

Scandal of child homelessness

■ Housing Minister to meet local authorities over high level of families in shelters

BY DECLAN TIERNEY

UNDER-FIRE Housing Minister James Browne has given a commitment to visit Galway to witness at first hand the scandal of child homelessness in the west - described by a Galway West TD as the worst in the country.

Minister Browne confirmed that he will meet with both Galway County Council and Galway City Council after hearing that there were 28 families in emergency accommodation for the past two years.

He was responding to concerns raised by Deputy John Connolly on the extent of child homelessness throughout the city and county as well as the West of Ireland in general.

The Fianna Fáil TD said that, outside of Dublin, the west region has the highest number of homeless children.

"There is no other region outside of Dublin that is comparable. The figures in every other region are in single digits but there are 28 families in the west region.

"That is very concerning. It

is not simply the lack of shelter but the long-term impact for those children of homelessness," he said.

"We are well used to hearing the well-worn phrase that it takes a village to rear a child, but these children are not part of a community.

"They are in emergency accommodation which is short term and it may not be somewhere that they will be for a long time. It is crucial that we challenge this," added Deputy Connolly.

He said that in the west re-

gion there are four local authorities, namely Galway City Council, Galway County Council, Mayo County Council and Roscommon County Council involved but Galway City Council is the lead authority.

He said that he was concerned that additional resources, both human and financial, have not been provided to Galway City Council to carry out that role.

"I ask the Minister to examine that. Given that Galway City Council is the regional lead in the west region for homeless-

ness and emergency accommodation provision, the Minister might consider providing additional staff to cover that area," the Galway West TD stated.

Minister Browne acknowledged Deputy Connolly's concerns in relation to homelessness and it was one that was close to his heart.

He added that the prevention of people going into homelessness was absolutely critical and that was something that his department was working on

"I will meet the two Galway local authorities in the coming weeks. I will head to Galway to meet both the city and county councils.

"I am aware of the Deputy's data that shows that area is having particular challenges outside the Dublin region, so I want to engage with the local authorities.

"The staffing will remain under review, but we want to ensure the supports are being put in place to ensure we can prevent people going into homelessness."



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

NOTICE OF PROPOSED MATERIAL ALTERATIONS TO THE DRAFT GORT LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025-2031

IN ACCORDANCE WITH:

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000, AS AMENDED,
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001, AS AMENDED
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2004, AS AMENDED

Notice is hereby given that the Members of Loughrea Municipal District, having considered the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 and the Chief Executive's Report in respect of submissions received, have resolved in accordance with Section 20 3(e) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, that the Draft Local Area Plan be amended. The proposed amendments constitute material alterations to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031.

In accordance with Section 20 3(f) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), Galway County Council has screened the Proposed Material Alterations for the need to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) and has determined that: SEA is required with respect to certain Proposed Material Alterations; and Stage 2 AA is not required for any Proposed Material Alteration.

A copy of the proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031, the SEA and AA Screening Determinations in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and associated SEA and AA documents (including information on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the proposed Material Alterations that is included in the SEA Environmental Report on Proposed Material Alterations) will be available for public display and may be inspected from Thursday 22nd May until 4pm Friday 20th June 2025 inclusive during normal opening hours at the following locations:

- <https://consult.galway.ie/>
- Planning Office, Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway, H91 H6KX (Monday-Friday 9.00 am - 4.00 pm)
- Gort Library, Church Road H91 F5P8 (Wednesday /Friday 11.00 am - 1.00 pm & 2.00 pm - 5.00 pm; Thursday 2.00 pm - 5.00 pm & 6.00 pm - 8.00 pm; Saturday 11.00 am - 1.00 pm & 2.00 pm - 5.00 pm; (closed Sunday, Monday, Tuesday)
- Gort Area Office, Crowe St, Gort, Co. Galway H91 W7W5 (Monday to Friday 9.00 am - 1.00 pm & 2.00 pm - 5.00 pm)

Written Submissions or observations with respect to the proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031, the SEA and AA determinations in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and the associated SEA and AA documents (including information on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the proposed Material Alterations that is included in the SEA Environmental Report on Proposed Material Alterations) are invited from members of the public and other interested parties. Written submissions or observations must state the full name and address of the person or relevant body, or agency making Material Alterations and should be clearly marked "Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031", and should quote the relevant proposed material alteration reference number(s) (which commences with 'MA').

Submissions may be made within the above period and before 4.00 pm Friday 20th June 2025. Written submissions or observations should be clearly marked "Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Gort LAP 2025-2031 and must be submitted either:

Online: Online by visiting <https://consult.galway.ie/>

By Email: Sent by email to forwardplanning@galwaycoco.ie

In Writing: In writing and addressed to:

'Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan' Forward Planning Section, Galway County Council, Prospect Hill, Galway.

The closing date for Submissions/Observations is Friday 20th June 2025 at 4.00 pm.

Late Submissions will not be accepted.

Please send your submission/observation through one medium only either in writing or electronically.

In respect of making a submission or observation please note the following:

Children or groups and associations representing the interests of children are entitled to make submissions or observations regarding policy objectives to deliver an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the LAP.

Galway County Council is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act (as amended). Please be advised that all submissions received will be published online in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act.

You should ensure that no vexatious, libellous or confidential information, including confidential information relating to a third party (in respect of which the third party has not, expressly, or impliedly in the circumstances, consented to its disclosure) is included in your submission. The Planning Authority reserves the right to redact any submission or part thereof that does not comply with this requirement. Please be advised that the submission will be published in full.

Galway County Council is subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act (as amended) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). In order to assist us in complying with Data Protection and GDPR please include your name and contact details (and where relevant, details of any organisation, community group or company etc., which you represent), on a separate sheet to the content of your submission/ observation. This processing of your personal data is lawful under Article 6 (1)(e) of the GDPR regulations. The Council's Data Protection Policy is available on the Council website.

Please note that in accordance with Section 19 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2018 all valid submissions received by the Council shall be published on the Galway County Council website within 10 working days of its receipt by the Council. The planning process is an open and public process and therefore your submission (in part or in total) will be available to view online at <https://consult.galway.ie/>. All observations or submissions received during the above time period will be taken into consideration before the making of the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031.

Hard copies of the Material Alterations and associated documentation are available for purchase from the Planning Department.

Lobbying

Lobbying is an essential part of the democratic process. It enables or facilitates citizens and organisations to make their views on public policy and public services such as land use zoning known to politicians and public servants (designated Public Officials). If you are involved in lobbying, you may need to:

- Register on the Register of Lobbying website which is maintained by Standards Commission www.lobbying.ie.
- Provide information to the Standards Commission about your lobbying activities three times a year.
- Please visit www.lobbying.ie for more information.

The personal information (data) collected during the consultation process (which may include the collection of sensitive personal data) is collected for the purpose of receiving and dealing with submissions and any data collected is subject to Galway County Council's privacy statement which can be found at <http://www.galway.ie/en/services/yourcouncil/privacystatement/>

Tá míle fáilte roimh chomhfhreagras agus ghnó i nGaillimhe: gaeilge@cocogailimh.ie www.gailimh.ie

✉ customerservices@galwaycoco.ie www.galway.ie

✉ @GalwayCoCo

J. Brann, Rúnaí Contae