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

**Held on Monday 23rd January 2017,**

**at 4.00 p.m., in City Hall, College Road, Galway.**

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

**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, T. O'Flaherty and J. Walsh.**

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

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

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

**Ms. E. Ruane, A/Director of Services**

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

**Mr. P. Foley, Meetings Administrator**

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

**Mr. J. Tansey, Senior Engineer**

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

**Mr. J. Molloy, Senior Executive Engineer**

**Mr. G. McMahon, A/ Senior Executive Officer**

**Mr. S. Walsh, Senior Executive Parks Superintendent**

**Ms. C. Phelan, Senior Planner**

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

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

**Apologies: Cllrs. B Cameron and N. McNelis**

At the beginning of the meeting The Mayor proposed that the Draft Annual Service Plan be considered as an Item. This was agreed by members present.

1. **1. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS OF OFFICIALS**
2. Quarterly Reports for Quarter Ending 30th September 2016 – Reports previously issued (October 2016)

(i) Transportation

(ii) Housing

(iii) Community, Culture & Economic Development

(iv) Environment

(v) Recreation & Amenity

It was agreed to note the Quarterly report for the quarter ending 30th September 2017.

2. **2(a). Draft Annual Service Delivery Plan 2017**

**Water Services**

A number of Councillors including Cllrs. McDonnell, Lyons, Ó Conchúir, Connolly, Fahy, Cubbard, Conneely & O. Crowe raised issues in relation to Water Services relating to procedures dealing with leaks, emergency call outs, advance notifications by Irish Water of outages & blocked gullies.

Detailed replies were issued from Ms. E. McCormack Head of Finance/Director of Services. Ms McCormack noted that Irish Water had a pilot programme in place for leaks and repairs along with a dedicated line for problems. She also advised that Mutton Island had capacity to take additional PE following a recent upgrade. In relation to planned outages she stated that leaflet drops formed part of Contractors Agreements.

**Recreation & Amenity**

Councillors raised a number of issues including Playgrounds in need of repair or reopening at Salthill, Bohermore, & South Park. Other issues highlighted included Leisureland, Cemeteries, the acquisition of additional land at Cappagh Park, Sports Capital Grants, Raft at Salthill, Grass-cutting & Roundabout maintenance.

In his response to Councillors, Mr. S. Walsh, Executive Parks Superintendent, advised that there were surface difficulties with the Playgrounds at Salthill and Bohermore which were being addressed. He stated that City Council had responsibility for 23 playground sites around the city which needed reinvestment and upgrading due to age and wear & tear. Mr Walsh also confirmed in terms of Health & Safety, that inspections took place on a daily basis by Environment & twice weekly by the Parks Departments. In relation to grass-cutting, Mr Walsh highlighted that the Council has limited resources along with an ageing fleet and that work has to be prioritised within the Parks Department given that some of the crew are doing multiple works.

In his reply to Councillors Mr. T. Connell highlighted the benefits of the many playgrounds to the City and that the Council has provided €100,000 in the 2017 budget towards upgrading works. He also confirmed that Members will be given a timeframe for the completion of works and reopening of playgrounds that are currently closed. Mr Connell also stated that it was very positive to see Cappagh Park facilities extensively used and it was an objective of Galway City Council to acquire land there, along with examining lands at Merlin Park and Terryland Forrest Park. Mr Connell also outlined that Galway City Council has a programme ready for grass-cutting from early March. In relation to the South Park Masterplan he confirmed that he would bring it before Councillors during summer 2017.

The Chief Executive Mr. Brendan McGrath stated that there is no fund provided in the budget to enable seven day burials. Mr McGrath also stated that interviews will be carried out by an independent panel for the Manager of Leisureland in early February 2017. He stated that Leisureland was in need of enhancement works particularly the catering facilities if we were to attract bigger events. Mr McGrath in response to Cllr P Flannery’s request stated that it was up to the Board of Management of Leisureland to look at all groups with a disability. He outlined that works to deliver Sports Capital Grant aided upgrades have also been factored into the work programmes. Mr McGrath also confirmed that discussions were ongoing with Irish Water Safety in relation to the raft at Blackrock and a Part VIII for works at the Blackrock Tower will shortly be presented to the Council.

**Housing**

A number of Councillors including Councillors MJ Crowe, O’ Flaherty, McDonnell, Farrell, Ó Conchúir, Connolly, Fahy, Cubbard, Conneely & O. Crowe raised issues in relation to Housing supply, Halting Sites, Tenant Purchase Scheme, Rent Review issues, Homelessness, Vacant properties & HAP.

Detailed replies were provided by Mr. T. Connell, Director of Services. In relation to the Ballymoneen Site, Mr Connell outlined that Galway City Council is engaging with the Department of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government for the last three years and every effort was being made to fast track the provision of 69 units at the site. Mr Connell confirmed that Voids were down to 1% or less than 30 Houses, which is less than the annual turnover of surrendered properties. He also highlighted that the Council has an enhanced Work Programme comprising of direct labour by the Council and Contract work with boiler replacement included as part of the current work programme. Mr Connell stated that there were a number of individuals sleeping rough who had been engaged with by the Homeless Services but they had chosen to continue rough sleeping. There are enough beds provided under the Winter Beds Initiative by approved housing bodies and Mr Connell thanked the providers for their support in providing additional accommodation.

Ms P. Philbin A/Director of Services gave an update to Councillors on the terms of the current Tenant Purchase Scheme. She confirmed that funding for loans was not available from GCC, that we had received interest but no formal applications for the scheme to date and that estates currently excluded would be reviewed. Ms Philbin also advised that following a rent review there are a number of families on Max rent who would be visited by the HELO’s over next few weeks.

The CE Mr. Brendan McGrath reiterated a number replies made by T. Connell previously. He informed that protocols oblige GCC to work with the prison services and house individuals that were also human beings, who had previously availed of prison services. Mr McGrath informed that GCC hoped to proceed with 77 units on the Ballyburke Site possibly as a PPP but this will take a number of years to complete.

The Mayor Cllr. N Larkin proposed that we finish the Housing Service Delivery Plan and deal with the Motions without debate. This was agreed by all members.

In response to clarifications Mr T Connell spoke about how the Voluntary Housing Bodies can access 100% funding through CAS which come before Members but they can also buy units without ref to LA but have to take persons from the housing waiting list. He also gave an undertaking to provide Valuations for the Keeraun & Ballymoneen Sites. Mr Connell stated that GCC were working very closely with the County Council in relation to resolving boundary issues with HAP.

Proposal: Proposer: Cllr. Flaherty

Seconder: Cllr. O. Crowe

“That Galway City Council immediately request that the Manager of the Leisureland facility provide free access to St. Joseph’s Special School for one hour per week, excluding June, July and August and facilitate the educational needs of those with disabilities for 2017”.

Withdrawn

1. **3. NOTICES OF MOTION**

It was proposed by the Mayor and agreed by members to consider Notice of Motions without debate

1. **Motion proposed at December 2016 Meeting:**
2. “That this Council introduce one-way systems throughout Galway City as a means of solving the traffic gridlock and that such projects are introduced immediately on a pilot basis with a view to full implementation in March 2017”
3. Proposed: Cllr. M.J Crowe Seconded: Cllr. P. Keane

Deferred at the request of Cllr. M.J. Crowe

1. NOM 03/16 Notice given by: Cllr. N. McNelis
2. Date Received: 30th March, 2016
3. “For the benefit of retailers in the city centre and for shoppers and visitors all pedestrian areas of the city centre are vehicle free from an earlier start of 9.00 am during the months of June, July and August”.

Deferred as Cllr. McNelis was not in attendance at the meeting.

1. NOM 09/16 Notice given by: Cllr. C. Connolly
2. Date Received: 11th April, 2016
3. “That GCC requests that the Government provide adequate funding to provide special housing units for victims of domestic violence”.

Deferred as Cllr. Connolly was not present in the Council Chamber.

1. NOM 12/16 Notice given by: Cllr. C. Connolly
2. Date Received: 3rd May, 2016.
3. “That Galway City Council Transportation SPC calls on the Government to introduce a free school transport service for all children attending city schools.

Deferred as Cllr. Connolly was not present in the Council Chamber.

1. NOM 16/16 Notice given by: Cllr. C. Ó Conchúir
2. Date Received: 24th August, 2016.
3. “That this Council ask Sean Kyne T.D. and the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine
4. to intervene in the ongoing dispute at Ros a Mhil Harbour between local fisherman and the
5. harbour authorities”.

Deferred as Cllr. Ó Conchúir was not present in the Council Chamber.

1. NOM 17/16 Notice given by: Cllr. D. Lyons
2. Date Received: 5th September 2016.
3. “Galway City Council calls on the Minister of Health to amend the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2002 and introduce additional legislation/regulations which would regulate the use of e-cigarettes similar to those which already apply to tobacco related activity”

This motion was proposed by Cllr. Lyons, seconded by Cllr. McDonnell and agreed unanimously by the 13 members present.

1. NOM 18/16 Notice given by: Cllr. D. Lyons
2. Date Received: 5th September 2016.
3. “Galway City Council calls on the Industrial Development Authority and other state agencies
4. to bring forward plans for the development of the industrial zoned lands on the west of
5. Galway City.”

This motion was proposed by Cllr. Lyons, seconded by Cllr. McDonnell, Cllr. F. Fahy proposed the following amendment which Cllr. Lyons agreed to incorporate into his proposal. The Mayor called for a vote be taken on the proposal, which was agreed unanimously by the 13 members present.

1. NOM 23/16 Notice given by: Cllr. B. Cameron
2. Date Received: 3rd October, 2016
3. “I call on the Chief Executive to earmark and designate the 1.4 acre site in the Westside as a Cultural and Artistic hub to cater for a mix of organisations specialising with Children and youth”.

Deferred as Cllr. Cameron was not in attendance at the meeting.

1. NOM 24/16 Notice given by: Cllr. P. Flannery
2. Date Received: 2nd November, 2016
3. “That the Galway City Council executive write to Dr Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh
4. and Primate of All Ireland and request the he formally invite His Holiness Pope Francis to
5. visit Galway during his proposed visit to Ireland in 2018 and celebrate mass in a similar
6. fashion to his predecessor John Paul 2nd in 1979”.

This motion was proposed by Cllr. Flannery, Cllr. Lyons proposed that the wording following 2018 be removed from the motion, Cllr. Flannery agreed to remove the word “and celebrate mass in a similar fashion to his predecessor John Paul 2nd in 1979”. Cllr. Lyons then seconded the proposal, the Mayor called for a vote to be taken on the proposal which was unanimous agreed by the 13 members present.

1. NOM 25/16 Notice given by: Cllr. O. Crowe
2. Date Received: 8th November, 2016
3. “That Galway City Council calls on the current government to reverse their decision for
4. staffless libraries with immediate effect”

This motion was proposed by Cllr. O. Crowe and seconded by Cllr. Lyons. The Mayor called for a vote to be taken which resulted as follows:

For: 10

Against: 1

Abstain: 2

1. NOM 26/16 Notice given by: Cllr. N. McNelis
2. Date Received: 5th December, 2016
3. “That Galway City Council introduce weight restrictions on vehicles that enter pedestrian
4. areas of the city centre”.
5. Deferred as Cllr. McNelis was not in attendance at the meeting.
6. NOM 27/16 Notice given by: Cllr. N. McNelis
7. Date Received: 5th December, 2016
8. “That an audit of housing for the elderly owned by Galway City Council take place, with
9. regard to best practice in EU to heating and weather glazed windows”.
10. Deferred as Cllr. McNelis was not in attendance at the meeting.
11. **NOM 01/ 17 Notice given by: Cllr D. McDonnell Seconded by: Cllr. P. Keane**
12. **Date Received: 3rd January 2017**
13. “I hereby propose that a variation of the City Development Plan is initiated forthwith to provide for the re-zoning of lands of 1.2 acres at Greenfields, Newcastle, in the ownership of Rory Rogers c/o McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan, block 1, Finacial Services Building, Moneenagheisha Road, Galway.
14. The proposed variation is in the interest of proper planning and sustainable development and having regard to the housing crisis that currently exists in Galway City.”

The motion was proposed by Cllr. D McDonnell but Cllr. P Conneely asked to be removed as a seconder to the proposal. He was replaced by Cllr. P Keane. The Mayor called for a vote to be taken which resulted as follows:

For: 7

Against: 6

Abstain: 0

Absent: 5

1. The meeting concluded at 8.10pm.