**Minutes of Special Meeting of Galway City Council**

**Held on Monday 20th February 2017,**

**at 3.00 p.m., in City Hall, College Road, Galway.**

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**Presiding: Cllr.N. Larkin, Mayor of the City of Galway CHECK ATTENDANCE**

**Present: Councillors: C. Ó Conchúir, P. Conneely, C. Connolly, M.J. Crowe, O. Crowe, M. Cubbard, F. Fahy, M. Farrell, P. Flannery, P. Keane, M. Lohan, D. Lyons, D. McDonnell, N. McNelis, T. O'Flaherty and J. Walsh. I HAVE ONE TOO MANY**

**In Attendance: Mr. B. McGrath, Chief Executive**

**Mr. T. Connell, Director of Services**

**Ms. E. McCormack, Head of Finance / Director of Services**

**Ms. P. Philbin, A/Director of Services**

**Mr. G. McMahon, Meetings Administrator**

**Mr. D. Mahon, Senior Executive Officer**

**Mr. U. Finn, Senior Engineer**

**Mr. Liam Blake, Senior Executive Planner**

**Mr. J. Nyirenda, Traveller Accommodation Programme Manager**

**Ms. S. Loughnane, Executive Engineer**

**Ms. K. Lohan, Clerical Officer**

**Ms J. Georges, Clerical Officer**

Mayor Larkin proposed that Item 3 on the agenda be taken first. This was agreed.

**3. Business Prescribed by Statute**

**(a) Proposal for a Material Contravention of Galway City Development Plan 2017- 23 under Section 34 (6) of the Planning & Development Act (2000) to facilitate the provision of a single storey extension to No. 302 Corrib Park (Pl.Ref/16/310)**

Mr. L. Blake referred to a report previously circulated outlining the issues regarding the proposed Material Contravention and the related planning application. He indicated that following advertising the proposal publicly, no submissions had been received. He also indicated the positive recommendation of the Chief Executive in the matter.

Cllr. O. Crowe proposed, seconded by Cllr. McDonnell, the adoption of the proposal. This was unanimously agreed by all 16 members present.

**1. Traveller Accommodation Programme**

**(a) To receive an overview on Traveller Accommodation across Galway City**

**(b) To hear a presentation by Galway Traveller Movement**

**(c ) Adopt mid-term review on Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 – 2018 pursuant to the Traveller Accommodation Act 1998**

Mr. D. Mahon, Senior Executive Officer, outlined in a presentation to the Mayor and Members (previously circulated) the range of historical and current issues in relation to Traveller accommodation and TAP. He indicated costs of traveller accommodation and details of issues around estate management. He indicated the scope and size of existing traveller-specific accommodation and the five possible proposed sites to cater for emergency accommodation. He outlined the process of the mid-term review of TAP 2014 -2018 including the series of meetings undertaken throughout the month of February. In conclusion he emphasised the requirement to complete the mid-term review and indicated the current objectives around the Urban Horse Project and the complementary allocations of housing to Traveller families through other means including HAP, RAS and long-term-leasing.

Ms. B. Kelly and Ms M. Ó Riada on behalf of Galway Traveller Movement then made a presentation to the Mayor and Members, ‘Understanding Traveller Accommodation Needs in Galway City – Promoting Cultural Diversity: An Equality Perspective.’ In their presentation they gave an introduction to GTM and its main areas of work. They supported this background with a range of statistics relating to Travellers in Galway city including demography and health information. They went on to outline various activities in the areas of education, enterprise and work. They outlined the difficulties experienced by some Traveller families in securing accommodation in the city including the situation at Carrowbrowne Temporary and Transient sites, the over-crowded situation at Cúl Trá and the issue of homelessness. Four imperatives for action on Traveller accommodation including legal, democratic, administrative and value-led were outlined. The need for sustainable solutions to Traveller accommodations were outline including the opportunities to link with the Local Economic & Community Plan of the LCDC and to link with a range of agencies in a collaborative cross-sectoral relationship.

Mr. Jack Keyes addressed the Mayor and Members on behalf of CENA which is an Approved Housing Body which focuses on culturally-appropriate accommodation especially for Traveller families. He outline a range of projects which associates of the CENA AHB had previously been involved in and lessons learned including ensuring a high level of Traveller involvement, working with established family groupings and the value of a partnership approach between Traveller support organisations and Local Authorities. He advised that Galway City Council had successfully bid to pilot one housing project with CENA which has funding stream of its own to the value of €1 million.

Mayor Larkin thanked the presenters for their contribution. On the proposal of Cllr. McDonnell, seconded by Cllr. Fahy and agreed by all present, Standing Orders were suspended to allow each Member 5 minutes speaking time. The Mayor invited comments and questions from Members.

Issues raised in a very lengthy discussion *inter alia* included: the number of existing sites in the East Ward in comparison to the Central and West Wards; the costs incurred in dealing with illegal encampments; the history of Traveller housing in the city; issues around the control of horses and the status of the Urban Horse Project; whether the provision of hard-stand halting site is a failed concept; the preference of some Members for full ‘social integration’ of Traveller families in ‘standard’ housing; issues around the purchase and cost of lands at Keeraun; safety concerns around over-crowding in Cúl Trá; the zoning of land at the suggested potential site in Westside; issues of ‘behaviour’ and respect’ and ENA’s mission statement; the vindication of Travellers’ rights; anti-social behaviour; the potential of the former airport site for use as an emergency transient site; the TAP in the context of the wider housing crisis; the powers available to the Chief Executive; thew funding available to the CENA project and the status and urgency of adopting the mid-term review of the TAP.

Responses and clarifications were provided by the Chief Executive, the acting Director of Services, the Senior Executive Officer in Housing and by Mr. Keyes and Ms Ó Riada.

In the course of debate, two motions had been proposed:

Proposed by: Cllr. M. Cubbard

Seconded by: Cllr O. Crowe

**“As the site in Westside is land locked, not levelled, adjacent to homes, businesses, sports facilities and a public walkway, I propose it be removed as consideration for a halting site as part of the Traveller Accommodation Plan 2014 – 2018.”**

Proposed by: Cllr. P. Keane

Seconded by: Cllr. O. Crowe

**“TEXT TO BE INSERTED”**

Following discussion, Cllr. Keane agreed to the deferral of his motion to the next meeting of the Council on 6th March subject to the text being referred for legal opinion.

On the proposal of Cllr. O. Crowe, seconded by Cllr. Ó Conchúr, it was agreed to leave Cllr. Cubbard’s motion on the agenda for the next meeting pending clarification around Cllr. Keane’s motion.

On the proposal of Cllr. McDonnell, seconded by Cllr. McNelis, the suspension of Standing Orders was rescinded with all 13 Members present at the time in favour.

Having reached 7.30pm, on the proposal of Cllr. Lyons, seconded by Cllr. Cubbard, it was proposed to extend the meeting to deal with Item 2. until 8.00pm and to return to the discussion of the Traveller Accommodation Programme Mid-term Review and the Standing Orders Review at the next Ordinary Meeting to commence at 2.00pm on 6th March.

In favour: 8 Against: 4 Absent: 6

**2. Review of Standing Orders**

**(a) To consider the report from Procedures Committee on the Draft Standing Orders Review.**

Mr. D. Mahon, SEO, introduced the report on the review of Standing Orders from the Procedures Committee.

Members discussed, proposed, seconded and agreed the adoption of Standing Orders 1, 3, 4 and 5. It was agreed to defer decision on S.O.2 until 6th March pending the availability of an English translation of the prayer.

1. **The Meeting ended at 8.00 pm .**