

Minutes of the April Plenary Council Meeting of Galway City Council held in the Council Chamber, City Hall and Online via MS Teams on Monday 14th April 2025 at 3.00p.m.	
Presiding	Cllr. Níall McNelis, Deputy Mayor of Galway City
Present (Elected Members)	Councillors: A. Burke, A. Cheevers, M.J. Crowe, M. Cubbard, A. Curran, F. Fahy, J. Forde, S. Forde, E. Hoare, D. Lyons, J. McDonagh, T. O'Flaherty, E. Seoighthe
Present (virtually)	Councillors: Cllrs. C. Higgins, D. McDonnell, H. Ogbu
Present (Executive)	Mr. L. Cleary, Chief Executive Ms. P. Philbin, Director of Services Mr. P. Greene, Director of Services Ms. H. Kilroy, Director of Finance Mr. D. Pender, Director of Services Ms. E. Fanning, A/Director of Services Mr. E. Lynch, Senior Planner Ms. F. Holland, Senior Engineer Ms. A. Rohan, Meetings Administrator Ms. L. Hynes, Financial Management Accountant Mr. D. Mahon, Senior Executive Officer Ms. A. Kenny, Administrative Officer
Apologies	Mayor P. Keane

Note: The Minutes of the Meeting and Agenda items are recorded in the order of their consideration.

Ms. A. Rohan, Meetings Administrator commenced the meeting with a statement of intent to conduct the business of the meeting in line with Standing Orders followed by a moment of silent reflection.

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis welcomed all attendees and referred Members to agenda item 1 and invited comments.

1. Disclosure of Conflict of Interest (Section 177 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended).

There were no conflicts disclosed.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

(a) March Plenary Council meeting held on 10th March 2025.

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis referred Members to agenda item 2(a) and invited matters of accuracy or matters arising.

There were no matters of accuracy. Matters arising were as follows:

- Update requested regarding the cost estimates associated with the damage caused by Storm Éowyn.

- Number of social housing tenants currently in arrears and a breakdown of legacy debt.
- Query on the level of use of generative AI for marketing promotion by the City Council.
- Update on public lighting issues following storm Éowyn and communication issued to affected residents.
- Update on MMT report and Christmas Park and Ride.
- Update on pedestrian safety at two ongoing developments on Upper Clybaun Road.
- Update on Pálás Cinema.

The executive responded to matters arising.

Mr. D. Pender addressed queries regarding wall damage resulting from the storm and informed Members that correspondence has been issued to residents with guidance on the appropriate course of action.

Members raised further clarifications as follows:

Cllr. M. Cubbard referred to the correspondence issued to tenants in arrears, specifically noting the prominent red text used, and requested that the wording be reviewed.

Cllr. D. Lyons referred to a previous meeting during which Councillors had requested a list of estates affected by public lighting damage following Storm Éowyn, noting that this information has not yet been received. He further requested that the public be informed of the status of the situation.

Both Cllr. A. Cheevers & Cllr. H. Ogbu expressed concern regarding the lack of communication from the City Council to the public and requested that the Chief Executive prioritise improvements in this area going forward.

Cllr. A Curran requested that the Monthly Management Reports and Quarterly Reports be made more prominently accessible on the website, noting that they would serve as a valuable source of information for members of the public.

Mr. L. Cleary responded that he would examine the possibility of enhancing the visibility of the Monthly Management Reports and Quarterly Reports on the website. He also advised that the Council is currently awaiting sanction from Central Government for additional resources to support the Communications Team.

Ms. H. Kilroy advised that she would review wording on arrears correspondence to tenants.

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis requested that a report be issued to Members on the storm damage costs and public lighting issues.

Mr. L. Cleary agreed to provide Members with a report outlining the issues and challenges, including financial constraints once collated.

Proposed By: Cllr. D. Lyons	Seconded By: Cllr. T. O'Flaherty
2(a) Confirmation of Minutes - March Plenary Council meeting held on 10 th March 2025.	
The minutes of the March plenary council meeting were agreed and adopted.	

3. Business Prescribed by Statute

3(a) To agree a time and date for the Annual Council Meeting 2025 – Proposed date Friday 20th June in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis referred Members to Agenda Item 3(a) and advised that the proposed date for the 2025 Annual Council Meeting was Friday, 20th June. He then invited comments from the Members.

Proposed By: Cllr. T. O' Flaherty	Seconded By: Cllr. J. McDonagh
3(a) Date of Friday 20th June 2025 for the Annual Council Meeting. Agreed time of 4:00pm in the Council Chamber, City Hall.	
The date and time for the Annual Council Meeting 2025 was agreed and adopted.	

3(b) Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board – Appointment of One (1) Members (for the lifetime of the Council) - Resignation of Cllr J. Forde

(Group system of appointment applies. At least 40 per cent of the members elected shall be women and at least 40 per cent shall be men, per S.I. No. 142 of 2019 Education and Training Boards Act 2013 (Local Authority Members) Regulations 2019) as amended.

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis referred Members to agenda item 3(b) and invited proposals.

Cllr. M. Cubbard nominated Cllr. A. Cheevers. This was Seconded by Cllr. J. Forde and agreed. Deputy Mayor N. McNelis called for a show of hands in favour of this nomination.

Proposed By: Cllr. M. Cubbard	Seconded By: Cllr. J. Forde
Cllr. A. Cheevers be appointed to the Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board.	
In favour: 16	Against: 0
Abstain: 0	Absent: 2
Present: 16	
This motion was carried.	

3(c) Appointment of One (1) Member to Civic Naming & Commemorative Committee from the West Ward - to replace Cllr M.J. Crowe

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis referred Members to agenda item 3(c) and invited comments.

Cllr. T. O'Flaherty proposed Cllr. D. Lyons. This was seconded by Cllr. A. Curran and agreed. Deputy Mayor N. McNelis called for a show of hands in favour of the above proposal.

Proposed By: Cllr. T. O'Flaherty	Seconded By: Cllr. A. Curran
Proposal that Cllr. D. Lyons be appointed to the Civic Naming Committee.	
In favour: 16	Against: 0
Abstain: 0	Absent: 2
Present: 16	
This motion was carried.	

3(d) Declaration of Public Road/Taking in Charge of Church Lane, Knocknacarra, Galway.

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis referred Members to agenda item 3(d) and invited comments.

Proposed By: Cllr. D. Lyons	Seconded By: Cllr. N. McNelis
To approve the Declaration of Public Road/Taking in Charge of Church Lane, Knocknacarra, Galway – per Report circulated.	
In favour: 16	Against: 0
Abstain: 0	Absent: 2
Present: 16	
This motion was carried.	

3(e) Draft Annual Financial Statement 2024 (subject to Audit).

- i. **Approval of Annual Financial Statements (Unaudited) for year ended 31st December 2024.**
- ii. **Approval of Transfers To/From Reserves as detailed in Note 14 of the Accounts.**
- iii. **Approval of Over/Under Expenditure by Division as detailed in Note 16 of the Accounts.**

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis referred Members to agenda item 3(e) and invited comments.

Ms. H. Kilroy briefed Members on item 3(e). A discussion followed and a number of queries were raised by Members and responded to by Ms. H. Kilroy & Ms. P. Philbin.

Proposed By: Cllr. D. Lyons	Seconded By: Cllr. E. Hoare
3(e) Draft Annual Financial Statement 2024 (subject to Audit).	
i. Approval of Annual Financial Statements (Unaudited) for year ended 31st December 2024.	
In favour: 16	Against: 0
Abstain: 0	Absent: 2
Present: 16	
Items 3(e)(i) was agreed and adopted.	

Proposed By: Cllr. D. Lyons	Seconded By: Cllr. E. Hoare
3(e) Draft Annual Financial Statement 2024 (subject to Audit).	
ii. Approval of Transfers To/From Reserves as detailed in Note 14 of the Accounts.	
In favour: 16	Against: 0
Abstain: 0	Absent: 2
Present: 16	
Items 3(e)(ii) was agreed and adopted.	

Proposed By: Cllr. D. Lyons	Seconded By: Cllr. E. Hoare
3(e) Draft Annual Financial Statement 2024 (subject to Audit).	
iii. Approval of Over/Under Expenditure by Division as detailed in Note 16 of the Accounts.	
In favour: 16	Against: 0
Abstain: 0	Absent: 2
Present: 16	
Items 3(e)(iii) was agreed and adopted.	

4(a) Notes of Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 7th April 2025.
- Recommendation regarding membership on EU Councillors Network

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis referred Members to agenda item 4(a) and invited comments. A discussion followed and a number of queries were raised by Members and responded to by the Executive.

Ms. A. Rohan provided an update to the Members regarding the EU Councillors Network advising that up until now there have been two networks, one organised by the Committee of the Regions and the other by Building Europe with Local Councillors (BELC) by the European Commission. These are being merged formally and only one process will be in place in the future. It was noted that Cllr. D. McDonnell currently serves as the spokesperson for Galway City Council on the Committee of the Regions network. The Deputy Mayor requested that this item be deferred to the next meeting in order to seek further clarification concerning the network. This was agreed.

Cllr. D Lyons referred to page 1 and Notice of Motions NOM 02/2025 and NOM 26/2023, noting that he has yet to receive a response regarding the planning permission. Mr. D. Pender advised that he would issue a response to Cllr. D. Lyons by close of business tomorrow.

Cllr. M. Cubbard proposed that Galway City Council write to the NTA in relation to St Patrick's Day 2026 in the city and request the roll-out of a trial 'free public bus' scheme throughout the day to encourage the public to use public transport to access the city centre for the parade and other festivities. This was seconded by Cllr. A. Curran and agreed.

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis called for a show of hands in favour of this proposal.

NOM24/2025				
Proposed By: Cllr. M. Cubbard			Seconded By: Cllr. A. Curran	
I proposed that Galway City Council write to the NTA in relation to St Patrick's Day 2026 in the city and request the roll-out a trial 'free public bus' scheme throughout the day to encourage the public to use public transport to access the city centre for the parade and other festivities.				
In favour: 16	Against: 0	Abstain: 0	Absent: 2	Present: 16
This motion was carried.				

Cllr. E. Hoare referenced NOM 17/2025 and requested that the executive write to the operational teams on the ground.

Mr. L. Cleary addressed queries concerning Uisce Éireann and informed Members that he participated in a meeting with Uisce Éireann earlier this morning, during which a constructive and candid discussion took place regarding growth, development, and the necessity for national government investment. He further noted that measures have been implemented to ensure continued dialogue with both the Senior Management Team and the planning team. He further added that Galway County Council was also present at the meeting, ensuring an integrated approach.

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis asked if a detailed report on the meeting with Uisce Éireann could be issued to Members. Mr. L. Cleary advised that he would provide an update.

Cllr. D. Lyons proposed that the Director of Services write to the NTA to request them to attend a meeting of this Council to discuss all issues of NTA matters. This was Seconded by Cllr. A. Curran and agreed.

Cllr. A. Cheevers proposed that the newly appointed Executive of the Chamber of Commerce be invited to deliver a presentation at a Council meeting to outline their role and responsibilities going forward. Mr. L. Cleary agreed to extend an invitation.

Proposed By: Cllr. D. Lyons	Seconded By: Cllr. A. Burke
4(a) Notes of Corporate Policy Group meeting held on 7 th April 2025 and Recommendation regarding membership on EU Councillors Network	
Item 4(a) was noted and agreed.	

5(b) Christmas Park and Ride report for 2024 - Recommendation from Corporate Policy Group for consideration.

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis referred Members to agenda item 5(b) and invited comments.

A discussion followed, during which Members raised queries concerning the operating costs, potential alternative sites, increasing efficiency and the future requirements of this facility.

Cllr. C. Higgins requested that the executive provide Members with a detailed report on the Park and Ride facility, including information on the extent of promotion undertaken for it.

Mr. L. Cleary informed Members that this matter requires further review, research, and cost analysis, and that there may be a role for the SPC in addressing it. He further stated that the Executive will conduct a review to assess potential options to assist Members in making a more informed decision.

Cllr. E. Hoare proposed the following motion. This was Seconded by Cllr. M. Cubbard and agreed.

NOM 25/2025				
Proposed By: Cllr. E. Hoare		Seconded By: Cllr. M. Cubbard		
That this Council reengage with University of Galway, ATU and other relevant stakeholders with regard to the rollout of a temporary Park & Ride for Christmas 2025. Commuters could use the University campuses and then take a public bus service to their destination. These campuses are largely unused for the Christmas period. Other locations that could be considered are the Galway Airport and the Galway Races sites if deemed appropriate.				
In favour: 17	Against: 0	Abstain: 0	Absent: 1	Present: 17
This motion was carried.				

5(a) Monthly Management Report for April 2025 and Quarterly Report for Q1, 2025.

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis referred Members to agenda item 5(a) and invited comments. A discussion followed and a number of queries were raised by Members and responded to by the Executive.

A discussion took place concerning the development at the Westside Shopping Centre. Members expressed concerns regarding planning and compliance issues, community engagement, as well as the handling of complaints and associated response timelines. Ms. P. Philbin and Mr. J. Russell responded to queries raised on this matter.

Cllr. C. Higgins referred to the economic viability of the city and to small family run businesses and proposed the following motion.

NOM 26/2025	
Proposed By: Cllr. C. Higgins	Seconded By: Cllr. E. Hoare
This that Galway City Council agrees to establish a Galway City Business Forum to bring together stakeholders e.g. local businesses, hospitality representatives, Council Executive and elected members. The aim of the forum is to:	
1. Facilitate ongoing dialogue on the challenges and opportunities facing local businesses.	

2. Collaboratively identify solutions to issues such as rates, vacant premises, planning barriers and retail footfall.
3. Advise on strategies to support family run and independent businesses, improve the retail environment and attract investment into the city.

It would be envisaged that this forum would meet quarterly and provide regular feedback to the Economic Development SPC and full Council.

It was agreed that NOM 26/2025 be referred to the relevant SPC for consideration.

In response to a query regarding disabled parking bays, Mr. P. Greene informed Members that all such bays within the City should be painted blue. He requested that Members notify him of any locations where repainting may be required.

Cllr. F. Fahy proposed to extend the meeting to finish the agenda. This was Seconded by Cllr. J. Forde and agreed.

Cllr. T. O'Flaherty referred to the columns at the Salmon Weir Bridge which are in a need of repainting and asked if this could be examined.

Proposed By: Cllr. D. Lyons

Seconded By: Cllr. F. Fahy

5(a) Monthly Management Report for April 2025 and Quarterly Report for Q1, 2025.

Item 5(a) was noted and agreed.

6. Notice of Motions

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis referred Members to agenda item 6 and to NOM 18/2025 and invited comments. Cllr. F. Fahy commented on this motion.

Mr. L. Cleary requested that NOM 18/2025 be referred to the Naming Committee for consideration. This was agreed.

NOM 18/2025, submitted by Cllr. F. Fahy on 07/04/2025

Seconded by Cllr. T. O'Flaherty

I propose that the playground on Henry Street be named after Mary Byrne, R.I.P, who was Galway's first female Mayor and a resident of Henry Street to acknowledge her huge contribution to Galway.

Refer to the Naming Committee for consideration.

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis referred Members to NOM2 1/2025 and invited comments. Cllr. H. Ogbu commented on this motion

It was agreed that NOM 21/2025 be referred to the relevant SPC for consideration.

NOM 21/2025, submitted by Cllr. H. Ogbu on 07/04/2025

Pilot of Accessible Parking Bay Text Alert Scheme: I propose the following motion for consideration by the Chief Executive, Directors and Council Members: That Galway City Council supports the Disabled Drivers Association of Ireland's (DDAI) campaign to combat the abuse of accessible parking bays and commits to implementing a pilot of the Accessible Parking Bay Text Alert Scheme in Galway City. This scheme would allow members of the public to easily report the misuse of accessible parking spaces via a simple text message, supporting better enforcement and protection of parking bays for those who genuinely need them. The pilot could be trialled in key locations across the city where misuse has been identified, with a view to expansion following review and stakeholder consultation.

Refer to relevant SPC for consideration.

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis referred Members to NOM 22/2025. He briefed Members on this motion. Cllr. M.J. Crowe suggested to amend wording in the motion to "examine" instead of "urgently address". This was agreed.

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis called for a show of hands in favour of NOM 22/2025.

NOM 22/2025, submitted by Cllr. N. McNelis on 06/04/2025**Seconded by Cllr. F. Fahy**

This Council calls on the Minister for Health and The Minister of State for Mental Health to examine those presenting as suicidal not to have to go through A & E. This council calls for a separate general admission unit for those experiencing a mental health emergency. The mental health records should be immediately referenced, while also securing and monitoring them when someone says they want to end their lives.

In favour: 17 Against: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 Present: 17

This motion was carried.

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis referred Members to NOM 23/2025 and invited comments. Cllr. E. Seoighthe commented on this NOM and requested NOM 23/2025 remain on the agenda. This was agreed.

NOM 23/2025, submitted by Cllr. E. Seoighthe on 07/04/2025

That this Council requests a full report from the Chief Executive detailing the purchase of Crown Square including:

1. The rationale for the purchase and how it aligns with the Council's Development Plan and strategic objectives.
2. The total purchase price, source of funding, and any additional financial commitments associated with the acquisition.
3. A breakdown of the due diligence process undertaken, including property valuation, structural surveys, legal title checks, and planning compliance.
4. Details of the procurement or selection process, including whether alternative properties were considered and if a competitive process was followed.

5. Any future plans for the property, associated costs, and the expected timeline for its use.
6. Confirmation of compliance with Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 and other relevant legislative provisions.

Furthermore, this Council calls for a review of the governance procedures surrounding property acquisitions to ensure full transparency, value for money, and accountability in all future purchases.

Leave on the agenda for next meeting.

NOM 27/2025 (Raise for the purposes of dealing with Urgent Business)

Proposed by Cllr. A. Cheevers

Seconded by Cllr. J. Forde

I am Calling on Galway City Council to fast track the construction lighted junction at entrance to Merlin Park. This is part of the Dublin Road Bus Corridor, but this junction needs to be fast tracked as soon as possible.

I am also calling for temporary safety measures to be implemented immediately at this entrance until construction of new junction.

In favour: 17 Against: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 Present: 17

This motion was carried.

7. Questions

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis referred Members to agenda item 7 and proposed that questions for which a response has been provided be removed from the agenda, while questions without a response be carried forward to the next meeting.

This was agreed.

Q8/2025, submitted by Cllr. J. Forde on 05/03/2025

I would like to raise a question at the March meeting regarding the status of outside dining for commercial ratepayers in Woodquay for 2025. Last year, businesses such as McGinn's and the Italian restaurant were denied permission for outdoor dining. However, during discussions on the commercial rate increase, I highlighted the importance of reconsidering this decision. With commercial rates now increased, it is crucial that businesses in Wood Quay receive fair treatment, especially compared to those in the West, where outdoor dining is permitted from May to September. The businesses in Woodquay are requesting approval for a much shorter period - only from July to the end of August.

Q9/2025, submitted by Cllr. T. O'Flaherty on 26/03/2025

Please give a breakdown of all the properties that the City Council is currently renting for office space or other purposes; their location and use; how many staff are working in those offices/spaces (listed for each space rented); the yearly rents paid on those properties and the current status of the leases (start and finish month/year). Also, will Crown Square accommodate all of the office staff currently working in those rented properties including the staff in City Hall.

Q11/2025, submitted by Cllr. H. Ogbu on 07/04/2025

At the January Council meeting, I raised the need for access to the email addresses of Residents' Associations in Galway City. Previously, this information was available via a link on the old website, but it has since been removed. Given that restoring access would facilitate better engagement, empowerment, and information sharing for communities, as well as assist the Council in disseminating information on funding, grants, planning, and consultations, can the Council take steps to reinstate this access? Furthermore, can this process begin while we continue recruiting the Community Development Officers, under whose remit this would eventually fall?

Q12/2025, submitted by Cllr. N. McNelis on 06/04/2025

Chief Executive, could you please let me know how many planning applications have been received by Galway City Council for retention of use for short term letting of residential properties and how many offices / commercial units for change of use to short term letting have been received in last 3 years. Can you please give numbers for how many have received permission for same. Will Chief Executive outline the planning process for short term lets and why as reported in local media that Galway City has hundreds of properties advertised online with no planning, In the middle of a housing crisis has this local authority enough resources to tackle unauthorised short term letting with staffing and current planning laws.

Q13/2025, submitted by Cllr. A. Curran on 06/03/2025

Can the council provide an updated report on the recorded speed data from the 19 driver feedback signs in the city, to include the following data in tabular format:

- Number of records
- Volume per Hour
- Mean Speed
- Median Speed
- Mean Speed by Hour
- Median Speed by Hour
- 85th Percentile Speed

8. Correspondence

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis referred Members to agenda item 8 and called for a proposer and seconder.

Proposed by Cllr. D. Lyons**Seconded by Cllr. F. Fahy**

- (a) Correspondence received on 11/03/2025 from Clare County Council – motion passed regarding funding for Early Year Educators.
- (b) Response to NOM09/2025, from Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, received on 13/03/2025.

Correspondence was noted.

10. Conferences & Training

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis referred Members to agenda item 10 and called for a proposer and seconder.

Proposed by Cllr. D. Lyons			Seconded by Cllr. F. Fahy
	Provider	Details	Date & Location
(a)	AILG	March Training Module: "Embracing Equality - Cultivating Inclusive Local Communities"	Saturday 22 nd March 2025 10.00am – 1.00pm Clayton Hotel, Ballybrit, Galway
(b)		QFA – Certificate in Professional Financial Advice (Cllr. Alan Cheevers)	
(c)	AILG	OPR Planning Training Webinar for Elected Members - Community Benefit Funds and Renewables	Friday, 28th of March 2025
Conferences and training were agreed and approved.			

11. Votes of Sympathy/Congratulations

Deputy Mayor N. McNelis referred Members to agenda item 11 and called for a proposer and seconder.

Proposed By: Cllr. D. Lyons		Seconded By: Cllr. F. Fahy	
• Mr. Leo Creane, RIP • Ms. Anita Geary, RIP • Mr. Jimmy Parslow, RIP • Mr. Ken Bruen, RIP • Ms. Ula Grigaityte, RIP		• Ms. Eileen Maura Garvin (nee Divilly), RIP • Mr. Michael Mee, RIP • Mr. John Melia, RIP	
Votes of Sympathy were noted.			

13.AOB

There was no other business.

The Meeting concluded at 19:00. The next plenary council meeting is scheduled for Monday 12th May 2025.

Minutes, Confirmed & Signed
Frank Kelly
Deputy Mayor of Galway