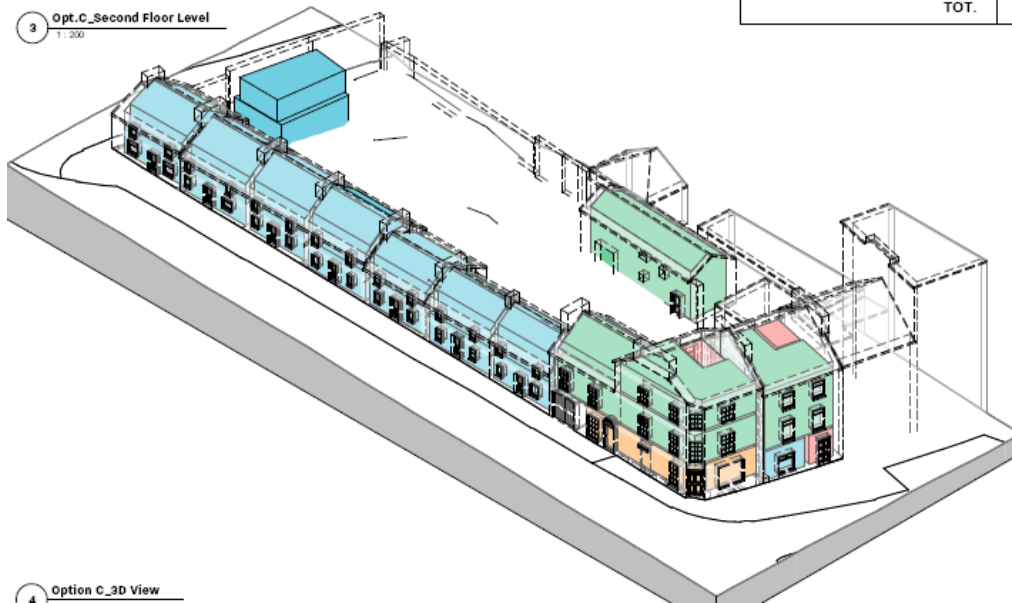


UNIT TYPES_OPTION C

- 1 BED UNIT
(No. 8 2 Storey Microsites & No. 1 Apt.)
- 2 BED UNIT
(No. 2 Duplex Apt. & No. 2 Apt.)
- CIRCULATION
- CIVIC

UNIT TYPE	AREA	DoH Req.	QTY
1 Bed Unit	48 to 62m ²	44-46 m ²	9
2 Bed Unit	66 to 88m ²	63-73 m ²	4
3 Bed Unit	-	76-83 m ²	0
4 Bed Unit	-	120 m ²	0
TOT.			13

3 Opt. C_Second Floor Level
1: 200



4 Option C_3D View

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE

The Housing for All capital programme has targets for both social and affordable delivery for Galway County Council.

The Social Housing Target for 2023 is 351 social units to be achieved by Galway County Council and Approved Housing Bodies. Social Housing Build, AHB build and Turnkey units all count under delivery targets.

The Affordable Target for 2023 is 57 (2022 and 2023 combined). This is to be achieved through Galway County Council own build and turnkey delivery.

To achieve this target Galway County Council are progressing a significant number of sites which offer both social and affordable housing mixes:

Cosmona, Loughrea – 80-90 units in total, possible two phases with 50:50 split

Claregalway – 80 to 90 units to be built 50:50 social and affordable

Tuam – Birmingham rd – 80 units in total between social and affordable. Cost will dictate the ratio

Oughterard – 40 units in total between social and affordable. Cost will dictate the ratio

Planned developments under Preliminary Stage 1 approval include 27 units at Gort Mhaoilr social & 34 on Affordable in Athenry – Irish Water have started the process for the network upgrade. As the procurement process for this upgrade is underway, we will begin more detailed plans and design to prepare for a planning application.

Social and Affordable Housing Developments offered via Turnkeys from developers are currently being considered and approval sought from the Dept of Housing for these. Locations include Athenry, Ballinasloe, Mountbellew, Tuam, Claregalway and Oranmore. These are not under contract at this stage but have potential to deliver significant further Social and Affordable units in 2023.

A further Turnkey advert will be placed in Q1 of 2023 seeking Turnkey options for social and affordable units.

Part V – a significant number of social units will come to Galway CoCo with the delivery of existing planning permissions across the MD with a number of planning permissions for estates due to commence in 2023.

COUNCILLOR WORKSHOP

A workshop on Housing will be held for Councillors online on the Wednesday 1st Feb to see first-hand the new system for tracking property status – occupied social houses, voids and vacant properties. There will also be a reminder on how to use the social housing demand tables, the allocation scheme, the housing application form (including disability form) and the online repairs form. Agenda:

- Social Housing Demand Tables – reminder of current tables on website
- Housing Supply – New Tables on the no of Council properties – occupied, vacant, under renovation etc by MD
- Allocation Scheme
- Housing Application forms
- Online repair portal

ECONOMIC, COMMUNITY & RURAL DEVELOPMENT (ERCD)

LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LCDC)

- The Health & Wellbeing Sub-Committee of the LCDC will hold a further meeting in January to agree priorities for Round 4 of the Healthy Ireland Fund and these recommendations will be discussed by the LCDC at their January Meeting – the finalised Healthy Ireland Strategy and Application Form will then be submitted to Pobal by 27th January 2023.
- The SICAP Sub-Committee of the LCDC will meet to discuss the draft SICAP Annual Plan for 2023.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

- A funding request was submitted to the DCEDIY (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth) for Comhairle na nÓg activities in 2023, to progress the chosen topics of mental health through promotional and awareness activities, and youth spaces through further surveys to identify needs at local level to inform local funding programmes.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK

ACTING AS AN INFORMATION HUB:

- The PPN attended the Athenry MD Meeting in January to promote engagement and build awareness of the role of the PPN amongst Councillors and Council Staff
- The PPN sent out its Weekly Digest Info letters (each Friday), 1 Monthly Newsletter along with 10 emails to all 1150 Member Groups.
- The PPN Website was updated with news, events, and funding information throughout the month.

BUILDING CAPACITY:

- The PPN assisted groups with queries relating to the Community Support Fund.
- The PPN hosted its second Steering Group meeting for the SEAI funded project: 'Energy Master Plan for County Galway'. The PPN has also launched a survey to identify eligible groups and buildings to available of free Energy Audits as part of this project and 43 community centres expressed an interest in having an energy audit.
- The PPN attended training on Media Relations.

PROMOTING REPRESENTATION:

- The PPN shared details of consultations on the draft Regional Water Resources Plan - North West, and the Strategic Environmental Assessment of EirGrid Grid Implementation Plan 2023 – 2028.

ARTS OFFICE

Artist Support Scheme 2023. The objective of this scheme is to assist individual artists to develop their arts practice and artistic career. The scheme is open to professional artists residing in County Galway at all stages of their career, working in any artform and context. The maximum award offered is €3,000 and awards are often made for smaller amounts. The total fund available for 2023 is €22,000. Deadline for applications is 4:00 p.m. on Monday 13 February 2023.

Visual Artists’ Ireland Lifelong Learning Programme Galway in partnership with Galway Culture Company, Galway City Arts Office, and Visual Artists’ Ireland: This programme of professional supports for visual artists will commence in February 2023. 40 artists attended a visual artists café on 30 November to contribute to the design of an upcoming programme of professional development supports that will be delivered in 2023

Community Support Scheme: Work has begun to draft the Community Support Scheme (Cultural) Application process for 2023. A budget of €60,000 will be available for Arts Events and Programmes for 2023.

Public Art: RFQ has been prepared and published for services to project manage two flood relief Percent for Art Schemes on behalf of Galway County Council and the OPW Provision of Services for Public Art Project Co-ordinator on schemes: 1) Dunkellin River / Aggard Stream and 2) Claregalway Closing date is the 27th of January.

CREATIVE IRELAND

- Arts Office presented the Draft Galway County Culture and Creativity Strategy to the Community and Culture SPC for consideration on the 6th of December and was approved at the December Plenary meeting. The Strategy has been delivered to Creative Ireland and will be launched at a national event in February 2023.
- Creative Climate Action Fund. *Creative Climate Action II: Agents for change.* This unique €3.6 million fund will run from 2023-2025. The goal is community climate action using the talent of the arts, culture, heritage and wider creative sectors for public engagement. Applications are invited along two strands.

Spark: This strand is for those looking to pilot a new idea, or who want to deliver a creative project at a local level. Organisations, community groups and creative groups

who can inspire, build knowledge, skills and confidence are welcome to apply for grants between €20,000 and €50,000.

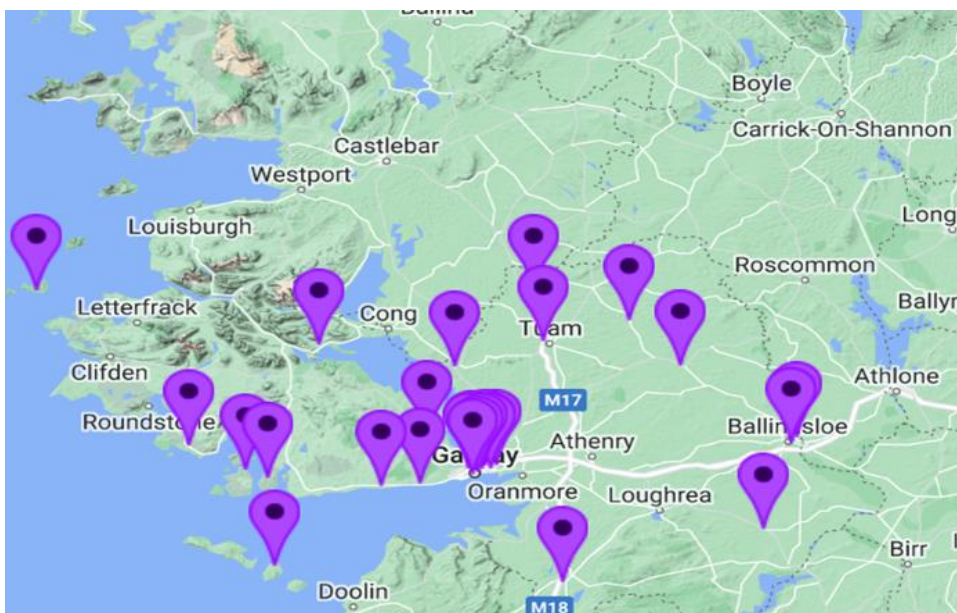
Ignite: This funding strand is suitable for those with experience in delivering public engagement projects at scale, and are proposing durational projects with extensive public participation. Applicants may be eligible for grants between €50,000 and €250,000.

A **networking session** will take place on Tuesday the **24th January** in Dublin to support the development of interdisciplinary partnerships and project teams.



HUBS

Galway County Council (Economic, Community & Rural Development Unit & Broadband Office) are hosting a networking and information event for Hubs on **Thursday January 26th, 2023 at 6.30pm in the Claregalway Hotel**. H91 XR8E. The event targets those operating and interested in the development of Hubs. Hubs can range from Enterprise Hubs, Scaling Hubs, R&D, Co-work Spaces to Community and Enterprise Hubs that combined both commercial enterprise spaces for income with Community Activity and Services. Guest Speakers will attend from Grow Remote, Department of Community and Rural Development, Western Development Commission and Local Hubs.



Connected Hubs <https://connectedhubs.ie/hubs/search>

<https://connectedhubs.ie/publications.html> - Guidance for Setting up Hubs.

The National Connected Hubs Voucher Scheme - Phase 2 which was launched on 21st Sept. was extended to 8th January. 4,086 Connected Hubs Vouchers were used up until 31st December, 2022.

A Corporate scheme is being scoped out with Grow Remote to engage corporate clients to use hubs. Initially planning a pilot with 6 corporates.

An analysis of the Economic Impact of Hubs is being undertaken by the Western Development Commission. Report will be available in Summer.

MOVING WEST TV SERIES – TG4

Produced by Dundara Television & Media for TG4. In Association with the Western Development Commission - Presented by broadcaster Mary Kennedy.

Episode 5 -Showcases Galway on Wednesday 8th February at 8:30pm

The 6-episode series will begin in Sligo, followed by Mayo, Kerry, Donegal, Galway and The Islands every Wednesday at the same time. The show will also be repeated on Thursday evenings at 5.30pm. The series has been created to highlight the global opportunities available across the region. Shows the public the possibilities if they decide the West of Ireland is the right place for their next move. The show follows the lives of families who have moved or are in the process of moving and shines a light on all the West of Ireland has to Offer in terms of lifestyle, outdoor amenities, food, Culture and Quality of Life.

Following last year's success which saw over 700,000 people view the show, which has garnered national and regional media over the past few months. The Show highlights global career opportunities now available right across the Atlantic Coast. Each episode gives the viewer an insight into the life of an Irish Owned company, a startup, those working from Connected Hubs or working for FDI Companies based in the region.

All dates for episodes [are HERE. Moving West Season 2, a six part series showcasing life in the West of Ireland to air on TG4 - Western Development Commission](#)

RURAL REGENERATION SCHEME

ATHENRY:

Cross Street enhancement design nearing completion. In addition to incorporating Cross Street to complement the works at the Market Square, the team are including amendments to incorporate areas near the junction of Old Church Street and North Gate Street and the junction of North Gate Street and Burkes Lane.

LOUGHREA:

Updated requested information supporting funding uplift request for the works to the Town Hall has been submitted to the Department and is currently under review.

CLIFDEN:

The Car Parking review of Clifden has been completed and this along with the proposed public realm design is currently being reviewed by the various Directorates including Infrastructure & Operations, Planning & Corporate Services.

PORTUMNA COURTHOUSE:

Design detail and cost analysis currently under consideration.

PORTUMNA PUBLIC REALM:

Public Consultation has been extended to January 20th 2023.

GORT :

Public Realm and Town Centre First Plan Public Consultation took place on Jan 12th 2023. There was a good attendance at the meeting with very positive input on the development of the proposals.

TOURISM

GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING FÁILTE IRELAND IN RELATION TO TOURISM JUST TRANSITION FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES.

Fáilte Ireland has been awarded €68m to deliver a Regenerative Tourism Scheme for the Midlands as part of the Just Transition Fund. The tourism element of the Just Transition Plan, includes allocations of €38million under Regenerative Tourism business supports and €30million for a Tourism Trails Network.

The EU Just Transition Fund in Ireland has 3 priority areas for investment:

- Generating employment through diversification of the local economy
- Restoration of degraded peatlands and regeneration of industrial heritage assets
- Smart and sustainable mobility

Galway County Council and Fáilte Ireland will be exploring tourism potential in East Galway with Government and agencies positioned to confirm the details of the funding schemes by end of Q1 '23.

INIS OÍRR LIGHTHOUSE

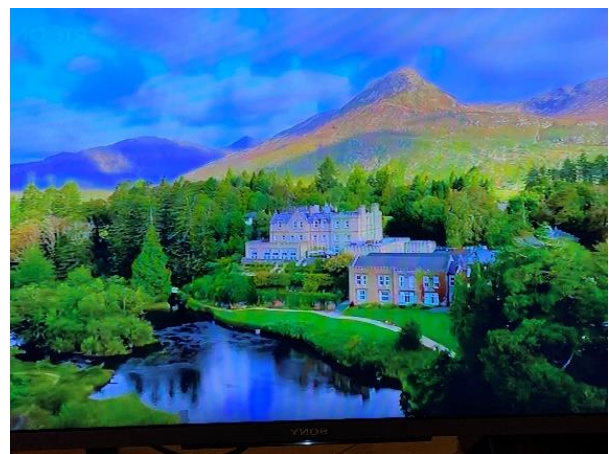
Multiple stakeholders are working together to consider uses for the lighthouse on Inis Oírr with agencies and Galway County Council attending this hybrid event on 18th January organised by the Comhar Caomhán Teo, Inis Oírr.



NEVEN'S FOOD TRAILS

Neven's Food trails was aired on 11 January and we worked with the production team through September to consider tourism opportunities for the Connemara Greenway. We co ordinated with the Conamara Area Office to ensure access for the film crew in September- many thanks to all the team there for their support to Corporate Services for arranging filming permissions.

The programme highlighted Connemara Hamper, Connemara Smokehouse, Ballinahinch Castle, The Greenway Café, Glenlo Abbey Pullman restaurant and captured numerous scenes of Neven cycling The Greenway and to various locations in Connemara.



Galway County Council have just taken delivery of a new Velocity Patcher unit. This brings to 4 the number of such machines in operation across the county.

It is intended that the new Velocity Patcher will be deployed on a shared arrangement between Tuam and Loughrea Municipal Districts based on current need.

Velocity Patchers are an essential tool in ensuring the safe and efficient repair of potholes and maintaining a fit for purpose road network. They clean out the pothole using compressed air and fill the hole with a computer calibrated mix of hot material. It is a much safer procedure than the traditional repair operation, it only involves the driver of the patcher unit and does not require a traffic management crew. Overall, use of a Velocity Patcher provides a cheaper, more effective, and safer outcome. Their use makes it possible to carry out more road repairs than traditional techniques at a lower cost.

Pictures below show the Velocity Patcher in the Machinery Yard, Sandy Road





ATHENRY SEWERAGE SCHEME NETWORK UPGRADE

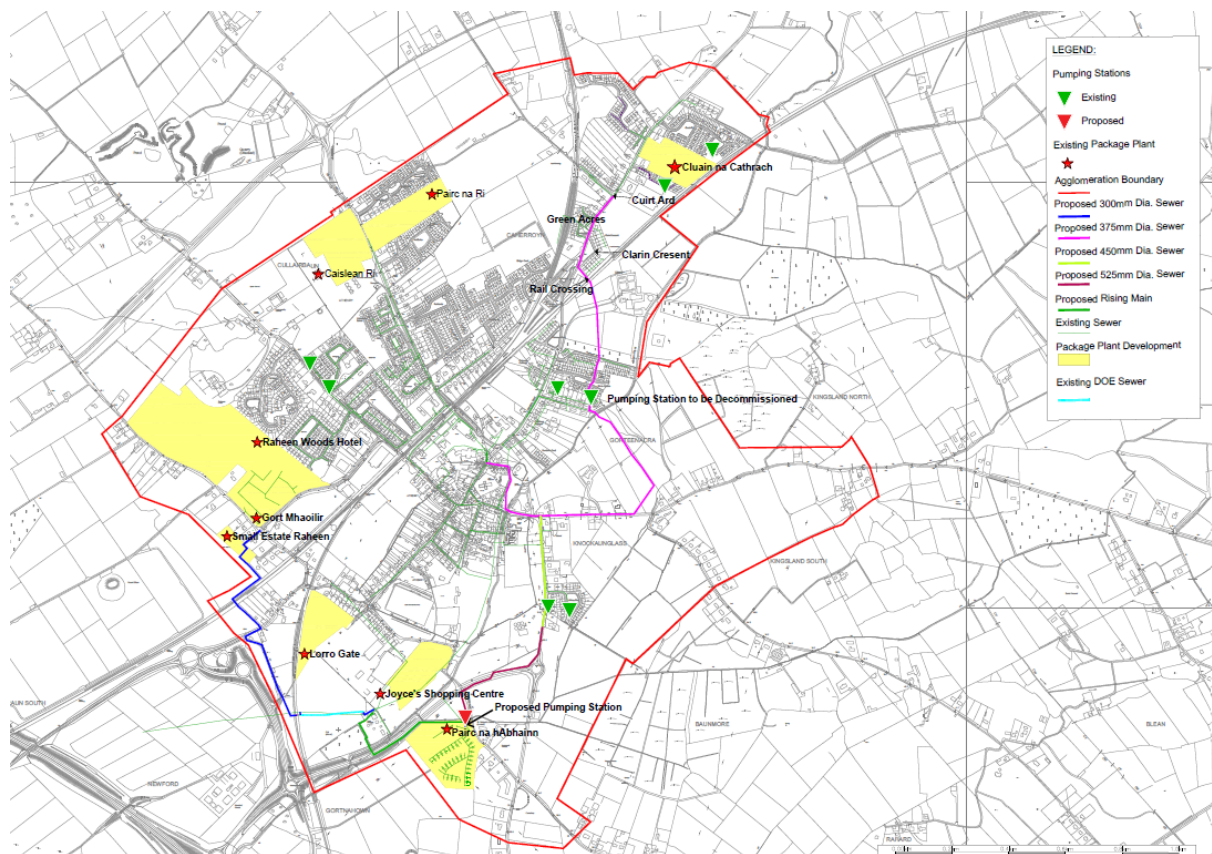
Coffey has been awarded a contract to upgrade the Athenry Sewerage Scheme Network by Irish water. The upgrade is a significant infrastructure project that will help to protect public health and the local environment by ensuring that wastewater is properly collected and transferred for treatment before being released back into the environment. Specifically, the works will allow current and future housing in the town to connect directly to the Athenry wastewater treatment plant and eliminate the existing private treatment plants in use throughout the locality.

The contract consists of the design, provision, construction, testing and commissioning of an upgrade to the Athenry Sewerage Scheme Network including:

- Installation of 493m of rising main and 3,872m of gravity sewer pipes incorporating three rail crossings and two river crossings along the various routes
- Decommissioning and removal of the existing pumping station at Caheroyan
- Construction of new main pumping station adjacent to Pairc na hAbhainn housing estate with rising main which will be connected to Athenry wastewater treatment plant

The works will commence in early 2023 and are forecast to be completed in 2025.

A map showing the extent of the works is shown overleaf.



GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL TO HOST NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACTION GROUP (TAG) MEETING- 27TH JANUARY 2023

The Telecommunications Action Group (TAG) is made up of local authority broadband officers and Dept. of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) staff.

TAG meetings are held regularly and provide an opportunity to discuss NBP roll-out plans, recent events and share experiences and information. TAG meetings also offer an opportunity for broadband officers to network, to receive updates on broadband and mobile services deployment plans.

Through these meetings new initiatives & programs can be highlighted and discussed.

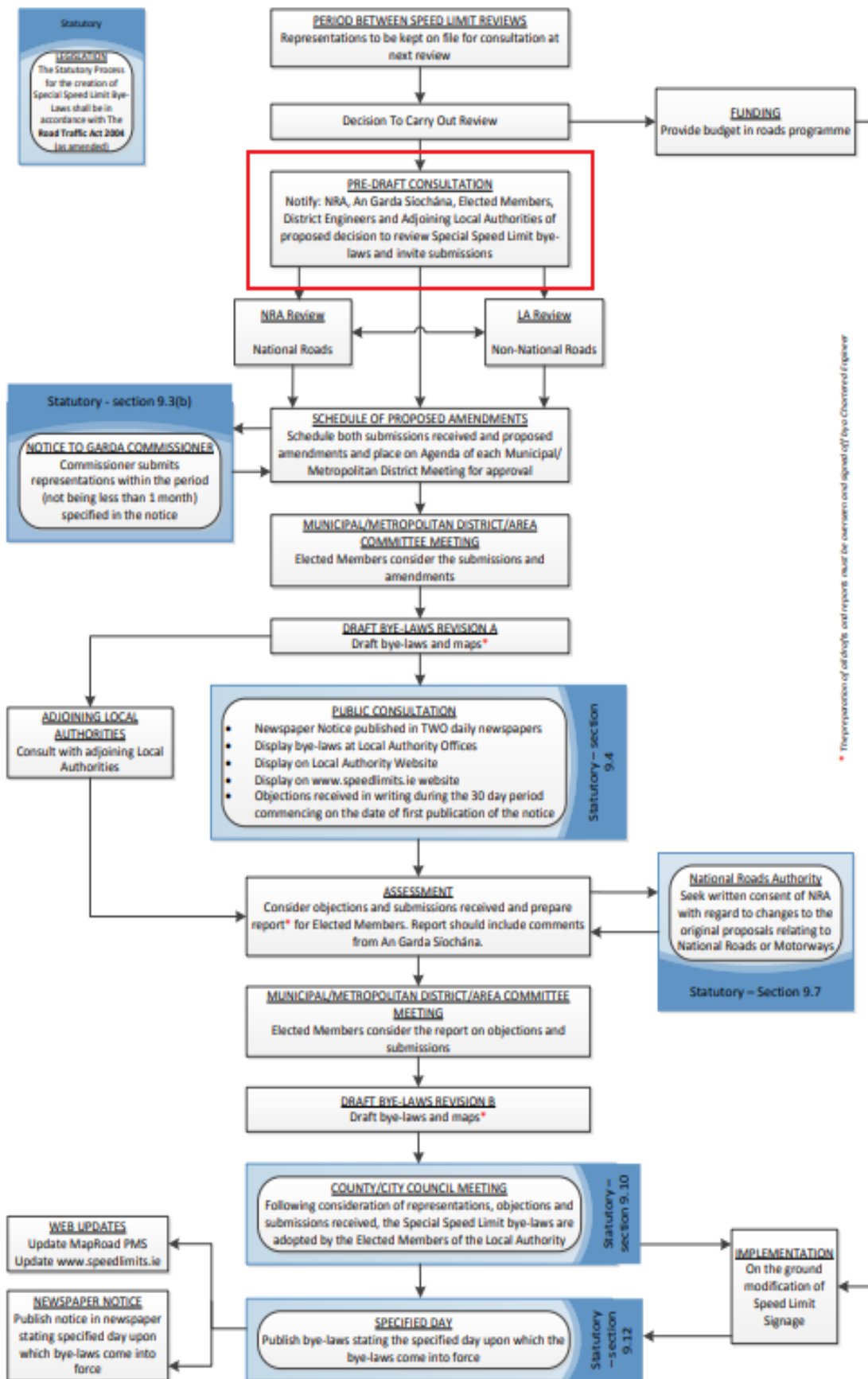
These meetings support action 6 of the [Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce](#) published in April 2022.

The location of these meetings varies and are usually hosted by a county or city council.

On the 27th of January Galway County Council will host the first National Broadband Officers meeting of 2023.

SPEED LIMIT REVIEW – COMMENCING

Local Authorities have, since the enactment of the Road Traffic Act 1994, been required to engage in a consultation process with respect to the publication of Special Speed Limit bye-laws. It is recommended that the process should commence at the earliest opportunity so that the bodies involved can make informed contributions to the overall process. The Road Traffic Act 2004 introduced a requirement for consultation with the general public. All representations and objections relating to proposed bye-laws must be made in writing to the Local Authority.



Consultation includes:

- Advertising for submission of requests for consideration
- Consultation with any adjoining Road Authority in respect of roads which pass through each adjoining Authority to ensure consistency of approach.
- Road Authorities must consult with An Garda Síochána in respect of all proposals relating to Special Speed Limit bye-laws.
- The Road Traffic Act 2004 provides for a public consultation process in relation to the making of Special Speed Limit bye-laws.

Section 9(3) and 9(4) of the Road Traffic Act 2004 sets out a formal consultation process (see flowchart on previous page) that must be followed, however an informal non statutory consultation process is also carried out by many Local Authorities in the drafting of Special Speed Limit bye-laws. Non statutory consultation is carried out by engagement with neighbouring local authorities, local Gardaí, and residential associations and community development groups.

As part of this consultation the members will receive formal written notification in the coming weeks of the commencement of the process. Also, as some members will be new to the process, a document titled “Guidelines For Setting And Managing Speed Limits In Ireland” will also be circulated to the members which provides guidance to Local Authorities, and other practitioners, in making bye-laws in relation to the setting and management of speed limits in Ireland.

BUILDING REGULATIONS (PART M AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2022

The Minister of State with responsibility for Planning and Local Government, has signed new regulations entitled Building Regulations (Part M Amendment) Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 608 of 2022). These revised Regulations make provision for a changing places toilet in certain buildings.

The revised Regulations are accompanied by technical guidance in the form of the Building Regulations 2022 - Technical Guidance Document M – Access and Use, which outlines how compliance with the updated requirements can be achieved in practice.

Changing places toilets offer larger supported sanitary facilities that address the needs of people for whom current accessible sanitary facilities are inadequate.

The key objectives of the amendments are as follows:

- To increase the provision of changing places toilets in certain new buildings, subject to their size and use,
- To ensure adequate standards of accessibility and usability in changing places toilets,
- To improve the accessibility and usability of existing building stock by making provision for a changing places toilet, where there is a significant extension or material change of use, subject to the building size and use,
- To support and complement the aims of the Equality Act 2004, the Disability Act 2005, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- To further the achievement of UN Sustainable Development Goals by reducing inequality and promoting an inclusive society.
- To support and underpin the philosophy of Universal Design.

The new Regulation will enhance the needs of an important segment of our society by the regulatory provision of this sanitary facility in certain buildings and spaces and will greatly improve community participation and social inclusion.

The Building Regulations (Part M Amendment) Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 608 of 2022):

- amend Part M of the Building Regulations to require the provision of a changing places toilet in buildings, having regard to the buildings use and size.

- amend Article 5(4) of the Principal Regulations to include a definition of a ‘changing places toilet’.
- amend Article 5(4) of the Principal Regulations to remove derogatory terms from the definition of an ‘institutional building’.
- repeat the definition of ‘material alteration’ from the Building Regulations (Part M Amendment) Regulations 2010 (S. I. No. 513 of 2010).
- amend Article 13 of the Principal Regulations to require Part M4 to apply to an existing building or part of a building which undergoes a material change of use having regard to the use and size of the building.
- revoke the Building Regulations (Part M Amendment) Regulations 2010 (S. I. No. 513 of 2010).

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (EXEMPTED DEVELOPMENT) (NUMBER 5) REGULATIONS 2022

The Regulations insert a new Article (Article 8H) into the Planning and Development Regulations 2001. Article 8H provides that the replacement of broadleaf high forest by conifer species in areas less than 10 hectares (in areas other than a city, a town or other specified areas), currently exempted under Article 6(3) of the Planning and Development Regulations, remains exempted from the planning system even where an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and/or Appropriate Assessment (AA) is required. In accordance with Section 4(4A) of the Planning and Development Act, the EIA and/or AA will be carried out pursuant to licencing processes under Section 6 of the Forestry Act 2014.

The replacement of broadleaf high forest by conifer species in areas less than 10 hectares (in areas other than a city, a town or other specified areas) is exempt entirely from planning, including where an EIA and/or AA is required for that development, with the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Marine acting as the single consenting authority.

BUILT HERITAGE INVESTMENT SCHEME 2023 – SUPPLEMENTARY RING-FENCED FUNDING FOR HISTORIC THATCHED STRUCTURES.



Galway County Council has been allocated €115,984 under this ring-fenced stream. The conditions attached to this funding are as follows:

How will the ring-fenced stream operate?

The ring-fenced thatch funding will be awarded on broadly the same basis, using the same application form and to the same deadlines as the mainstream BHIS, with applications being made through the local authorities in the first instance. Grants to thatched structures may also continue to be made from the local authority’s mainstream BHIS allocation under the terms and conditions of that allocation.

Eligibility requirements

The following thatched structures may be funded under the ring-fenced stream:

- Thatched structures that are included in the Record of Protected Structures of the relevant local authority
- Thatched structures that are proposed for inclusion in the RPS
- Other historic thatched structures which are neither currently protected/nor proposed for protection.

Eligible works

Funded works will not be limited to repairs to the thatch itself and all eligible conservation works listed in the BHIS Circular will be eligible for funding under this stream.

Awards

Grants of up to €20,000 may be awarded under the ring-fenced thatch stream.

Whereas the mainstream BHIS generally requires private match funding of a minimum of 50% of the total project cost, the ring-fenced thatch stream will only require a minimum of 20% match funding. Unlike the mainstream BHIS, the match funding may include other grant funding.

Underspend of ring-fenced funding

Local authorities should note that the ring-fenced funding may be used solely to fund conservation repairs to eligible historic thatched structures.

AMENDMENTS TO THE SUSTAINABLE URBAN HOUSING - DESIGN STANDARDS FOR NEW APARTMENTS GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING AUTHORITIES (2020)

Pursuant to Section 28(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, this amendment removes Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) 7 and 8 of the Apartment Guidelines (see Appendix II for detail of the SPPRs that are removed). The effect of this amendment is that Build To Rent (BTR) is no longer a distinct class of development for planning purposes, and that planning standards for BTR development are required to be the same as those for all other generally permissible apartment types.

Section 5.0 of the Apartment Guidelines continues to recognise BTR development as a valid form of rental accommodation and sets out typical characteristics, but with no allowable divergence from the minimum standards for apartments generally, which are set out in Sections 3.0 and Section 4.0 of the Guidelines. This ensures that apartment developments, irrespective of the intended end user, will be designed to the same minimum standards.

This amendment shall come into effect on **22nd December 2022**.

TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

All current appeals or planning applications (including any outstanding SHD applications and appeals consequent to a current planning application), that are subject to consideration within the planning system on or before 21st December 2022, will be considered and decided in accordance with the current version of the Apartment Guidelines, that include SPPRs 7 and 8.

Furthermore, in cases where a request for a Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) meeting has been submitted to a local authority for a proposal that includes specified BTR development in accordance with s.32B of the Planning and Development Act on or before the date of this Circular (21st December 2022), even if the LRD meeting has yet to take place, the opinion has yet to issue, or a planning application has yet to be made but is made within 6 months of receipt of the opinion as required by s.32A of the Act, the development will be assessed by the local authority and where applicable, on appeal to the Board, in accordance with the Guidelines issued prior to the BTR update i.e. the version of the Apartment Guidelines that includes SPPRs 7 and 8, will remain applicable.

RESIDENTIAL ZONED LAND TAX: SUBMISSIONS BY LANDOWNERS REQUESTING ZONING AMENDMENTS

Circular Letter: NRUP 07/2022 dated the 21st December 2022 included additional guidance to assist planning authorities in the process of considering any submissions requesting a change to statutory land use zonings, as facilitated under Section 653I(1)(a) and (b) of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 (as amended).

CONTEXT

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) was announced in Budget 2022 and is contained in the Finance Act 2021. The provisions of the tax are due to come into effect on 1 February 2024.

The principal purpose of the Residential Zoned Land Tax is to encourage the *timely* activation of zoned *and serviced* residential development land for housing, rather than solely to raise revenue. It is intended that the Residential Zoned Land Tax will function as a significant incentive to bringing forward suitably zoned and serviced land for residential development. As referenced in Circular NRUP 02/2022 The Department published section 28 guidelines¹ on the 29 June 2022 to assist planning authorities and stakeholders in meeting their obligations under the legislation, in order to activate zoned and serviced land for housing.

Circular NRUP 02/2022 also indicated that a Section 29 Ministerial Policy Directive would be issued to facilitate consideration of rezoning submissions received during the public display periods for the draft and supplemental maps. Having considered the existing provisions in legislation and statutory guidelines, rather than issuing a Ministerial Policy Directive, this

Circular draws attention to the provisions available to planning authorities for the purposes of expediting requests for rezoning.

Mapping of the land which satisfies the relevant criteria is undertaken by the planning authority, while management of the Residential Zoned Land Tax, including liability, payment and enforcement, will be undertaken by the Revenue Commissioners. Maps must be updated annually by planning authorities.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Draft maps identifying land that satisfies the relevant criteria were published by all planning authorities on 1 November 2022. A supplemental map (as provided for in Section 653F of the TCA 1997) may be published where necessary by 1 May 2023, with the process to be completed with publication of the final map by 1 December 2023.

ACCEPTING AND PUBLISHING SUBMISSIONS

During the public notification periods for the draft maps (1 November 2022 – 1 January 2023) and supplemental maps (1 May 2023 to 1 June 2023), submissions may be made by the owners of land identified as satisfying the relevant criteria on the maps in order to remove their lands from the scope of the tax by the rezoning of the land. The provision for making these requests for rezoning is only available during the first undertaking of the mapping process for the tax in order to afford an opportunity for land previously unaffected by the taxation measure to seek amendment to avoid the tax. It is not available for any subsequent annual review of maps for the purpose of the tax.

Submissions relating to zoned sites which are not mapped for the purpose of the Residential Zoned Land Tax on a draft or supplemental map shall not be considered for a change of zoning.

Submissions requesting changes to zoning are subject to timelines for publication as set out in Section 13(3A) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 i.e. within 10 working days of receipt, including provision for application of Section 251 of the Planning Act 2000 regarding discounted days, where such a submission is made between 25 December and 1 January. All other submissions received during the draft map and supplemental map notification periods, must be published by the planning authority by 11 January 2023 and 11 June 2023 respectively.

As set out in sections 653D and 653G of the Taxes and Consolidation Act 1997 (as introduced by Finance Act 2021), submissions from landowners are to be accompanied by a site location plan to a scale sufficient to identify the land with the landowner's site outlined. The planning authority may seek additional information from landowners proving ownership.

A total of 51 submissions were received by the closing date of the 1st January 2023 and all submissions have been published to the consult portal and are available via www.consult.galway.ie.

CONSIDERATIONS DURING PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Whilst Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) provides that a planning authority may commence the process of variation of their development plan at any time, it is recommended that the process of reviewing all rezoning submissions received should be undertaken as a single, collective variation process after the public notification period for the supplemental map has ended on 1 June 2023. This approach will enable the full and cumulative assessment of the impact of all rezoning submissions received in relation to the publication of draft and supplemental maps on the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

As a consequence of collectively considering submissions and the timelines involved in preparing for and undertaking variation to the development plan, the process might not be completed by 1 November in order for the outcome to be reflected on the Final Map published on 1 December 2023. In this regard, attention is drawn to Section 653AE(1)(c) of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 (as amended), which allows for a deferral of tax by a landowner where a variation has not been made as a consequence of a submission made under Section 653I. As Section 653AE(1)(c) allows that anyone who has made a submission can apply for a deferral of liability, there is an imperative to ensure that rezoning requests are considered and the process to commence consideration of a variation to the development plan as appropriate is undertaken as soon as is practicable after 1 June.

Once a request for rezoning has been received, the planning authority must consider a number of key planning criteria as part of assessment of whether land should be subject to a proposed variation to amend the zoning objective. In this regard, attention is drawn to relevant parts of the Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities (July 2022) and the Residential Zoned Land Tax – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (June 2022) issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

The impact of any proposed rezoning on the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area including the core strategy and housing supply targets for the county, as identified in the Development Plan, will be of particular relevance and Section 4.4 of the Development Plans Guidelines is considered helpful in this regard. Planning Authorities should ensure that any amendments to zonings will continue to ensure compliance with the requirements of Section 10(2A) of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

The sequential approach to zoning, as specified under Section 6.2.3, of the Development Plans Guidelines, is also of particular importance in assessing the merits of requests for zoning changes from landowners. Accordingly, planning authorities should appropriately prioritise spatially central sites within settlements for new housing development consistent with the compact growth, utilisation of existing infrastructure and town regeneration national policy objectives of the NPF.

In considering rezoning proposals, planning authorities may have information to hand on the serviced status of alternative lands which may be required to meet the objectives of the development plan, available from the development plan and RZLT mapping processes. Where necessary, it would be useful to seek advice from statutory authorities to assist in identification of suitably serviced alternative lands where amendment to zoning is being considered.

FINANCIAL IMPACT AND EXISTING LAND USE

While the financial impact of the tax on the landowner may form a reason for requests to amend zonings, this is not a planning matter and therefore should not be considered. The existing use of the land by the landowner will need to be considered and balanced against the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, including the need to meet development plan housing supply targets within existing or new serviced land. The Development Plans Guidelines should be relied upon to frame decision-making on the requests to amend zoning.

Issues such as contamination of land, archaeological remains or other criteria considered as part of scoping the land for the purpose of the tax under section 653B may also form part of submissions made requesting amendments to zonings. Where such issues arise as part of rezoning submissions, the local authority may decide to take this into account in considering whether the land use zoning should be amended, or whether the lands satisfy the relevant criteria in the first instance.

ZONINGS CONTAINED IN LOCAL AREA PLANS

Where the statutory land use plan for an area or settlement is a Local Area Plan, any process to amend a zoning contained within an LAP can only be undertaken through variation of the development plan as set out in Section 653I of the TCA 1997 which directly references Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. Amendment to the local area plan alone would not address the housing targets within the development plan associated with settlements, including the settlement to which the LAP applied. Variation of the development plan will ensure that amendments to zonings which would require rebalancing of the housing supply targets and core strategy are adequately addressed. Co-ordination between planning authorities is recommended where requests for zoning amendments are received for a settlement subject to a joint local area plan.

Where a development plan as varied under this process results in a conflict with a local area plan currently in force, section 18(4)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 will apply whereby that conflicting provision within the local area plan shall cease to have any effect.

DECISION TO PROPOSE TO MAKE A VARIATION TO A DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Upon review of the submissions received and taking into account the guidance provided within the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines referenced and any other relevant policy and guidelines, the planning authority may propose to make a variation to the development plan. The decision to initiate the statutory process of varying the development plan is an executive function.

Provision is also made within Section 13(1A) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 for the elected members to submit a resolution to the Chief Executive of the planning authority requesting him or her to prepare a report on a proposal by them to initiate a process to consider the variation of the development plan which for the time being is in force. Such a resolution requires three quarters of the members of that authority have approved it. In responding to such a motion, the Chief Executive is required to prepare a report on the proposed variation within four weeks. If the Chief Executive considers that the proposal is not justified taking account of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, the statutory obligations of any local authority in the area and any relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government or of any Minister of the Government, the report must outline reasons for not initiating the variation process, in writing.

The process of undertaking a variation of the development plan shall follow the process set out in Section 13(2) – (14) of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

Where a request to amend a zoning has been submitted in accordance with the provisions of the legislation but the process of assessment and consideration by the local authority has not been completed by 1 month prior to publication of the final map on 1 December 2023, the land shall remain on the final map as published. As stated above, there is an imperative to ensure that rezoning requests are considered and the process to commence consideration of a variation to the development plan as appropriate is undertaken as soon as is practicable after 1 June. However, the owner of the land may seek a deferral of payment pending the outcome of the process under section 653I, as provided for in S653AE (1) (c) of the TCA 1997.

PLAN EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT BY THE OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR (OPR)

As is the case for any variation of the development plan, the OPR may provide statutory observations and recommendations during the variation process, as provided for by Section 31(AM) of the Planning Act. Under Section 31AM (8) of the Act, the OPR, shall make a recommendation to the Minister to use his or her functions to take such steps as to rectify matters where a variation of a development plan has been made in a manner which is not consistent with recommendation of the Office or where it would fail to set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area concerned. As set out above, the provisions of S.653AE(1)(c) would allow for deferral of tax liability for land where a matter contained in a variation to a development plan relevant to that land was subject to a Ministerial Direction as Section 31(6) would apply until such time as a direction under S.31(16) is issued.

CONCLUSION

It is intended that the Residential Zoned Land Tax will function as a significant incentive to bringing forward suitably zoned and serviced land for residential development. The legislative provisions for RZLT facilitate requests from landowners with land in scope as identified on the first set of maps published in 2022/23 to seek a rezoning of their land. The Circular, and the Section 28 Guidelines referred to above, with particular reference to the Development Plans Guidelines, provide planning guidance to planning authorities in considering rezoning requests, and where appropriate to commence the process of undertaking a variation to the development plan under the existing provisions set out within Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000

Join the library



plus a Mobile Library catering for 63 individual stops and communities.

The public are encouraged to make joining their local library a New Year Resolution and begin to enjoy all that the Library Service has to offer in term of events, services, interesting reading material for young and old, newspapers, exhibitions etc. There are 29 service points dotted across County Galway



BOOK CLUBS

Plans are underway to set up 2 book clubs for autistic adults. One of these will be located in Oranmore Library and one in the City. A facilitator will be provided, and book club sets have been purchased. This is a first for a public library in Ireland and will afford a safe, inclusive space to discuss reading choices but more importantly will provide another social network for autistic adults.

SCHOOLS SECTION

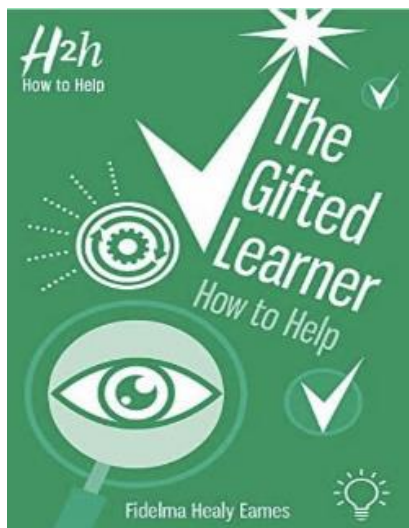
Galway Public Library Schools Department currently serves approximately 250 primary schools in the city and county with loan material. The Schools Service library van services 235 primary schools in rural Galway. This is a dedicated van which visits schools on average twice per year to facilitate exchange of classroom book stock. In 2022 the Schools Section provided approximately 11,500 items to school classrooms, as well as 465 individual item requests to teachers.

The Schools Section's major role is the provision of classroom novel sets to teachers, whereby multiple copies of a title are supplied on request to teachers for their classroom to read during a school term. Lists of available book sets for junior and senior classes, as well as book sets available as Gaeilge, are provided to teachers to select from and the sets are then sent out to local branch libraries for collection. In 2022 the Schools Section supplied 293 class sets of up to 29 copies at a time to various school classrooms in the city and county.



The Schools Section, which is located in Library Headquarters, Island House can be contacted on info@galwaylibrary.ie or 091-509388.

THE GIFTED LEARNER IN ORANMORE LIBRARY



Former member of Galway County Council and former member of Seanad Éireann Dr. Fidelma Healy Eames was in Oranmore Library on Saturday 14th January to give a short talk and presentation on her book *The Gifted Learner-How to Help*. The talk was suitable for parents and teachers or indeed anybody with a gifted learner in their life. The book is the result of considerable original research over 2.5 years. The book can be borrowed from any Library Branch.

COMICS AND GRAPHIC NOVELS



Galway Library Service provides free access to a vast range of comics and graphic novels through the ComicsPlus App. Your Library card grants you access to comics from publishers such as Dark Horse Comics, Archie Comics and more.

GALWAY ADVERTISER CHRISTMAS ART COMPETITION 2022



The City Library on Augustine Street currently is displaying the winning entries from the Galway Advertiser Art Competition held before Christmas. Entries were received from all over the City and County and winning entries are on display until January 23rd.

Mise, le meas,

Mr. Jim Cullen

Chief Executive

Galway County Council

20th January 2023