



Miontuairiscí Chruinniú Choiste Polásaí Straitéiseacha Pobail, An Ghaeilge, An Ghaeltacht, Turasóireachta & Comhtháthú a tionóladh Dé Luain 11ú Samhain 2024, i Seomra na Comhairle, Áras an Chontae.

Minutes of Meeting of the Community, Irish Language, Gaeltacht, Tourism & Integration Strategic Policy Committee held on Monday 11th November 2024, at the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae.

Members in Attendance:

Cllr Seamus Walsh	Galway County Council
Cllr Alan Harney	Galway County Council
Cllr Evelyn Parsons	Galway County Council
Cllr Shane Curley	Galway County Council
Cllr Noel Thomas	Galway County Council
Cllr Máirtín Lee	Galway County Council
Cllr Michael Leainde	Galway County Council
Paul Dillon	Community/Voluntary Representative
Chika Onyia	Social Inclusion Representative
Paul Carey	Development/Construction Representative
Colleen Baxter	Business/Commercial Representative

Staff in Attendance:

Jacqueline Carroll	Galway County Council
Kieran Coyne	Galway County Council
Máirtín O'Donnchadha	Galway County Council
Mary McGann	Galway County Council
John Neary	Galway County Council
Andrew McBride	Galway County Council
Sharon O'Grady	Galway County Council
Bernie Donnellan	Galway County Council
Jennifer Swannock	Galway County Council
Eimear Dolan	Galway County Council
Breege Lynn	Galway County Council

1. Welcome and Introductions

Cllr. Walsh welcomed all present to the first meeting of the newly formed Strategic Policy Committee and asked everyone present to introduce themselves.

2. Presentation on overview of the Community, Irish Language, Gaeltacht, Tourism, and Integration Strategic Policy Committee areas

Cllr Walsh introduced Jacqueline Carroll, Director of Services, who gave a presentation on the work carried out by different Sections within the Directorate and confirmed that areas such as the Irish Language and Library Service were under the Corporate Services Department, which was under the remit of Eileen Ruane, Director of Services. Máirtín O'Donnchadha, Oifigeach Forbartha na Gaeilge



and Elizabeth Keane, City & County Librarian also presented to the Members on the work areas under their remit.

The various work areas outlined were as follows:

Community Development	Local Community Development Committee Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) Empowering Communities Healthy Ireland Local Enhancement Programme Community Recognition Fund Community Support Schemes Age Friendly Programme Public Participation Network Comhairle na nÓg Local Community Safety Partnership Local Authority Integration Team
Cultural Development	Arts Programmes Strategic Partners – Music Generation, Creative Places, UNESCO City of Film, Áras Éanna Public Arts Programme Creative Ireland
Rural Development	Town & Village Renewal Scheme Streetscape Enhancement Schemes CLÁR Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Schemes EU/Interreg Projects – Food Waste, Tourism, Rural Proofing
Sports Development	Galway Sports Partnership Committee Galway Sports Partnership Programmes
Tourism Development	Destination Towns Just Transition Fund Strategic Partner - Fáilte Ireland
An Gaeilge / An Gaeltacht	Official Languages Act requirements An Coimisinéar Teanga Training for Staff & 14 Gaeltacht Scholarships Gaeltacht & Language Planning Areas Seachtain na Gaeilge and Community Support Schemes Cathaoirleach Awards Irish Category
Library Service	People: Right to Read, Book Fund, participation Spaces: upgrade of library buildings/fleet, ICT, visitor no.'s Connections: e-books, online learning, online language classes, digital literacy, learning supports, My Open Library. Culture: cultural heritage and local history, archives, cross border co-operation Programming: Healthy Ireland at your Library, Grow it Forward, STEM, Podcasting, Crafts & Creativity Classes, Outreach programmes in the community.



Cllr. Walsh thanked Jacqueline Carroll, Máirtín O'Donnchadha and Elizabeth Keane for the presentations.

Cllr Michael Leainde asked Mr O'Donnchadha how many events he attends as the Irish Officer, and in reply, Mr O'Donnchadha advised that due to his work schedule he is currently only able to attend in-house events. Breege Lynn, Administrative Officer, Corporate Services advised the members that this issue is to be looked at with a view to improving it in 2025.

Cllr Shane Curley commended Mr O'Donnchadha on the good work currently being done within the Council in relation to Irish but stated that more needs to be done to improve the percentage of advertising done in Irish within the Council and that the level of funding spent on Irish through the Council needs to be increased. Cllr Seamus Walsh stated that Connemara is the largest Gaeltacht area in the Country and that it is important to try to keep as many Irish speakers living in Gaeltacht areas in Galway as possible, and that Enurement clauses and laws regarding planning permissions in these areas were in place to protect the Irish Language.

Cllr Alan Harney enquired regarding storage space in Ballinasloe library and in reply, Ms Keane advised that the storage space in Ballinasloe library will be reviewed and concurred with Cllr Harney that it could be better utilised.

3. Work Programme 2025

Jacqueline Carroll, Director of Services, noted the following strategic documents were within the remit of this Strategic Policy Committee, and a number of these policies would be brought to the SPC Members over the coming months for input into the development of strategic priorities under the relevant policy areas, and updates on the implementation of existing policies:

- Local Economic and Community Plan
- Local Community Safety Plan
- Age Friendly Strategy
- Migrant Integration Strategy
- Outdoor Recreation Strategy
- Tourism Strategy
- Arts Plan
- Local Sports Plan
- An Scéim Teanga / Irish Language Scheme
- Library Development Plan

Paul Carey thanked all the presenters and stated that he would like to see interaction between all members of the SPC going forward and sharing of expertise in the development of policies, as all members have a different skill set to bring to discussions.

4. Consideration of the Community Support Schemes 2025

Cllr Walsh introduced Mary McGann to give an overview of the Community Support Schemes 2025. Ms McGann advised the members that these grants are 100% funded by Galway County Council and while they are small in nature, they are very important for local communities to commence and



develop projects across a range of areas. Ms. McGann outlined the aims of the Community Support Scheme funding as follows:

- To encourage community & voluntary groups to take an active part in the development of local communities.
- To fund projects which are of benefit to the wider community.
- To promote local economic benefits by encouraging applicants to 'Shop Local'.
- To promote the PPN as the main structure linking communities and the local authority, by requiring all applicants to be members of PPN.

Ms. McGann confirmed that the Community Support Schemes were divided into 3 distinct Support Schemes supporting economic, community, and cultural development, with support for the following type of projects:

- Economic: tourism events & festivals and other economic development initiatives including upgrade of festive lighting, farmers markets etc.
- Community: upgrade of community amenities and support for Groups who enter the National Tidy Towns Competition.
- Cultural: Arts Act Grants, Heritage Grants, and Irish Language Promotional Activities Grants to promote interest, knowledge, experience and practice of the arts, heritage and Irish language respectively.

Ms. McGann confirmed that it is intended to advertise the grants with a closing date of 24th January 2025, and to again utilise an online application system next year which enables more efficient processing of applications. To this end, it was planned to present funding recommendations to the February Plenary Meeting. She also confirmed that an essential element of the Schemes was to issue feedback to all unsuccessful applicants so that they would be advised of issues with their application or signposted to a more suitable funding scheme.

Cllr Seamus Walsh thanked Mary McGann for her presentation. Cllr Shane Curley stated that the Community Support Scheme grants are hugely important to local and voluntary groups but that the amounts being granted are too small, and there was a need for scheme which allocated amounts between these small schemes as a step-up to other medium-scale schemes such as LEADER. Cllr. Thomas stated that the Community Support Schemes are ideal as small schemes, but he agreed that there was a gap in funding for small-to-medium type projects. Paul Dillon also agreed stating that the Community Support Schemes are spread too thinly with insufficient funding for significant projects or equipment purchases, and larger funding schemes created difficulties for Community Groups with regard to the match funding requirement. In response, Jacqueline Carroll advised that a Grants Booklet was being collated which would provide information on all funding sources available for a variety of project types and this was welcomed by the members.

In response to a suggestion from Cllr Curley, Máirtín O'Donnchadha and Breege Lynn will revisit the funding available for Irish Language Promotional Activities grants to see if it can be increased for 2025. Jacqueline Carroll reminded the Elected Members that funding for the Community Support Scheme grants is approved at the Annual Budget Meeting. Cllr Alan Harney thanked Mary McGann for her presentation and stated that the online system is working well but that there is room for improvement as it can be difficult to navigate, in particular at the acceptance stage.



5. Schedule of Dates for Meetings 2025

Indicative dates for the next meetings of the SPC were agreed as Monday 10th February 2025, and Monday 12th May 2025, with both meetings to be hybrid and at the same time of 2 p.m.

6. Any Other Business

Chikya Onyia asked if the presentations would be circulated to the members and in response, Jacqueline Carroll confirmed that all presentations would be circulated following the meeting.

Jacqueline Carroll outlined recent successes, i.e., achievements of local groups in the National Tidy Towns Competition, Kinvara and Williamstown achieving Runner-Up Awards in the All-Island Pride of Place Competition, and Galway County Council achieving the overall winner of the Age Friendly Transport Award category for Bus Shelters at Cnoc (Indreabhán) and Casla. Ms. Carroll also confirmed the success of projects put forward for the Large-Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund and that feedback was being sought on projects which had been unsuccessful in receiving funding.

Cllr Walsh thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Chríoghnaigh an chruinniú ansin.