

Minutes of Special Council Meeting of Galway City Council
Held on Monday 10th January, 2022, at 3pm in The Galmont Hotel and online via zoom platform.
City Development Plan 2023 – 2029

Presiding: Cllr. C. Connolly, Mayor of the City of Galway

Present: Councillors: A. Cheevers; J. Connolly; M.J. Crowe; O. Hanley; N. Murphy & M. O'Connor

Present Virtually: Councillors: I. Byrne, M. Cubbard, F. Fahy; C. Higgins; E. Hoare; P. Keane, N. Larkin, D. Lyons, D. McDonnell, N. McNelis & T. O'Flaherty

In Attendance: Mr. B. McGrath, Chief Executive
Ms. P. Philbin, Director of Services
Ms. C. Phelan, Senior Planner
Ms. H. Coleman, Senior Executive Planner
Ms. A. Rohan, Meetings Administrator
Ms. G. Reilly, Clerical Officer

In Attendance Virtually: Mr. P. Greene, Director of Services
Ms. R. McNally, Director of Services
Mr. B. Barrett, A/Director of Services
Mr. D. Smyth, A/Head of Finance
Ms. E. Naughton, Head of ICT
Mr. B. Barrett, Senior Executive Officer
Mr. D. Mahon, Senior Executive Officer
Mr. U. Finn, Senior Engineer
Ms. C. Kilcoyne, Senior Engineer
Mr. T. Prendergast, Senior Engineer
Mr. F. Clancy, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. M. Harrington, Executive Planner
Ms. M. Beirne, Executive Planner
Ms. K. Moloney, Assistant Planner
Ms. E. Silke, Administrative Officer
Ms. M. Kilgarriff, Assistant Staff Officer
Ms. C. Morgan, Administrative Officer
Ms. T. Donohue, Staff Officer

Mr. A. Rohan, Meetings Administrator welcomed all to the Special Meeting and noted that this was the first of scheduled meetings to consider the Galway City Development Plan 2023 – 2029. She commenced the meeting with a statement of intention to conduct the business of the Meeting in line with Standing Orders followed by a moment of silent reflection.

Ms. A. Rohan, Meetings Administrator read the Code of Conduct and Regulation of Lobbying information into the record of the Meeting:

Extract from Code of Conduct for Councillors under the Local Government Act 2001: Key decisions on planning matters such as the making of development plans are vested in the elected council as representatives of the local community acting in the interests of the common good and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The planning system is a very open one allowing

Minutes, Confirmed & Signed

Mayor Cllr C. Connolly
Mayor of Galway

for input by all parties. It is all the more important therefore that consideration of planning matter by Councillors is carried out in a transparent fashion; follows due process; and is based on what is relevant while ignoring that which is irrelevant within the requirements of the statutory planning framework. The same applies as regards input by individual Councillors in relation to planning applications, decisions on which vest in the executive. Extra care must therefore be observed in dealing with planning matters and in this context the provisions of this Code particularly as regards conflict of personal and public interest are very relevant.

Extract from Regulation of Lobbying; Guidelines on lobbying in relation to development and zoning of land from the Standards in Public Office Commission: When communicating with public officials or representatives regarding the zoning or development of land, individuals and groups who may not ordinarily regard themselves as carrying on lobbying activities, may find that the Act also applies to them. These guidelines deal specifically with lobbying in relation to zoning and development. When drawing up development plans or local area plans, local authorities engage in a formal consultation process. This means that the public may make a submission to the local authority setting out their views on the proposed plan. Making views known to a local authority as part of a formal public consultation process is not lobbying. Communication, however with a Designated Public Official outside the formal public consultation process about a development plan or local area plan or a proposal to zone or re-zone particular lands may be lobbying. For example contacting a local TD or County Councillor about a development plan or a proposal to zone or re-zone particular lands outside the formal public consultation process or a proposal to zone or re-zone particular lands outside the formal public consultation process.

Mayor Cllr. C. Connolly welcomed all and referred to a Procedures meeting held online on Thursday 6th January 2022 where a recommendation was made by the majority that meetings going forward be conducted online. She suggested that a vote be taken to decide if the next meetings of the Council should be in person, online or hybrid. Cllr. D. Lyons proposed that the matter go on the agenda and this was seconded by Cllr. N. McNelis. Cllr. D. Lyons recommended that Standing Orders be suspended to allow for the item to be considered.

Ms. A. Rohan, Meetings Administrator referred to the rise in number of the omicron variant and that meetings should not take place face to face unless absolutely necessary.

Mr. McGrath, Chief Executive gave an update on the situation advising that guidelines have not changed. He said that this was a decision for consideration by the members and whatever decision taken will be facilitated.

Councillors discussed the matter with views both for and against the holding of meetings online. Ms. A. Rohan, Meetings Administrator proceeded to take a Roll Call Vote:

Proposed by: Cllr. D. Lyons

Seconded by: Cllr. N. McNelis

To suspend Standing Orders to consider the holding of Council meetings online.

In favour: Cllr. I. Byrne, Cllr. A. Cheevers, Cllr. C. Connolly, Cllr. J. Connolly, Cllr. M.J. Crowe, Cllr. M. Cubbard, Cllr. F. Fahy, Cllr. O. Hanley, Cllr. C. Higgins, Cllr. E. Hoare, Cllr. N. Larkin, Cllr. D. Lyons, Cllr. D. McDonnell, Cllr. N. McNelis, Cllr. N. Murphy, Cllr. M. O'Connor, Cllr. O'Flaherty.

In Favour: 17 Against: 0 Abstain: 0 Present: 17

The motion was passed.

Councillors discussed the motion. Ms. A. Rohan, Meetings Administrator proceeded to take a Roll Call Vote:

Proposed by: Cllr. D. Lyons **Seconded by:** Cllr. N. McNelis

That future meetings of Galway City Council be held online up to and including the February Council meeting due to the rise in the Omicron variant. The matter will be reviewed by the Procedures Committee in early February 2022.

In favour: Cllr. C. Connolly, Cllr. M. Cubbard, Cllr. F. Fahy, Cllr. O. Hanley, Cllr. C. Higgins, Cllr. E. Hoare, Cllr. N. Larkin, Cllr. D. Lyons, Cllr. N. McNelis, Cllr. N. Murphy, Cllr. M. O'Connor, Cllr. O'Flaherty.

Against: Cllr. I. Byrne, Cllr. A. Cheevers, Cllr. J. Connolly, Cllr. M.J. Crowe & Cllr. D. McDonnell.

In Favour: 12 Against: 5 Abstain: 0 Present: 17

The motion was passed.

A discussion took place in relation to the format of the meetings, whether each chapter would be discussed or if members would discuss the motions that had been submitted.

Proposed by: Cllr. J. Connolly **Seconded by:** Cllr. F. Fahy

That members go through each chapter and bring forward any queries before moving on to discuss the motions proposed.

This was agreed and approved.

Following queries from Cllr. J. Connolly and Cllr. C. Connolly, Ms. C. Phelan advised that Policy 1.3 relates to the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) which is supported by statute. There are strict regulations to adhere to the MASP and National Planning Framework (NPF). Development densities come from the NPF. Strategic Housing Development (SHD) legislation has been changed and new similar legislation has been introduced for large developments. The Core Strategy comes from planning legislation and gives context for local, regional and national plans. Ms. Phelan noted that there are three supporting documents including Environmental Assessments, which shows the Plan is not one dimensional. Ms. Phelan also noted that not everything connected to regeneration is high density i.e. compact developments in Bohermore. Density will be decided on a geographical area basis, with reference to capacity for higher density and different types of housing.

Proposed by: Cllr. J. Connolly **Seconded by:** Cllr. C. Connolly.

In the Strategic Vision for Galway City Pg. 1, to alter the third sentence from:

"A City that can attract and retain talent and skills..."

To read:

"A City that can develop, attract and retain talent and skills..."

This was agreed and approved.

Councillor J. Connolly spoke on the motions that he put forward outlining the unique arts culture of Galway City including the Irish language.

Proposed by: Cllr. J. Connolly **Seconded by:** Cllr. M.J. Crowe

Strategic Goals

P13 To alter number 7: 4th Sentence from “achieve community benefit, promote the unique form”

To read:

“achieve community benefit, foster the indigenous culture, promote the unique form”

This was agreed and approved.

Mayor C. Connolly suggested a break around 4.50pm to ventilate the room. This was agreed.

Proposed by: Cllr. O. Hanley **Seconded by:** Cllr. M. O’Connor

That this meeting continue to 7.30pm.

This was agreed.

Mayor C. Connolly referred Councillors to Chapter 2: Climate Change and invited queries.

Cllr. O. Hanley asked how targets will be measured and Ms. H. Coleman advised that many of the targets will be assessed through the Climate Action Plan.

In relation to Cllr. Connolly’s query about CFRAMS, Ms. Coleman advised that consultants have been brought on board to carry out a Flood Relief Scheme. Work is ongoing and a Steering Committee has been set up.

Ms. C. Kilcoyne, Senior Engineer confirmed that works will commence pending planning consent in 2026 with an estimated handover date of 2029.

Further to Cllr. M.J. Crowe’s query regarding pg. 51, 2.3 (4), Ms. Coleman clarified that this could refer to micro-energy, e.g. micro turbine at the Harbour. There are exemptions for wind turbines but these are subject to limitations. These are referred to in the text which acknowledges the restrictions of the urban area.

Councillors raised other queries which were responded to by Ms. Coleman, SEE and Mr. McGrath, CE.

Cllr. N. Murphy spoke on the motion he submitted.

Proposed by: Cllr. N. Murphy **Seconded by:** Cllr. C. Connolly

Original motion, 23 June 2021: “I move that a recommendation be added that Galway will adopt the National Park City initiative mission statement, aims and principles and will seek to be confirmed by the National Park City Foundation as a National Park City.”

The minutes of that meeting state that the following amendment proposed by Cllr Lyons was passed: “That the motion brought forward by Cllr. N. Murphy in relation to National Park City status for Galway City be deferred until further information has been presented to the Council.”

Following that meeting all Councillors were invited to a workshop on the topic on at 11am Tues Sept 14th 2021. It was organised by Brendan Smyth and included presentations from Daniel Raven-Ellison, founder of the London National Park City; Neil McCarthy, CEO of World Urban Parks; Kathryn Tierney, ex-policy coordinator for the ‘Green Deal’ at the European Commission; Martin Gettings from the Canary Wharf

Group London, Emily Hamilton, Head of Environment Protection, Social Responsibility and Corporate Governance at Savills Investment; and Jonathan Maidment, Head of Parks & Harbour Authority in Cardiff Council.”

Several elected members and council staff members attended that workshop. Recordings of the presentations are available at <https://bit.ly/3mP2l28>

I believe that this workshop satisfied Cllr Lyon’s amendment and I would like to now re-submit the original motion.

I believe that Policy 2.2 (page 47/48) is the right place to add such an objective. Not that point 12 of that policy already calls out that we should “Collaborate with the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) and any other relevant stakeholder”. I consider the NPC organisation to be a relevant stakeholder, and we should add an objective which explicitly states that.

The CE requested that the motion be deferred to Wednesday 12th January Council meeting to allow for consideration and a response to be prepared.

Proposed by: Cllr. N. Murphy **Seconded by:** Cllr. C. Connolly

The proposal to defer the motion to Wednesday’s Council meeting was accepted and agreed.

Cllr. J. Connolly spoke on the motion he submitted.

Proposed by: Cllr. J. Connolly **Seconded by:** Cllr. D. McDonnell

That the phrase ‘flood and coastal protection’ be added to the 2nd paragraph of pg. 47.

The motion was agreed and approved.

Cllr. O. Hanley spoke on the motion he submitted.

Proposed by: Cllr. O. Hanley **Seconded by:** Cllr. C. Connolly

**Insert an additional policy point under Policy 2.2 Climate Action Policy (page 47) to read:
“Require a climate action statement that considers energy, emissions and sustainable transport as part of every Local Area Plan, masterplan, spatial framework, and Regeneration and Opportunities site.”**

This was agreed

Cllr. O. Hanley spoke on the motion he submitted and considered substituting the words ‘public land’ with ‘Council owned land’. A discussion took place and following confirmation from the Chief Executive that Galway City Council do acquire lands for the purposes of conservation and environmental protection, Cllr. Hanley withdraw his motion. The Chief Executive suggested that this could be considered in the Climate Action Plan and the Green Spaces Strategy.

Proposed by: Cllr. O. Hanley **Seconded by:** Cllr. D. Lyons

**Insert an additional policy point under Policy 2.2 Climate Action Policy (page 47) to read:
“Ensure policy objectives on climate action are advanced through active management of public land, which may include the acquisition of land to facilitate green infrastructure, protection of the natural environment, and other nature based solutions to climate change.”**

The motion was withdrawn

The Council rose to take a break and ventilate the room at 4.50pm and the meeting resumed at 5.10pm.

Cllr. M. O’Connor spoke on the motion she submitted. Following clarification sought by Cllr. D. Lyons, it was advised that it is not the function of the CDP to itemise particular lands to be acquired.

Councillors discussed the motion.

Proposed by: Cllr. M. O’Connor **Seconded by:** Cllr. N. Murphy

Chapter 2, Page 54, 2.3 Section 10

Supports the re development on regeneration and Brownfield sites and measures to address dereliction and vacancy

Add the text: Including seek to explore acquiring via Compulsory Purchase Order of three identified sites that have been left idle for a number of years. Commonly referred to as the Dawn Dairies site in Renmore, Connacht Laundry Site on Helen Street and Higgins former Hardware shop site on Shantalla Road.

It was agreed to defer this motion and submit a more appropriate rewording for consideration at the Council meeting scheduled on Wednesday 12th January, 2022.

Proposed by: Cllr. M. O’Connor **Seconded by:** Cllr. C. Connolly

Mayor C. Connolly referred Councillor to Chapter 3: Housing & Sustainable Neighbourhood and invited queries from Councillors.

Ms. H. Coleman, SEP responded to queries raised and explained that village envelopes as referenced in Chapter 3 reflect historic patterns. She advised that the Placenames Committee has a role in the naming of residential estates in the city. Permeability refers also to improving existing connections between estates through traffic calming and footpaths.

Ms. C. Phelan, SP advised that most of the regeneration sites are in the city centre, and that the majority of higher density development is proposed for the city centre, where there is transport connectivity and greater demand. She confirmed that a definition of ‘right-sizing’ can be put in the Plan along with a glossary and acronyms.

Ms. Phelan advised that the Traveller Accommodation Plan (TAP) is enabled by the City Development Plan but that the CDP does not deliver the TAP directly.

Mr. D. Mahon clarified that ‘culturally specific housing’ can mean halting site accommodation or it may mean housing with space provided for a caravan, such as is provided for in the Keeraun development.

Cllr. N. McNelis spoke on the motion he submitted and Councillors discussed same.

Proposed by: Cllr. N. McNelis **Seconded by:** Cllr. D. Lyons

In the light of the Housing requirements and housing needs of Galway City that are identified in the Housing Need Demand Assessment and the draft Galway City Development Plan 2023 – 2029 and also in the Government’s policy Housing for All, that appropriate polices are incorporated into the proposed draft City Development Plan to restrict short-term lettings of residential properties, especially new build residential housing (supply) units, particularly within the core city area / city centre area.

Furthermore, appropriate objectives and development management policies should be set out in the draft plan to prevent new residential units being used as short-term lets within the lifetime of the next city development plan 2023 – 2029.

Ms. C. Phelan recommended that Policy 3.1 Housing Strategy no. 24 of the Draft Plan be amended to add the following wording:

“Notwithstanding this, where planning consent is required under legislation for short term letting, there will be a presumption against allowing such a use in view of the status of the city defined as a rent pressure zone.”

Cllr. McNelis agreed to accept this recommended wording and withdrew his original motion.

Mayor C. Connolly proposed a break at 6.14pm for 5 minutes, the meeting resumed at 6.25pm.

Cllr. M.J. Crowe spoke on the motion he submitted. Councillors discussed the motion.

Ms. C. Phelan, SP and Ms. H. Coleman, SEP spoke on the proposed motion and responded to queries raised.

Proposed by: Cllr. M.J. Crowe **Seconded by:** Cllr. D. McDonnell

**Amend Policy 3.9 no. 1 on pg. 76 to read as follows;
Strengthen the character of specified villages through encouraging appropriate development *in line with and similar to the character of existing builds in each village and limit the access to these villages to what it is presently.***

Proposed by: Cllr. M.J. Crowe **Seconded by:** Cllr. J. Connolly

To defer the motion for consideration until Wednesday 12th January 2022.

This was agreed.

Cllr. O. Hanley spoke on the motion he submitted.

Councillors discussed the motion.

Mr. McGrath, Chief Executive responded to queries raised on the proposed motion.

Cllr. E. Hoare proposed to keep the original text in the Report. It was advised that this is a direct negative of the motion submitted by Cllr. O. Hanley.

Proposed by: Cllr. O. Hanley **Seconded by:** Cllr. M. Cubbard

Amend the policy point under Policy 3.1 no. 6 Housing Strategy (page 59) which reads:
"Work in collaboration with the Land Development Agency to enhance delivery of the long term strategic needs for housing in the city."

And instead to read:

"Work in collaboration with the Land Development Agency to enhance delivery of the long term strategic needs for social, affordable and cost rental housing in the city."

In favour: Cllr. A. Cheevers, Cllr. C. Connolly, Cllr. J. Connolly, Cllr. M.J. Crowe, Cllr. M. Cubbard, , Cllr. O. Hanley, Cllr. N. McNelis, Cllr. N. Murphy & Cllr. M. O'Connor

Against: Cllr. I. Byrne, Cllr. F. Fahy, Cllr. C. Higgins, Cllr. E. Hoare, Cllr. D. Lyons, Cllr. D. McDonnell, Cllr. T. O'Flaherty

In Favour: 9 **Against:** 7 **Abstain:** 0 **Present:** 16

The motion was passed.

Mayor C. Connolly referred to the motion submitted by Cllr. O. Hanley.

Proposed by: Cllr. O. Hanley **Seconded by:** Cllr. J. Connolly

Amend the policy point under Policy 3.1 no. 9 Housing Strategy (page 59) which reads:
"Support a diverse range of housing tenures..."

And instead to read:

"Support a diverse range of housing types, size and tenures..."

This was agreed and approved.

Cllr. O. Hanley spoke on the motion he submitted.

Proposed by: Cllr. O. Hanley **Seconded by:** Cllr. N. Murphy

Amend the policy point under Policy 3.1 no. 14 Housing Strategy (page 60) which reads:

"Address the demand for additional social housing and housing delivery supports through a number of means including the construction of housing, direct acquisition of housing, delivery in conjunction with AHBs and the use of the RAS, HAPs, long term leasing, on a cost rental basis through affordable housing purchase arrangements, shared equity schemes, and any other appropriate housing delivery."

And instead to read:

"Address the demand for additional social housing and housing delivery supports through a number of means including the construction of housing, direct acquisition of housing, delivery in conjunction with AHBs and the use of the RAS, HAPs, on a cost rental basis through affordable housing purchase arrangements, shared equity schemes, and any other appropriate housing delivery, including long term leasing but as a less favoured model which is to be avoided."

Chief Executive Mr. B. McGrath recommended the following wording be considered for addition to the CDP under Policy 3.1 no. 14:

“Long term leasing as a social housing delivery option will be considered as a less favourable model and in accordance with Housing For All, will be phased out for new entrants.”

Cllr. O. Hanley agreed to accept this recommendation and withdrew his original motion.
Cllr. O. Hanley proposed the recommended wording and this was seconded by Cllr. N. Murphy and agreed and approved by Council.

Mayor C. Connolly referred to the motion submitted by Cllr. O. Hanley.

Proposed by: Cllr. O. Hanley **Seconded by:** Cllr. C. Connolly

Amend the policy point under Policy 3.1 no. 16 Housing Strategy (page 60) which reads:

“Encourage the provision of good quality, well regulated, private rented accommodation....”

And instead to read:

“Encourage the provision of good quality, well regulated, affordable private rented accommodation....”

This was agreed and approved.

Mayor C. Connolly referred to the motion submitted by Cllr. O. Hanley.

Proposed by: Cllr. O. Hanley **Seconded by:** Cllr. M. O’Connor

Amend the final line of the first paragraph on page 69 Sustainable Neighbourhoods: Outer Suburbs which reads:

“The preparation of an area plan for Castlegar will consider improved connectivity and linkage including to the green network and will investigate opportunities for improvements to neighbourhood assets.”

And instead to read:

“The preparation of an area plan for Castlegar will consider improved connectivity, infrastructure, and linkage including to the green network and will investigate opportunities for improvements in community facilities, recreation amenities, high quality green spaces, and other neighbourhood assets in consultation with local stakeholders.”

This was agreed and approved.

Cllr. O. Hanley spoke on the motion he submitted.

Proposed by: Cllr. O. Hanley **Seconded by:** Cllr. C. Connolly

Insert an additional policy point under Policy 3.5 Sustainable Neighbourhoods: Established Suburbs (page 72) to read:

“Encourage the on-going provision of community facilities and local services through a schedule of regeneration plans and social and community infrastructure audits.”

Following discussion, Cllr. Hanley withdrew this motion

Cllr. O. Hanley spoke on the motion he submitted. Councillors discussed the motion.

As there was not agreement on the motion; Ms. A. Rohan proceeded to take a Roll Call Vote.

Proposed by: Cllr. O. Hanley **Seconded by:** Cllr. C. Connolly

**Amend the policy point under Policy 3.7 no. 5 City Centre Residential Areas (page 75) which reads:
“Consider the redevelopment of the City Council car park at Bowling Green to meet social housing needs.”**

And instead to read:

“Consider the redevelopment of all City Council car parks, with priority for the car park at Bowling Green, to meet social and affordable housing needs.”

In favour: Cllr. C. Connolly, Cllr. O. Hanley, Cllr. N. Murphy, Cllr. M. O’Connor

Against: Cllr. I. Byrne, Cllr. A. Cheevers, Cllr. J. Connolly, Cllr. M.J. Crowe, Cllr. M. Cubbard; Cllr. F. Fahy, Cllr. C. Higgins, Cllr. E. Hoare, Cllr. D. Lyons, Cllr. D. McDonnell, Cllr. N. McNelis, Cllr. T. O’Flaherty

In Favour: 4 Against: 12 Abstain: 0 Present: 16

This motion was defeated

Cllr. M.J. Crowe proposed a motion as follows:

Ms. A. Rohan proceeded to take a Roll Call Vote on the motion.

Proposed by: Cllr. M. J. Crowe **Seconded by:** Cllr. M. Cubbard

**Amend the policy point under Policy 3.7 no. 5 City Centre Residential Areas (page 75) which reads:
“Consider the redevelopment of the City Council car park at Bowling Green to meet social housing needs.”**

And instead to read:

“Consider the redevelopment of the City Council car park at Bowling Green to meet social and/or affordable housing needs.”

In favour: Cllr. I. Byrne, Cllr. A. Cheevers, Cllr. J. Connolly, Cllr. M.J. Crowe, Cllr. M. Cubbard, Cllr. F. Fahy, Cllr. O. Hanley, Cllr. C. Higgins, Cllr. E. Hoare, Cllr. D. McDonnell & Cllr. N. McNelis.

Against: Cllr. C. Connolly, Cllr. D. Lyons, Cllr. N. Murphy, Cllr. M. O’Connor & Cllr. T. O’Flaherty

In Favour: 11 Against: 5 Abstain: 0 Present: 16

The motion was passed.

The Mayor, Cllr. C. Connolly, thanked all for attending and advised that the next Council meeting to consider the City Development Plan will take place on Wednesday 12th January 2022 at 4pm online via zoom technology.

The meeting concluded at 7.29pm.