

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Minutes of Housing SPC Meeting held on Wednesday, 10th April 2024 in the Council Chamber, Galway County Council at 10.00 a.m.

I Láthair:-

Baill: Cllr. Joe Byrne (Chairperson)
Cllr. Jimmy McClearn
Cllr. Thomas Welby
Cllr. Eileen Mannion
Mr. Mark Coffey

Oifigigh: Mr. Michael Owens, Director of Services
Mr. Gerard Scully, Senior Executive Officer
Ms. Carmel Kilcoyne, Senior Executive Officer
Mr. Damien Mitchell, Senior Engineer
Ms. Nuala Heffernan, Administrative Officer
Ms. Angela Spelman Administrative Officer
Ms. Michelle Connellan, Vacant Homes Officer, (VHO)
Ms. Kathleen Lohan, Staff Officer, Housing
Ms. Jenny Swannock, Integration Officer
Mr. Brendan Kelly, Assistant Staff Officer, Housing

Leithscéal

Mr. Kenny Deery
Ms. Marcella Conneely
Mr. Martin Ward

1. Minutes of the meeting of 1st of March 2024

The Chairperson apologised for his absence at the last Housing SPC Meeting, and he thanked Cllr. McClearn for standing in as acting chairperson. The minutes of the SPC meeting held on 1st of March 2024 were proposed by Cllr. Welby, seconded by Cllr. McClearn and agreed.

- **Matters of Accuracy** – None
- **Matters Arising**
- **Update Carna Wastewater Treatment Query** - In response, Mr. Owens stated that he had attended a meeting in Carna on this issue the previous week and he outlined that any addition to the current number of Social Housing units in Carna would require the relocation of the existing Wastewater Treatment System. The relocation of the

wastewater treatment plant would allow for a maximum of six additional housing units to be built on the site. He outlined that both the relocation of the wastewater plant and the six additional units would be subject to the Planning Process.

- Cllr. Welby informed the members that he could not make the meeting in Carna due to personal reasons and Mr Owens confirmed that Cllr. Mannion relayed his apologies to the meeting.
 - Cllr. Mannion thanked the Director for his attendance at the meeting in Carna.
- **Nan Burkes Field and Boxing Club** – Mr. Owens confirmed that this development is included in the housing delivery programme for 2026 and he reminded the members that the EOI stage for this proposed development has been completed with Tuath being the preferred AHB for the project. He confirmed to the members that a meeting to discuss the AHBs Design Proposal will take place very shortly. The inclusion of community-based facilities on site would have to be done in an open and transparent EOI process, with this in mind the chosen AHB would need to consider this when they develop and submit their design proposal. In response to a query from Cllr. Mannion, Mr. Owens confirmed that a Section 183 would be needed to make public lands available for use by sporting bodies. He outlined that this would have to be supported by a public process that would allow other community-based organisations, be they sporting or otherwise to express an interest in being involved at the Nan Burkes development. Mr. Owens stated that it would be up to GCC to dispose of the Nan Burkes site by way of the Section 183. The chosen AHB will be asked to consider the involvement of any civic/sporting organisation that has expressed a wish to be included on the proposed development.
- **Affordable Housing Funding Levels** –

Mr. Owens confirmed that the current funding thresholds remain in place at 50,000. 75,000 and 100,000 as per population density. He outlined that the Department of Housing had indicated that there would be flexibility when it comes to the 50,000 & 75,000 subsidy thresholds. Mr. Owens informed the members that the funding level issue was discussed at the most recent Housing Taskforce meeting held on the 9th of April, and there will be further contact with the Department on this issue. Mr. Owens acknowledged that current construction and land costs are a challenge in the current Affordable Scheme.
- **Housing Maintenance program** – Cllr. McClearn stated to the members that Planned Maintenance Programme was not functioning, and works were not being carried out and he believed that it was only a matter of time before it was raised by news media. He stated that the Maintenance Programme was not fit for purpose.
- **Housing Grants Awards** - Cllr. Welby thanked Grants Section for their speed at processing grant applications an enquired if there was any increase to the award amounts – Mr. Owens confirmed that the award amounts are currently under review and the 2024 allocation may reflect the outcome of this review.

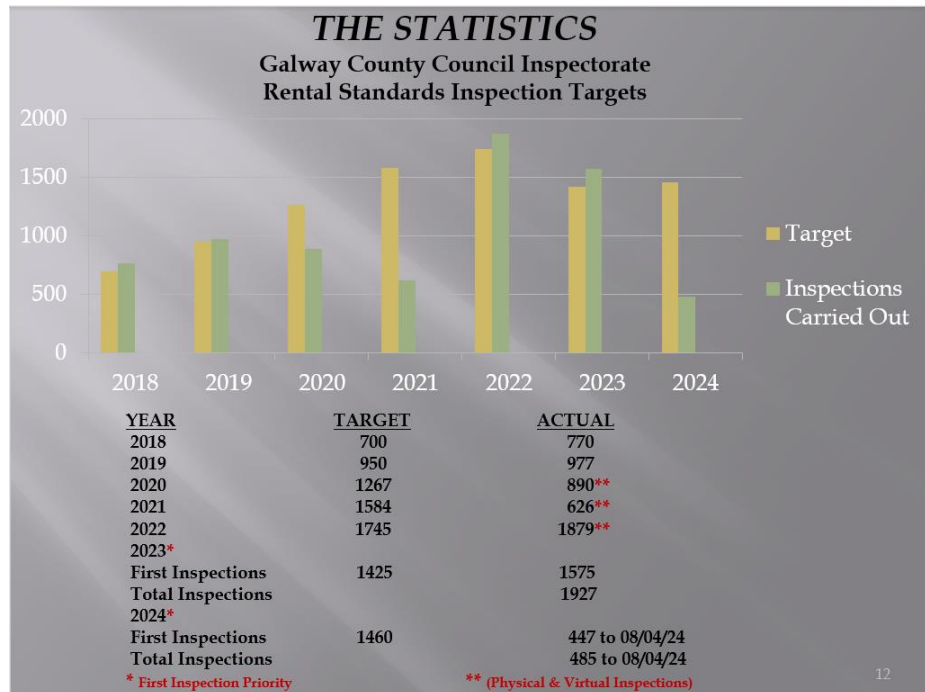
- Additional Maintenance Teams – Mr. Owens confirmed to the Chair that GCC had received an additional €600,000 in funding in the budget process. He stated that the addition of maintenance staff will require sanctioning from the Department and to include additional technical posts required for each additional maintenance team. He outlined that this will be included in the Strategic Workforce Plan and that it is his intention to go from 3 to 5 maintenance teams in the longer term, subject of funding.
- Number of LA Voids – Mr. Ger Scully informed the Members that there were currently 135 units listed as almost completed, under construction or awaiting keys. He stated that there were 2,694 occupied units. There were 66 units that were under construction, 37 units under offer to Housing Support Clients and there are currently 36 vacant units. Of these vacant units 10 are casual vacancies, 26 are new properties. He stated that 20 units are awaiting minor repairs and 27 properties are currently listed as derelict. Mr. Scully stated that the Council received a significant number of new vacant units in the last quarter of 2023. He went on to say that Housing had allocated 134 units in the first quarter of 2024. Mr. Scully said that the end of year vacancy figures for 2024 should be significantly lower than the 2023 numbers. He stated that he had never seen the number of casual vacancies as low as 10 units and he reminded the members that this information is live on the website.

2. Building Inspectorate: 2023 Planned v Actual Inspections & Targets for 2024.

Mr. Enda Hoey gave a detailed presentation to the members on the above topic. He discussed the following items in detail.

- The Inspectorate’s Role – The Inspectorate has a Statutory Function in the Minimum Rental Standards Legislation.
- HOUSING STANDARDS FOR RENTED HOUSES REGULATIONS 2019 - STATUTORY INSTRUMENT S.I. 137 OF 1st May 2019.
- Regulations and why they are needed.
 - Regulation 4. Structure.
 1. Is the structure in a proper state of structural repair.
 2. Sound internally – roof & other elements
 3. Drop greater than 1400 mm – window restrictors required.
 4. Prevent harbourage or ingress of pests or vermin.
 - Regulation 5. Sanitary facilities
 - Regulation 6. Heating facilities incl. carbon monoxide alarms
 - Regulation 7. Food preparation & laundry
 - Regulation 8. Ventilation
 - Regulation 9. Lighting
 - Regulation 10. Fire safety

- Regulation 11. Refuse
- Regulation 12. Gas, oil & electricity installations
- Regulation 13. Information
- The Function of the Inspectorate.
- Inspectorate Staff Structure
- Complaints Referral & Process
- Inspection Outcomes:
- The Statistics:



- Other inspection Types – MAG’s, HAG’s and HAOP’s
- The Future
 - Standardised Inspection Processes
 - Complaints Referral Process Digital Automation
 - Enhanced Web Based Interactions
 - Public Awareness Campaigns

All the members present commended Mr Hoey on his detailed presentation. In response to queries raised by members Mr. Hoey advised as follows:

- Mr. Hoey informed the members that Housing Inspections are not random, but rather they are prompted from information received under data sharing agreements with the RTB and the Main HAP Office located in Limerick City & County Council and from the Council’s own internal HAP section. Mr. Hoey explained to the chair that once a landlord registers with the RTB or a HAP tenancy is commenced then Inspectorate receives a request to carry out an inspection. A referral from another State Agency would also trigger an Inspection and be processed under the Legislation discussed in his presentation.

- In response to the Chair, Mr. Hoey stated that the current Legislation does not require a Local Authority to register with the RTB.

3. Draft Vacant Homes Action Plan Update

Ms. Carmel Kilcoyne presented an update on the Vacant Homes Action Plan. What follows are the key areas she discussed.

- Introduction & Objectives
- Objective 1; Establish robust, accurate, consistent, and up-to-date data sets on vacancy.
- Objective 2; Bring forward measures to ensure, to the greatest degree possible, that vacant and underused privately owned properties are brought back in to use.
- Objective 3; Bring forward measures to minimise vacancy arising in Social Housing Stock.
- Objective 4; Continued engagement with and provision of support to key stakeholders to ensure suitable vacant properties held by banks, financial institutions and investors are acquired for social housing use.
- Objective 5; Foster and develop cross-sector relationships, collaborating in partnership to tackle vacant housing matters.
- Objective 6; Facilitate the activation of vacant properties utilising the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) and the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) and in conjunction with the Town First Strategy.
- Objective 7; Acquire derelict and vacant brown field sites to convert into Social Housing Units at strategic locations to meet social housing demand in key County Towns, thereby addressing dereliction in town centres and social housing need as one project.
- The Chair thanked Ms. Kilcoyne for her informative Presentation and he enquired if the Draft Vacant Homes Action Plan was going before the next Plenary Council Meeting for approval. The Chair also acknowledged the role of Michelle Connellan as the Vacant Homes Officer.
- Cllr. Welby thanked Ms. Kilcoyne for her presentation and confirmed his support for the plan.

In response to queries raised by members Ms. Kilcoyne and Mr. Owens advised as follows:

- Ms. Kilcoyne confirmed to the Chair that under Circular VHU1 2018, every LA were directed to prepare a Vacant Homes Action Plan. She outlined how the Department of Housing have recently published their own Vacant Homes Action Plan and on foot of this, the Housing Department decided to update their own strategic Vacant Homes Action Plan.
- Ms. Kilcoyne confirmed to the members that this plan will go for approval before the next Plenary Council Meeting.

- Cllr. Mannion proposed that the Vacant Homes Action Plan be sent forward to the Plenary Council meeting, and it was seconded by Cllr. Welby.
- Mr. Owens informed the members that there were currently 18 properties being progressed or completed under the Tenant in Situ Scheme. These include 6 properties being allocated under TIS, 4 properties are occupied and there are a further 8 applicants awaiting further progress. He also confirmed that there are further applicants to the scheme whereby a Notice to Quit has been issued and they are in the process of having their properties assessed for possible acquisition under the TIS Scheme.

4. Housing Delivery Action Plan Update

Mr. Damian Mitchell gave an update to the Elected Members on the Housing Delivery Action Plan.

In response to queries raised by members Mr. Mitchell advised the following:

- Part V's Planning Permissions Granted - In response to Mr. Mark Coffey (Construction Sector Rep.), Mr. Mitchell stated that GCC issued an Expression of Interest call for on a twice yearly basis, and he said that he did not have the figure to hand for the number of Part V Developments that have been granted Planning permission by Galway County Council. He agreed with Mr. Coffey that the number of Part V developments being built had reduced overall and he attributed this to the increase in building costs. In response, Mr. Coffey stated that it was not just building costs, but rather he stated that these types of developments were not being granted planning permission and he stated that over 470 houses were refused planning in 2023. Mr. Mitchell explained that the Planning process is an independent process and that he does not have a role in the granting of Planning Permission and every individual has the right to object to a planning application.
- Mr. Owens confirmed to the members and Mr. Coffey that the Galway County Council had used Section 179a on two LA developments at Parkmore Tuam and Hillcrest in Loughrea. He outlined that Section 179a is going to be extended in the Planning Bill for 2025 and may be applicable to many of the developments earmarked for delivery in 2025 and 2026. Mr. Owens explained that it is intended that the Section 179a provision will be used on larger scale developments (50 plus units) that are in the pipeline. He confirmed to Mr. Coffey that the 179a developments are not subject to referral by An Bord Pleanála, only a Judicial Review.

5 Update on Homeless.

Ms. Nuala Heffernan addressed the meeting with an update on Homeless whereby she addressed the following:

- Homeless Services
 - Currently 331 households categorised as homeless on IHouse.

- 180 of these households are Galway City Council applicants with an Area of Choice in the County
 - 88 of the Galway County Council applicants classified as homeless are residing in a tenancy and have a Notice to Quit
 - An applicant with a validated Notice to Quit are categorised as homeless 3 months before the effective date of their NTQ.
 - 6 men who are categorised as homeless are residing in the Fairgreen – a **men's hostel** (GCC has 6 beds allocated to it in this hostel)
 - 3 women who are categorised as homeless are residing in Osterley Lodge – a **women's hostel** (GCC has 3 beds allocated to it in this hostel)
 - 12 families are residing in **Private Emergency Accommodation** (purpose-built B & Bs)
 - Waiting lists in place to access all forms of emergency accommodation.
 - 15 individuals are residing in **Housing First** tenancies.
 - 9 individuals in **Community Based Housing** Scheme – 5 properties
 - 7 households (9 tenancies) are residing in properties **leased by Galway County Council to an Approved Housing Body** in one town in County – 7 properties.
 - 6 occupants in **Youth Housing** properties – 3 properties
 - New Service – **Supported Housing for Families** – 2 families
- Ministerial Direction
 - Correspondence received from Minister O'Brien on 08th December 2023 regarding the need to reduce the numbers in emergency accommodation.
 - The Council were requested to allocate an increased number of tenancies to households in emergency accommodation as a matter of urgency during December 2023 and Q1 2024.
 - An update on the numbers of households exiting emergency accommodation was requested on the 15th January 2024 by the Department of Housing.
 - Galway County Council allocated social housing to 23 households who were residing in emergency accommodation during the period December 2023 to March 2024.
- Housing First:
 - Community based Housing:
 - Youth Housing:
 - Supported Housing for Families:
 - Cold Weather Response 2023 – 2024.
 - Homeless Services – Future Plans:
 - The establishment of medium-term 24/7 supported co-living housing service in the County – alternative to hostel accommodation.
 - Provision of Cold Weather Response to meet the needs of a small number of people sleeping rough. It will be located in a County town easily accessible from Galway City to include onsite office facilities.

- The development of a Domestic Violence Refuge in collaboration with multiple agencies.
- Allocation of dedicated supported short to medium accommodation specifically for families exiting domestic violence refuge.
- The expansion of Community Based Housing service in County to 12 houses in 2024.
- Homeless Services Contacts details and statistics
 - The service received 242 emails in March 2024
 - The service received 200 phone calls in March 2024

The Chairperson thanked Ms. Heffernan for the update, whereby he invited the members for their comments and questions.

In response to queries and comments from the members the following responses were given by Ms. Heffernan.

- In response to Cllrs. McClearn & Mannion, Ms. Heffernan informed the members that a Domestic Violence Center based in the County was still in the early stages of development and she outlined that several housing units have been allocated for persons that had moved out of the shared Domestic Violence Refuge center based in Galway City. Ms. Heffernan confirmed that the proposed County based Domestic Violence Refuge would be in the east of the county due to the need being greatest in that area.

6 Update on Refugee Programme

Ms. Nuala Heffernan and Ms Jennifer Swannock (Integration Support Co-Ordinator) gave an update on the Refugee Programme to the members. They highlighted the following:

- Refugee Resettlement Programme 2021 to 2024
 - **Nov 2020** - - Galway County Council contacted by Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth requesting that housing is made available for the resettlement of up to 150 new arrivals to Ireland under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme 2 (IRPP) 2021 to 2023.
 - **Feb 2021** - - Council requested by Department to set up Resettlement Inter-Agency Working Group
 - - Council requested by Department to prepare and submit application for funding for Refugee Resettlement Programme
 - **March 2021**
 - - IAWG meeting held on-line with large numbers in attendance
 - **June 2021**
 - - Identification and allocation of properties for the Resettlement Programme commenced on generic family profiles provided by the Department.
 - **November 2021**

- - Finalised Grant Agreement received and signed by Galway County Council and the Department
- December 2021 – May 2022
- - Families identified for resettlement in Galway and allocated to specific houses
- - Additional properties allocated to the Refugee Resettlement Scheme and Department advised of property addresses.
- - Regular meetings with relevant stakeholders to establish specific family needs for families relocating to Galway.
- - Meetings onsite with Department of Social Protection regarding fit-out of houses
- **June 2022**
- - Refugee Resettlement Worker and Intercultural Worker employed
- - Translation of essential documents into various languages
- - Initial properties kitted out by Dept of Social which were viewed and approved by staff of Department Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- - Links established with schools, local community groups, adult education facilities
- **July 2022 – March 2024**
- - 141 refugees, 31 households, 18 from Syria and 14 Afghanistan resettled in 6 towns in County Galway
- - Intensive supports provided to families to enable them to successfully integrate and partake in their new communities
- - Quarterly returns on progress of Refugee Resettlement Programme submitted to Department
- **July 2022 to March 2024**
- Integration activities included:
 - Language skills courses
 - Introduction to Local Government – Immigrant Council of Ireland
 - Curriculum Vitae preparation – Youth Work Ireland and Galway Rural Development
 - Linking resettled refugees with local employers
 - Linking resettled refugees with local sporting bodies for children and adults
 - Culture night activity – Arabic music Tuam
 - Community food events in Loughrea and Tuam
 - World Food Day – cooking demonstration in Clarin College, Athenry
 - International Womens Day - Wellness event in Tuam and Loughrea
 - Outdoor activity week for young people
 - Christmas/Easter/Summer programmes for young people.

The Chairperson thanks Ms. Heffernan for the update and welcomed Ms. Swannock to her new role as the Integration Support Co-Ordinator, whereby he invited the members for their comments and questions.

In response to queries raised by members, Ms. Heffernan and Jenny advised the following:

- Ms. Swannock confirmed to Cllr. Welby that she will also be working with Ukrainian Refugees as part of her role as Integration Officer. She outlined that they are the beneficiaries of Temporary Protection and as such they are a key cohort that her section will be dealing with.

- Ms. Swannock confirmed to Cllr. Welby, that the GRETB are tasked with providing English language services to Ukrainian refugees within the county. She outlined that the community forum that was set up to deal with the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis, will be repurposed to function as the Integration Team.
- Ms. Heffernan informed the members that Ms. Swannock will circulate her contact details to the Councillors should they need to contact her for any further information.

7. Update on the Master Agenda.

- **Report by the Chair of the Housing SPC 2019 to 2024**

The Housing SPC 2019 to 2024, developed a significant work programme in 2019 for the life of the SPC, and this has been delivered and updated annually throughout the life of the SPC.

The work that has been carried out falls under a number of categories namely;

- 1. Housing Strategies and Policies**
- 2. Critical Housing Issues that require regular updates to the SPC**
- 3. General Information**

1. Housing Strategies and Policies

The following Strategies and Policies have been delivered throughout the life of the SPC;

- 1.1 Allocations Strategy
- 1.2 Tenancy Sustainment Strategy
- 1.3 Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy
- 1.4 Differential Rent Scheme
- 1.5 Strategic Plan for People with a Disability 2021 to 2026
- 1.6 Housing Delivery Action Plan under Housing for All
- 1.7 Vacant Homes Action Plan
- 1.8 Review of Homeless Framework Action Plan (2017)
- 1.9 Review of West Region Homelessness Action Plan 2020-2022
- 1.10 Galway County Council Homeless Action Plan 2020-2022
- 1.11 Development of Homeless Transition Accommodation Hub
- 1.12 Interim Review of the Traveller Accommodation Plan 2019-2024
- 1.13 Scheme of Priority for Affordable Housing

2. Critical Housing Issues that require regular updates to the SPC

- 2.1 Part V – Social Housing Guidelines
- 2.2 Housing Delivery Action Plan
- 2.3 AHB Forum
- 2.4 Galway City and County Social Housing Taskforce
- 2.5 Updates on the Vacant Homes Action Plan
- 2.6 Updates on Housing Grants
- 2.7 Updates on the Local Authority Home Loan Scheme

- 2.8 Housing Need Assessment Overview
- 2.9 Choice Based letting (when it was in operation)
- 2.10 Update on HAP and RAS
- 2.11 Updates on Homelessness
- 2.12 Introduction to the new Traveller Accommodation Plan 2024 to 2029 (to be finalised in 2024)
- 2.13 Update on the works programme for Traveller Specific Accommodation
- 2.14 Updates on the Refugee Programme
- 2.15 Updates on the Housing Disability Strategy
- 2.16 Updates on Housing Maintenance and status of voids
- 2.17 Updates from the Housing Inspectorate on planned versus actual inspections.

3. General Information

- 3.1 Presentations from outside bodies including
 - 3.1.1 Presentation by Threshold regarding their services
 - 3.1.2 Presentation from Enda McGuane, on impacts on the Business Sector
- 3.2 Updates on all Housing Circulars issued by the Department
- 3.3 Updates on all new Schemes

4. Critical Strategies/Policies which are outstanding for the new Housing SPC 2024 to 2029

- 4.1 Traveller Accommodation Plan 2024-2029**
- 4.2 Regional Homeless Action Plan**
- 4.3 Control of Houses Bye Laws**

The Chairperson thanked all the SPC Members for their contribution to this significant workload throughout the life of the SPC.

8. Any Other Business

Draft Amendment to the Social Housing Allocation Scheme - Transfer Policy for An Gaeltacht.

Mr. Owens outlined that it is now proposed to amend the transfer policy to facilitate local authority tenants, originally from the Galway Gaeltacht that have accepted a tenancy outside of the Gaeltacht, to apply for a transfer to facilitate their return to the Gaeltacht. He informed the members that subject to the approval of the SPC Members, he intended to bring this proposed amendment for consideration and decision at the April meeting and thereafter subject to the approval of the Plenary and the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Cllr. Mannion thanked Mr. Owens for the speed at which the proposed amendment was brought before the SPC for consideration, given the fact that the issue was raised at the Housing meeting that took place in Carne the week before. She stated that the amendment would allow native Irish speakers to return to the Gaeltacht and she proposed that the amendment be sent forward for consideration at the April Meeting.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Welby and the Chair confirmed that the proposed amendment would go forward for consideration at the April Plenary meeting.

Cllr. King's Notice of Motion for April Plenary.

The Chairperson read Cllr. King's proposal to the members.

"I will propose, That Galway County Council provide an affordable housing scheme for Connemara North West housing area as a matter of high priority. Kind Regards, Cllr Gerry King."

Mr. Owens outlined that Galway County Council would be very much in favour of providing an affordable Housing Scheme not only in Connemara Northwest but also across the entire County. He outlined that the main constraint in this area is the affordability, and that achieving the required minimum 15% discount below the existing market Price for a property was particularly challenging outside the Galway MASP. Based on the current Affordable Housing Scheme criteria, Mr Owen's stated that this proposal would not meet the criteria.

Cllr. Dr. Evelyn Parson's Notice of Motion for April Plenary.

The Chairperson read Cllr. Parson's Motion on provision of social housing support for returning Irish emigrants.

"I propose that where need has been identified and a qualifying applicant has been approved by Safe Home Ireland, that Galway County Council will allocate one age-friendly property per year (in each of the Council's electoral areas) to a returning Irish emigrant and that a copy of this motion is distributed to the other local authorities. The proposed applicant must have their housing needs assessed by the Local Authority and be approved for inclusion on the social housing waiting list."

The chairperson invited Mr. Owens for his comments on the proposal. Mr. Owens stated that he would be guided by the preference of the members present at the meeting, and he outlined that a returning emigrant, with an existing connection to the county can apply for the social housing list. He outlined that this proposal is requesting that the Council allocate one property per year within each LEA for a returning emigrant. He stated that this proposal would require the Council to allocate up to 7 properties per year. He clarified that this proposal would give priority to a returning emigrant over and above existing OAP applicants that are already on the HWL for multiple years.

Mr. Owens confirmed to Cllr. Mannion that this proposal would be implemented under the Housing Allocation Scheme. If there was no returning emigrant within a particular MD, Mr. Owens confirmed that it would hold up the allocation of one house within the MD, whereby Cllr. Mannion stated that she would not be in favor of this.

Cllr. Welby said that the proposal should be discussed at Plenary, and that it deserves further discussion after the Local Elections scheduled to occur in June 2024.

The Chairperson, Cllr. Byrne wished to convey his gratitude to Mr. Michael Owens, Mr. Liam Hanrahan, Ms. Carmel Kilcoyne and all the members of the Housing Department of Galway County Council. Cllr. Byrne thanked the Councillors and sectoral representatives' that had contributed to the workings of the Housing SPC since its first meeting on Feb. 14th, 2020. Cllr. Byrne pointed out that this meeting was held 7 months after the Local Elections in 2019, and he suggested that there is no need for such a delay for the next Housing SPC meeting to be held after the June Local Elections. He requested that his Report of the Housing SPC 2019 to 2024 should be included in the minutes so they can be used by the next SPC committee. Cllr. Byrne concluded by thanking all past and present committee members and he stated that he really enjoyed his time as the Housing SPC Chairperson. He wished all the elected members good luck in the upcoming local elections, and he reiterated his thanks to Mr. Mark Coffey for attending the SPC meetings and contributing his expertise to the committee.

- Cllr. Welby stated that the Housing SPC Committee was ran very efficiently and he stated that for him it was down to the professionalism and commitment shown by Cllr. Byrne as the Chairperson.
- Cllr. McClearn thanked Cllr. Byrne for his 5 years as chair on the committee and he pointed to the fact that he had previously had the pleasure of working as a councillor with Mr. Byrne's father. He stressed the importance of having a Housing SPC Committee and Chairperson due to the housing needs that are present in the County.
- Cllr. Mannion stated that she concurred with all her colleague's comments, and she thanked the chair for all his efforts over the past 5 years on the Housing SPC. She stated that this SPC probably held more meetings over the past 5 years than any other SPC and she stressed the importance of the committee work.
- On behalf of himself, Liam Hanrahan and all the staff in the Housing Section, Mr. Owens thanked Cllr. Byrne for all his hard work while Chairperson of the Housing SPC. He wished to acknowledge the huge progress and work programme that had been delivered over the past 5 years and he recognised the role that both the Councillors and Sectoral Representatives played in this success. He thanked all the housing staff that had helped and supported the running of the SPC over the past 5 years. Mr. Owens expressed his gratitude to all staff members who had updated the committee and those who had also helped develop the various Housing strategies and policies. He acknowledged the role played by both the Chairperson and Ms. Kilcoyne for their collaborative roles to design and implement the overall work programme of the Housing SPC. In conclusion, he thanked Cllr. Byrne for his commitment and professionalism that he has shown since he became the Chairperson of the Housing SPC Committee, and he wished all the elected members well in the upcoming local elections.
- The meeting then concluded.