



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Demolition & Replacement of Existing Cottage At: Church Street, Loughrea, Co. Galway



Design Statement to accompany Part 8 Application

Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)

Permission is being sought at: Church Street, Loughrea, Co. Galway for:

- The demolition of the existing derelict cottage.
- The construction of a new multi-purpose structure which closely matches the footprint, scale and proportion of the existing cottage.
- The proposed development includes new signage, an enclosed bin store, connection to existing services, hard and soft landscaping, and all associated site works.
- The following uses will be accommodated on the site: outdoor traders market, outdoor performances and community events and ancillary uses associated with the use of the Town Hall.

The subject works are located within the Loughrea Architectural Conservation Area. The site is adjacent to the Loughrea Town Hall which is on the Record of Protected Structures No. 315 and listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage No. 30337027

A Stage 1 'Appropriate Assessment' screening was carried out for the proposed development and Galway County Council has concluded that a Stage 2 'Appropriate Assessment' (Natura Impact Assessment- NIS) is not required.

**October 2026
Galway County Council,
Áras an Chontae
Prospect Hill
Galway**



Image 1. Existing cottage in context on Church Street – Loughrea Town Hall at left – cottage at centre



Image 2. Replacement structure in context – newly renovated Loughrea Town hall at left, proposed replacement structure with façade in the open position to afford access to the market yard beyond. Existing commercial property at right.

1. Introduction

Galway County Council is seeking Part 8 planning approval to carry out the following works at Church Street, Loughrea, County Galway:

- The demolition and replacement of the existing derelict cottage with a new multi-purpose community facility.
- The construction of a replacement structure closely matching the footprint of the existing cottage, and of similar scale and proportion, to both secure and serve as a gateway to the community open space beyond.

- The proposed development will include new signage, an enclosed bin store, connection to existing services, hard and soft landscaping, and all associated site works.
- The following uses will be accommodated on the site: outdoor traders market, outdoor performances, and community events including ancillary uses to Loughrea Town Hall.



Image 3. Proposed market yard with outdoor traders market



Image 4. Proposed market yard with evening outdoor event

2. Description of the Cottage and Attendant Land.

The derelict cottage is in the ownership of Galway County Council; the Council completed the purchase of this derelict cottage in 2025. The historic 6'' survey maps of 1829 to 1842 show a building of similar arrangement at this location and the second edition survey 25'' map of 1897 shows the cottage in its current position.

It is a two-storey building with a centrally positioned single leaf door flanked by two windows at entrance level and three first floor windows. The cottage is without ornament and is of rudimentary composition. The external walls are of stone construction with traditional lime render still evident in areas. The windows to the street elevation retain their stone sills as does one window to the rear. A single storey lean-too structure of masonry construction is attached to the rear of the cottage. A single leaf door leads from the lean-too into an enclosed yard beyond where livestock would have been held.

The northern-most gable is constructed hard up against the neighbouring building. Its placement is unusual as it stands forward of the building line on the western side of Church Street by approximately one meter. The southern gable faces onto a narrow access way between the cottage and the historic town hall.

An ensemble of rubble and concrete lean-too structures were arranged in the yard however these have since collapsed.



Image 5. Historic 6'' map



Image 6. Historic 25'' map

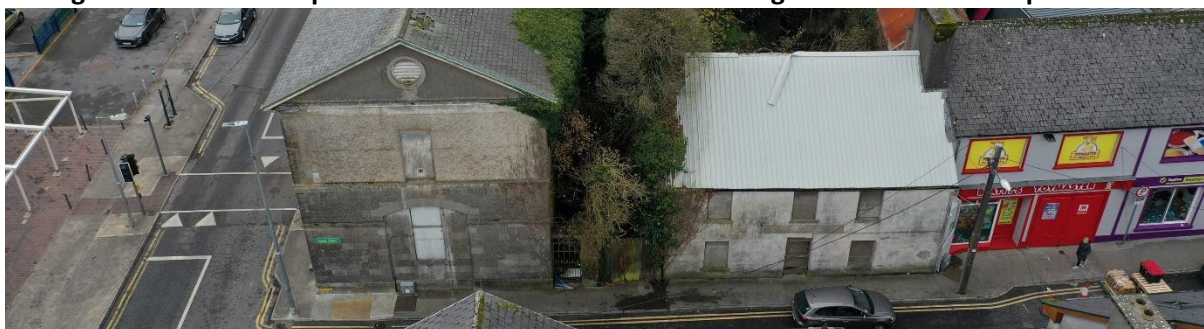


Image 7. The existing cottage in the context of the streetscape (pre-renovation of the Town Hall)

3. Cottage Structural Condition

This building has remained vacant for an extensive period of time and has consequently fallen into dereliction. A structural engineer was appointed By Galway County Council to assess the condition of the cottage and to provide a structural report (which accompanies this application). The report recommends the demolition of the cottage as, by the engineer's assessment, the original fabric cannot be salvaged and is beyond repair.

A summary of the condition of the building elements is as follows:

- 'Bellying' of the front masonry wall as structural elements have decayed and failed.
- First floor structural timber joists and internal masonry 'tie walls' have separated from the external walls.
- Leaning of the southern gable and chimney towards the town hall.
- Collapse of first floor structural timbers.
- Collapse of the timber staircase and landings.
- Decay and failure of timber lintels.
- Decay and collapse of roof structure of both the cottage and lean-to extension.
- Deterioration of timber roof trusses has resulted in decay at roof covering fixing points.



Image 8. Front elevation with 'bellying' wall



Image 9. Roof structure collapse



Image 10. Chimney stack leaning



Image 11. Lean-to extension and main roof collapse



Image 12. Collapse of first floor



Image 13. Collapse of stairs and landing



Image 14. Collapse of first floor



Image 15. Collapse of first floor

4. Design Consideration

For almost a century the Loughrea Town Hall has held particular social importance within the community. For generations the first floor ball room was the focal point of social life while the cinema was a destination for families at weekends.

After standing vacant for more than 20 years, Galway County Council's Regeneration Team has undertaken the repurposing and renovation of this neo-classical building to bring it back into community use. The neighbouring cottage was acquired by Galway County Council in 2024 to facilitate construction at the Town Hall, to improve the immediate context of the historic hall, address dereliction and to provide much needed community open space.

The design solution for the site was shaped by its context, immediately adjacent to the Town Hall. The design solution was developed with careful consideration of the role which the cottage plays in defining the streetscape and its contribution to the character of the broader Architectural Conservation Area. Having commissioned a structural engineer's report, it became evident the original fabric of the cottage is beyond repair. A residential use was no longer suitable at this location, therefore an adaptive reuse of the site was deemed appropriate.



Image 16.
Town Hall
present
context with
existing
cottage



Image 17.
Town Hall
proposed
context with
replacement
multi-
function
community
structure

The proposed development considers the removal of the derelict cottage to be the most appropriate solution to the site. Water ingress and neglect has deemed the cottage unsalvageable and a risk to public safety. The design solution was to re-imagine the site with a replacement structure which in its essence is a reflection of the original. The proposed structure is of similar scale, proportion, and form as the original cottage – even marking the fenestration. In this way the new structure augments the character of the streetscape while its contemporary aesthetic lifts the context of the renovated Town Hall. The new structure and courtyard will serve to accommodate community uses which will complement the Town Hall activities, outdoor performances, breakout areas and Artisan Market.

The demolition of the cottage is the only appropriate response to the site as it is in a serious state of dereliction, and the remaining historic fabric has lost its structural integrity. The proposed design will pay homage to the cottage in that it constitutes a ‘shadow’ of this building and therefore retains its architectural presence along Church Street and contributes positively to the streetscape.

The replacement structure has been designed to convey a lightness and translucency while retaining the mass and proportion of the original building. The size and location of the

original fenestration openings on Church Street are marked on the louvered timber façade by slight syncopation of the vertical members. The textured façade will add visual interest to the character of the street. Both the front and rear elevations of the structure will slide open to allow the outdoor traders of Loughrea to use the shelter of the roof while expanding the public open space into the courtyard beyond. There currently is no community open space of this nature in the town. The 'Market Yard' will be used for outdoor performances, community events, set building for the Town Hall, and as a congregation space for patrons visiting theatrical or musical events in the Town Hall.

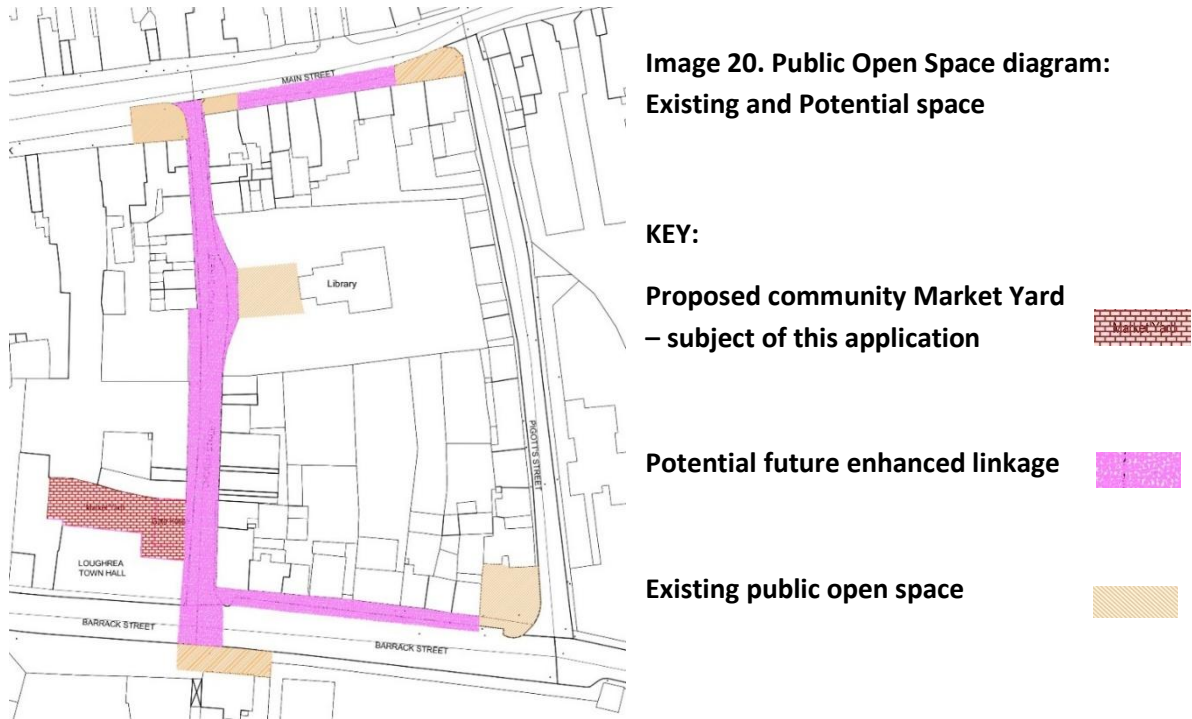


**Image 18. Church Street
façade closed for outdoor
performance. Market Yard
façade open.**



**Image 19. Church Street
façade and Market Yard
façade open on market day**

5. Urban Context – Public Realm Regeneration Opportunities



The proposed 'Market Yard' will satisfy the requirement for a town centre community open space and safe outdoor traders market away from the main vehicular routes. The open space and replacement structure will make a positive contribution to the setting of the magnificently restored Town Hall. It will accommodate complimentary uses to those taking place at the Town hall since it's renovation and adaptive reuse.

In the immediate vicinity of our site, where the width of the footpath allows, a small number of coffee shops have expanded their business into the public realm. The current condition of the public open space, which is designed in response to vehicular traffic, does not encourage social interaction or commercial activity. The development of a community 'Market Yard' could serve as a catalyst for the reimagining of the public realm and as a focal point for the regeneration of streets and open spaces.

As part of a future project, these open spaces could be enhanced and connected by pedestrian focused 'linkages' which encourage social and commercial activity. Currently, the roads are surfaced with asphalt and the pedestrian pavements are surfaced with asphalt or concrete which lends to the sense of vehicle dominance of the public realm. A future intervention could be the introduction of pedestrian friendly surfaces which would improve the area aesthetically and support social and commercial interaction.

In future, to improve the setting and context of the Town Hall and 'Market Yard', vehicular movement along Church Street could be reconfigured to give pedestrians priority. This could be implemented through the introduction of high quality, natural surfacing materials which would create a safer and better functioning public realm and be appropriate to this historically significant setting.



Image 21. Repurposed Town Hall and Market Yard as catalyst for Public Open Space enhancement

The proposed community 'Market Yard' could act as the nexus for the rejuvenated public open space. The Church of Ireland building further up the road is situated in a graveyard with a carpark to the front which presents an opportunity to create a series of places along Church Street for the community to use.

Building frontage design plays an important role in defining the pedestrian experience and the degree of pedestrian engagement with the place. Transparency levels, visual variation and textures all contribute to the make of an enticing street environment. The openable, translucent, façade of the proposed structure allows for the extension of the public realm into the site allowing both visual and physical access.



Image 21. Proposed development facilitates the expansion of the public realm.



Image 22. Proposed development compliments the adaptive reuse and setting of the Town Hall

As illustrated by the above images, the proposed development will serve to celebrate the repurposed Town Hall by enhancing its immediate setting and improving the street environment. The buildings along the western side of Church Street have been modified such that their character has been compromised. The proposed replacement structure will complement the Town Hall aesthetically and functionally while removing a derelict building. It will provide a valuable community space and regenerate Church Street.

6. Location for the Outdoor Traders Market

The Loughrea Traders Market has suffered serious decline such that there are now only 3 traders who attend each Thursday. 18 number trading bays are designated within the town centre which underlines the past popularity and historic significance of Loughrea as a market trading hub.

The primary cause of the decline is that the bays are positioned on Barrack Street, one of the busiest streets in the town, which drives away pedestrian footfall. As Image 17 illustrates: Church Street links directly off Barrack Street and as such is a prime location for the proposed 'Market Yard'. The remaining traders have been consulted by the Regeneration Team and they have expressed unanimous support for the proposed Market Yard concept –



Image 23. Unsuitability of Barrack Street for outdoor market – trader on footpath at left



Image 24. Traders on Barrack Street working in the Barrack Street traffic



Image 25. Proposed Market Yard and community event space – away from vehicular traffic to nurture outdoor trading



Image 26. Proposed Market Yard adjacent to the re-purposed Town Hall



Image 27. Historic, potato market weighing scales celebrated in a fragment of open space at the corner of Barrack Street and Piggot Street

7. Planning Context

National Planning Framework

The site which is the subject of this application has been purchased with funding from the Rural Regeneration Development Fund part of Project Ireland 2040. The proposed new design will be subject to a future funding application under the Town and Village Regeneration Scheme 2027, with a closing date of 22nd January 2027.

Galway County Council Development Plan 2022 – 2028

The proposed development fully supports chapter 5 Economic Development, Enterprise and retail, especially policies CSA 1, CSA 3. The redevelopment of the derelict building on Church Street will enable the “Town hall” development to expand its offer, allowing for outside performances, opportunities for nighttime economy events in accordance with policy objective CSA 8, also ensuring the focus of the retail environment within the defined town centre. The provision of a specialised civic space within the Town Centre to allow the operation of the market, will improve facilities for both the vendors and consumers ensuring the developed external space is part of the wider regeneration opportunities for Loughrea Town centre.

Appendix 7 – Architectural Conservation Areas

Loughrea’s principal significance lies in the combination of its street pattern, plot sizes, architectural coherence, distinctive landmark buildings and unique setting.

The existing building does not form part of a contiguous street elevation; it sits forward of the adjoining buildings and is an anomaly within the existing pattern of development. The surrounding properties do not share a contiguous pattern of fenestration or roof pitch and do not form a defined pattern of development. The building was not constructed as part of a collection of buildings with a defined pattern of development as outlined within the statement of significance for Loughrea’s ACA. The adjacent Town hall represents a dominant civic building both facing Barrack Street and Church Street. The cottage building's location and siting are part of a unique form of development within the ACA. In order to respect and retain this unique form, the proposal will retain the existing street pattern, plot size and architectural coherence, while introducing a revitalised use which will enhance the Town hall building.

Maintaining the roof structure, building form, siting and positioning the new building seeks to engrain its form and structure within the existing pattern of development. The design approach and concept for the site have been informed by detailed structural surveying and analysis. These supporting documents have demonstrated that significant elements of the cottage building are beyond salvaging, where retention has been possible, these elements most notably northern-most gable abutting the adjoining property have informed the new design concept. The corrugated roof will be replaced with natural slate reflecting what would have been the original roof prior to the most recent interventions. The front facade will be replaced with a contemporary elevation allowing a visual link into the rear of the property where the “courtyard” for the Town hall will provide an active public realm space with passive observation and creating secure public area.

The adaptive re-use of this plot within the Town centre will respect the existing streetscape, pay homage to the form and principal elements of the existing building, the high-quality design, its integration to the existing streetscape and respect for the character and form of

the ACA are in full accordance with adopted policies AH1 and AH 4 of the County Development Plan 2022-2028.

The proposed development will contribute to the streetscape and has the potential to augment the open spaces between the buildings which hold the street edge. The replacement structure is translucent and completely openable such that it will renew the appreciation for historic plots concealed behind buildings. The replacement structure will closely resemble the existing derelict cottage in position, form, scale, and proportion to retain its presence on the street and the wider public realm. The proposed development will not negatively impact the significance of Loughrea's ACA or the setting of the Town Hall RPS 315.

Chapter 3 – Placemaking, Regeneration, and Urban Living

The proposed development subscribes fully to the strategic aims of Chapter 3 of the CDP, in that it will promote town centre regeneration, ensure the delivery of high-quality community space at this site, and encourage the further regeneration of public open space in the vicinity.

The proposed development is absolutely context specific and will enhance the character of Church Street, uplift the context of the Town Hall, and promote the architectural identity of the Town. While the loss of the existing property is regrettable, every effort has been taken within the proposed design to address the built form, plot size and existing rhythm of the street by retaining a reflection of the building and modernising it to accommodate community town centre usage, complying with CDP policy objectives CGR2, CGR4, CGR 7, CGR 8.

Loughrea Local Area Plan 2024-2030, policy LSST 10 highlights the defined Town Centre as the preferred location for new retail development, it also seeks to develop complementary mixed uses within the town centre. In addition, policy LSS11 Town Centre seeks to develop a Town Centre Management Plan for Loughrea which considers the feasibility of a Town centre market. Research has been completed in support of this development, including liaising with existing market vendors, this demonstrated that the relocation of the Town Centre Market will represent a welcome regeneration initiative for the Town of Loughrea. Policy LSST 15- promotes the development of community facilities with a high level of access to the local community, including community, civic, cultural and complementary uses. This proposal is fully compliant with this policy objective.

Policy LSST 24- supports the regeneration and re-use of vacant or underutilized lands in Loughrea, this derelict property within the town centre core will be reimagined and redesigned to create a vibrant civic space for use by the local community and will contribute to the long-term regeneration of Loughrea Town centre.

Policy LSST 36 seeks to ensure that new developments are responsive to their site context and in keeping with the character, heritage, amenities, environment and landscape of the area. New development proposals will be required to complement the existing character of the area in terms of scale, height, massing, building line, urban grain and definition and through high-quality design proposals for buildings/structures/shop fronts, the use of high

quality, appropriate materials and the provision of appropriate signage, lighting, landscaping proposals and other such details. The proposed development at Church Street is fully in accordance with this policy objective.

The proposed redevelopment of this key town centre site with a high quality, bespoke designed covered civic space will enhance the essential character of the Loughrea ACA and the setting of the Town Hall in accordance with adopted policies LSST 44 and 45.

8. Architectural Heritage

The proposed development involves the demolition of a property within the ACA, policy AH4 seeks to prohibit development proposals which include demolition of a structure where it contributes to the special character of the area. As demonstrated, in both this and the supporting documentation, the building the subject of this application has been in a ruinous state for a number of years, has no features of special significance, is not part of a recognised pattern or continuous form of development. The loss of the building while regrettable, it is structurally beyond salvation and poses a public health risk, the loss of this structure will not have a negative impact on the overall significance of the Loughrea ACA. The new proposal will “have appropriate regard to scale, plot, form, mass, design, materials, colours and function.” When considering all relevant heritage policies and objectives regarding the proposed development, on balance, the proposed development will protect the street pattern, plot size and the existing cottage design which is not part of any clearly defined architectural coherence within the streetscape.

The replacement structure will be a ‘shadow’ of the cottage and will offer reflection on the nature of the constituent architectural parts of the historic streetscape.



Image 28: Loughrea Architectural Conservation Area

9. Protected status

The cottage is not a protected structure. The proposal involves works immediately adjacent to the Town Hall building which is number 315 on Galway County Council's Record of Protected Structures. The Townhall is listed as number 30337027 in the NIAH.

An Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment is submitted in support of the Planning Application.

10. Natural Heritage

The site is located 110 meters from Lough Rea which is a designated SPA, SAC, and Natural Heritage Area, as part of the Natura 2000 network.

It is located within 15 km of the following Special Areas of Conservation:

- SAC: Lough Rea SAC
- SAC: Sonnagh Bog SAC
- SAC: Peterswell Turlough SAC
- SAC: Rahasane Turlough SAC
- SPA: Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA
- SPA: Lough Rea SPA
- SPA: Rahasane Turlough SPA

The site is situated within the existing town centre. The external works are not of a significant scale sufficient to have a direct or indirect impact on the SAC's and SPA being 135 metres at its closest point to the proposed development across a built-up area.

An Ecologists Appropriate Assessment Screening report and report on Bats and Swifts will be submitted in support of this application.

11. Surface Water Management

a) Sustainable Urban Drainage strategy

The Loughrea LAP notes the following: *"There is no dedicated surface water sewer network serving Loughrea. In order to ensure that surface water is disposed of in a controlled and sustainable manner, future developments will be required to address surface water disposal through on-site systems, (depending on site characteristics), discharge to adjacent surface water (where available), or discharge to an existing surface water sewer if available."*

Given the age, condition, and close proximity of the neighbouring buildings which do not have contemporary foundations, on-site attenuation of surface water in soak pits could result in structural failure through over-saturation of bearing ground. As such soak pits will have to be avoided.

In addressing the Sustainable Urban Drainage requirement, the proposed development will incorporate permeable paving on the site. Any overflow drainage will then be connected to the existing drainage infrastructure along Church Street.

Rainwater gathered from the pitched roof of the replacement structure will drain by way of a new, replacement, connection into the existing surface water sewer.

b) Surface water drainage summary

There will be no increased load on the existing surface water drainage system from the proposed development.

The geography of the site, and typical 'best practice' construction procedures expected for this type of development, will mean that during construction an insignificant amount of construction contaminated surface water might reach the existing combined drainage system. The existing drainage network leads to the local treatment plant.

12.Flood Risk Management

In respect of flood risk, the land use for the site is designated as Less Vulnerable Development and it is located in Flood Zone C. Therefore, the site is deemed to be appropriate for development. Flood Zone C is rated as having low probability of flooding < 1:1000 for river flooding.

13.Traffic Management Strategy

a) Parking provision:

The greatest demand for parking will be driven by the performance space in the Town Hall and evening or weekend, summer performances at the 'Market Yard'. Given that most functions will take place in the evening time, this demand will not coincide with the peak demand period for parking in the town which falls within normal business hours.

The Loughrea traders market takes place each Thursday morning. The traders have been consulted during the design process and they have signalled a willingness to relocate to the proposed 'Market Yard'. The current parking arrangements for visitors to the Thursday market will continue to operate as before.

The number of available parking bays are as follows:

Barrack Street car park:	57
Barrack Street pay parking on-street bays:	144 incl. 2 E-Vehicle charging points
Castle Street:	11
Church Street:	8

Kelly Street:	7
King Street:	16
Piggot Street:	19
Total bays:	<u>262bays</u>

b) Construction traffic:

Construction Traffic will have little impact on Church Street and Barrack Street by virtue of the fact that the majority of the works will take place to the rear of the Town Hall building, away from the streets, and that the proposed works are simple by design. The impact of the works on Church Street circulation can be managed by restricting large deliveries to the site to fall place outside of the busiest days in the town which are Thursdays, Fridays and Saturday mornings.

14.Design and General Factors

This proposal takes into consideration the architectural presence of the cottage, its prominence in the streetscape, and the importance of its setting within the ACA. The primary objective is to maintain the architectural significance of cottage, within the broader context of the ACA, through considered built intervention while bringing additionality by way of complimentary uses opportunities for the nighttime economy and a positive impact on the wider environment. The proposed works have been designed to be sympathetic to its context and to enhance the status of the Town Hall.

15.Part 8 Consultations

It is intended that details of the proposed scheme will be referred to the following in conjunction with the public advertising of the proposals:

Loughrea Municipal District Elected Members

- a) Councillor Paul Killilea
- b) Councillor Ivan Canning
- c) Councillor Michael Regan
- d) Councillor Geraldine Donohue
- e) Councillor Gerry Finnerty
- f) Councillor Laurie Harney
- g) Councillor Declan Kelly
- h) Councillor Michael Maher
- i) Councillor Jimmy McClearn
- j) Councillor Martina Kinane

