

DÁIL ÉIREANN

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE IRISH LANGUAGE, THE GAELTACHT AND THE IRISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

COMHCHOISTE NA GAEILGE, NA GAELTACHTA AGUS PHOBAL LABHAR- THA NA GAEILGE

Dé Céadaoin, 1 Nollaig 2021

Wednesday, 1 December 2021

Tháinig an Comhchoiste le chéile ag 13.30 p.m.

The Joint Committee met at 13.30 p.m.

Comhaltaí a bhí i láthair / Members present:

Teachtaí Dála / Deputies	Seanadóirí / Senators
Catherine Connolly,	Seán Kyne,
Pa Daly,	Niall Ó Donnghaile.
Danny Healy-Rae,	
Aindrias Moynihan,	
Marc Ó Cathasaigh.	

I láthair / In attendance: Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív and Senator Lynn Boylan.

Teachta / Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh sa Chathaoir / in the Chair.

Tithíocht agus Cúrsaí Pleanála sa Ghaeltacht: Plé

Chairman: Cuirim fáilte roimh chomhaltaí an chomhchoiste, roimh na finnétithe a bheidh ag labhairt os comhair an chomhchoiste agus roimh aon duine a bheidh ag féachaint air seo ar Theilifís an Oireachtais beo nó amach anseo.

Is mian liom a thaifeadadh go bhfuil na finnétithe go léir ó na ceithre chomhairle contae ag freastal ar an gcruinniú ar líne ó lasmuigh de phurláin an Oireachtais agus beimid ag bualadh leo le linn an chomhchoiste seo. Linn inniu tá Moira Murrell Uasal, an príomhfheidhmeannach, Comhairle Contae Chiarraí; agus léi tá John Breen, stiúrthóir seirbhísí; agus Damien Ginty Uasal, pleanálaí sinsearach. Ó Chomhairle Cathrach agus Contae Phort Láirge tá an príomhfheidhmeannach, Michael Walsh; Máire Seosaimhín Breathnach, oifigeach Gaeilge; agus Liam McGree Uasal, pleanálaí sinsearach. Ó Chomhairle Contae na Mí tá Jackie Maguire, an príomhfheidhmeannach; agus Des Foley, stiúrthóir seirbhísí pleanála; agus Seán Clarke, oifigeach feidhmiúcháin sinsearach. Ó Chomhairle Contae Chorcaí tá Tim Lucey, an príomhfheidhmeannach; Valerie O'Sullivan, bainisteoir rannáin - An Deisceart; Michael Lynch, stiúrthóir seirbhísí pleanála; Maurice Manning, stiúrthóir seirbhísí tithíochta; agus Aileen Loughrey, oifigeach Gaeilge. Tá an Teachta Dála Daly istigh sa seomra anseo liom. Tá na Teachtaí Connolly, Ó Cuív agus Ó Cathasaigh ar líne faoi láthair agus feicim an Seanadóir Kyne ar líne chomh maith. B'fhéidir go mbeidh daoine eile ann agus ainmneoidh mé iad agus muid ag dul ar aghaidh, más rud é go bhfuil siad ag teacht isteach go fíorúil ar líne. Má tá comhaltaí ag freastal ar an gcruinniú ó oifigí thithe an Oireachtais agus nuair a bheidh na finnétithe ag freastal ar an gcruinniú, is gá dóibh na físeáin a bheith ar siúl an t-am go léir ionas gur féidir leis an gCathaoirleach agus na comhaltaí eile na finnétithe eile, na baill foirne, agus na comhaltaí eile atá i láthair a fheiceáil. Ba chóir dóibh a bheith ar an eolas gur féidir le gach duine eile atá ag an gcruinniú iad a fheiceáil ar an scáileán, cé acu an mbeadh nó nach mbeadh siad ag labhairt ag an am. Bá chóir dóibh a chinntiú freisin go mbeidh an micreafón acu múchta nuair nach bhfuil siad ag caint.

Níl sé i gceist agam go mbeadh vóta ann ach ma ghlaoitear vóta leanfar leis de réir mar is gnáth trí vóta ar ghlaoh rolla na gcomhaltaí i seomra an choiste.

Chun críocha Thuarascáil Oifigiúil Thithe an Oireachtais, tá sé iarrtha orm comhaltaí agus finnétithe a aimsiú sula labhraíonn siad. Uaireanta, bíonn spás ann agus iarraim ar gach duine atá páirteach a gcuid ama a thógáil lena bhfreagairt go dtí go n-aithnímid iad ar dtús. Iarraim ar chomhaltaí agus finnétithe a gclúdaigh aghaidhe a bhaint díobh agus iad ag labhairt ach go háirithe iad siúd atá i seomra an choiste, ionas gur féidir leis an gcóras taifeadta na focail, na ceisteanna agus na ráitis a thaifeadadh i gceart agus go cruinn.

Ba mhaith liom a chur ar aird na bhfinnétithe inniu, go bhfuil de bhua Bhunreacht na hÉireann agus reachtaíochta araon go bhfuil finnétithe faoi chosaint ag lánphribhléid maidir leis an bhfianaise a thugann siad don chomhchoiste seo chomh fada is atá siad lonnaithe laistigh de phurláin Thithe an Oireachtais. Ba mhaith liom a chur ar aird na bhfinnétithe, toisc go bhfuil siad os comhair Thithe an Oireachtais ó lasmuigh díobh, nach féidir leo brath ar an gcosaint sin. Mar sin, molaim dóibh a bheith cúramach agus má ordaíonn an comhchoiste dóibh éirí as an bhfianaise a thabhairt i leith ní áirithe, go ndéanfaidh siad amhlaidh láithreach. Ordaítear dóibh gan aon fhianaise a thabhairt nach fianaise í a bhaineann le hábhar na n-imeachtaí atá á bplé ag an gcomhchoiste agus ba chóir dóibh a bheith ar an eolas go ndéanfar na ráitis tosaigh a chuir siad faoi bhráid an chomhchoiste a fhoilsiú ar shuíomh gréasáin an chomhchoiste tar éis an chruinnithe. Fiafraítear de bhinnétithe agus de chomhaltaí araon an cleachtadh parlaiminte a urramú nár chóir, más féidir, daoine nó eintiteas a cháineadh ná líomhaintí a dhéanamh ina n-

aghaidh, ná tuairimí a thabhairt maidir leo ina ainm, ina hainm nó ina n-ainm ar shlí a bhféadfaí iad a aithint. Chomh maith leis sin fiafraítear díobh gan aon ní a rá a d'fhéadfaí breathnú air mar ábhar díobhálach do dheachlu aon duine nó eintiteas. Mar sin, dá bhféadfaí ráitis tosaigh na bhfinnéithe a bheith clúmhilleach do dhuine nó eintiteas, ordófar dóibh éirí as an ráiteas sin láithreach. Tá sé rithabhachtach go ngéillfidh na finnéithe dá mbeadh ordú dá leithéid á thabhairt agam ón gcomhchoiste.

Is é tithíocht agus cúrsaí pleanála fisiciúla sa Ghaeltacht atá á phlé againn inniu. Iarrfaidh mé ar na finnéithe na ráitis tosaigh a thabhairt ar dtús agus ansin tabharfaidh mé deis ansin do na comhaltaí atá i láthair ceisteanna a chur. Ar dtús báire ba mhaith liom iarraidh ar an bpríomhfhinné ó Chomhairle Contae Chiarraí ráiteas tosaigh a dhéanamh, cibé acu Moira Murrell nó duine eile as an bhfoireann atá chun an ráiteas sin a thabhairt.

Ms Moira Murrell: A Chathaoirigh, a Theachtaí Dála agus a Sheanadóirí, ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas a ghabháil libhse, agus leis an gcoiste seo, as cuireadh a thabhairt domsa a bheith i láthair anseo chun cúrsaí tithíochta agus pleanáil fhisiciúil sa Ghaeltacht a phlé. Agus na hábhair seo á phlé againn, creidim go bhfuil sé tábhachtach a rá ar dtús go bhfuil Comhairle Contae Chiarraí fiordháiríre maidir le forbairt a limistéar Gaeltachta agus le cosaint a dhaingniú dá hoidhreacht agus dá cultúr. Maidir leis na hábhair atá luaite i mo ráiteas oscailte anseo, déantar plé níos mine orthu i réamhráiteas Chomhairle Contae Chiarraí. Tugann réamhráiteas na comhairle go leor sonraí faoi na struchtúir agus na riachtanais láidre a thugann tacaíocht d'fhorbairt agus do sholáthar polasaí maidir le tacaíocht do na limistéir Ghaeltachta agus lena bhforbairt. Baineann na struchtúir tacaíochta a luaitear leis na ról seo a leanas:

Oifig Ghaeilge: Bíonn an oifig seo i mbun idirchaidreamh laistigh agus lasmuigh den chomhairle maidir le forbairt agus cur chun cinn gach gné den Ghaeilge agus den oidhreacht chultúrtha a bhaineann léi thar cheann Chomhairle Contae Chiarraí.

Oifigeach forbartha teanga nua: Is é ról an oifigigh nua ceannaireacht a thabhairt thar ceann an údarais áitiúla maidir le Baile Seirbhíse Gaeltachta Chathair Saidhbhín. Anuas air sin, cuirfidh an t-oifigeach comhairle ar an gcomhairle ar fhorbairt pholasaí na Gaeilge san eagraíocht amach anseo.

Coiste Polasaí Straitéiseach na Gaeltachta: Déanann an coiste plé agus moltaí maidir le forbairt teanga agus cultúir sa Ghaeltacht agus tuairisciú don chomhairle faoi na ceisteanna seo.

Struchtúir Limistéir Bhardasacha Gaeltachta: Bíonn oifigigh na limistéir áitiúla ag soláthar seirbhísí áitiúla trí Ghaeilge freisin.

Coiste Comhairleach na Gaeilge: Coiste neamhspleách seachtrach de thriúr is ea é seo, ar bunaíodh i mí Márta chun comhairle a thabhairt don chomhairle maidir le réimsí áirithe teanga agus polasaí.

Pleanáil agus forbairt eacnamaíoch: Tá infheistíocht shuntasach sprioc-dhírithe déanta sa Ghaeltacht le blianta beaga anuas. Féach ar chur chuige polasaí eacnamaíoch na comhairle. Tá tionscadail athnuachana agus infheistithe arbh fhiú na milliúin euro ar siúl nó á bpleanáil sa dá cheantar Gaeltachta i gCiarraí agus sa cheantar mórtimpeall orthu. Tá sonraí na dtionscadal seo ar fáil sa réamhráiteas thuasluaite. Tá tascfhórsa Uíbh Ráthaigh ag fáil tacaíochta láidir leanúnach ó Chomhairle Contae Chiarraí agus tá an chomhairle ag obair go dlúth le hÚdarás na Gaeltachta, Fáilte Ireland, Mol Chorca Dhuibhne, comhlachtaí forbartha áitiúla agus grúpaí pobail chun pleananna agus tionscadail a fhorbairt sa Ghaeltacht. Beidh plean eacnamaíoch na

comhairle, a bheidh ag plé le hUíbh Ráthaigh agus Corca Dhuibhne, fiorthábhachtach maidir leis an daonra a choimeád iontu agus chun deiseanna fostaíochta fiúntacha a chur ar fáil amach anseo, rudaí a thacódh le teanga, cultúr agus leis an bpobal Gaeltachta trí cheile.

Plean forbartha an chontae agus pleananna limistéar áitiúil: Leanann cur chuige Comhairle Contae Chiarraí, i bplean forbartha an chontae agus i bpróisis pleananna na limistéar áitiúil, ag forbairt ar aghaidh agus ag iarraidh an pholasaí Gaeltachta seo sa chontae trí cheile a neartú. Is iad na pleananna forbartha a dhéantar tagairt dó anseo ná Plean Forbartha Chontae Chiarraí, Dréachtphlean Forbartha Chontae Chiarraí - atá ar thaispeáint phoiblí faoi láthair, Plean Limistéir Áitiúil Uíbh Ráthaigh agus Plean Limistéir Áitiúil Chorca Dhuibhne.

Tá sé tábhachtach a rá ag an bpointe seo go bhfuil a phlean limistéir áitiúil, PLÁ, féin ag gach ceann den dá cheantar Gaeltachta sa chontae anois. Tá Gaeltacht Chorca Dhuibhne anois clúdaithe ag Plean Limistéir Áitiúil Chorca Dhuibhne 2021 – 2026, a tháinig in áit dhá PLÁ a bhíodh ag clúdach an cheantair Gaeltachta seo. Ar an dul síos céanna, tá cúrsaí pleanála áitiúla maidir le Gaeltacht Uíbh Ráthaigh anois á gclúdach ag Plean Limistéir Áitiúil Iarthar Uíbh Ráthaigh 2019-2025, á tháinig in áit dhá PLÁ a bhí ann roimhe seo chomh maith. Tá cur i bhfeidhm straitéis seo na pleanála aonair den pholasaí pleanála áitiúil, anuas ar struchtúir nua na limistéar bardasach, tar éis cur chuige níos seasmhaí a chruthú sa dá cheantar Gaeltachta agus ag éascú fócas níos soiléire i ngach ceann acu ann féin maidir le ceapadh, plé agus cur i bhfeidhm na bpleananna limistéar áitiúil seo.

Maidir le plean forbartha an chontae agus lena dhréachtphlean forbartha, trí na spriocanna a leagtar síos ann, bíonn plean forbartha Contae Chiarraí ag iarraidh úsáid na Gaeilge mar theanga cumarsáide laethúla i bpobail Ghaeltachta a chur chun cinn agus a chosaint. Aithníonn an plean go bhfuil an Ghaeltacht saibhir maidir le teanga, traidisiún, litríocht, béaloideas, ceol agus seandálaíocht agus go bhfuil ról suntasach ag an gcultúr saibhir, agus na féilte agus imeachtaí a bhaineann leis, le forbairt eacnamaíoch an chontae, cúrsaí turasóireachta san áireamh.

Tá iarrachtaí suntasacha déanta i ndréachtphlean forbartha an chontae, atá á thaispeáint don phobal faoi láthair, chun tacaíocht a chur ar fáil don phobal Gaeltachta agus é a neartú. I measc na samplaí de seo atá ann, tá ar a laghad 66% d'aonaid chónaithe i ngach ceantar Gaeltachta á gcur i leataobh do chainteoirí Gaeilge. Tá an figiúr seo socraithe ag 31% sa phlean reatha do limistéar reatha Dhaingean Uí Chúis, agus níl aon sprioc in aon chor leagtha síos i bplean reatha limistéar Gaeltachta Uíbh Ráthach. I gcás roinnt lonnaíochtaí beaga áirithe, is féidir go gceadófar grúpa tithe a bhfuil a gcóras cóireála fuíolluisce féin acu faoi dhréachtphlean an chontae. Tacaíonn an dréachtphlean le Tobar Dhuibhne agus plean teanga Dhaingean Uí Chúis agus lena gcur chun cinn. Cuirtear tacaíocht ar fáil do na gníomhaíochtaí a eascraíonn as tuairisc tascfórsa Uíbh Ráthaigh agus tacaítear le ról na mbailte seirbhíse Gaeltachta: Trá Lí, Daingean Uí Chúis agus Cathair Saidhbhín.

Labhróidh mé anois ar chur i bhfeidhm an pholasaí tithíochta agus pleanála. Maidir leis an gclásal teanga, tá cleachtas láidir inmheánach forbartha ag an gcomhairle atá bunaithe ar mholtaí an Choimisinéara Teanga agus ar an tslí a mbaineann siad le cur i bhfeidhm an coinníoll pleanála teanga. Tá sonraí an chleachtais seo le fáil in aguisín 1 dár ráiteas scríofa. Maidir leis seo, tá sé tábhachtach a rá freisin go bhfuil sé deacair an coinníoll a chur i bhfeidhm. Ní féidir é a chur i bhfeidhm ach ar feadh tréimhse áirithe ama. Tá sé deacair comhlíonadh an chláisail theanga a chinntiú thar am nó nuair a athraíonn úinéireacht tí.

Maidir le tithe aonair sa Ghaeltacht, bíonn an polasaí um lonnaíocht tuaithe ar fud an chontae ag iarraidh cothrom a chruthú idir cosaint na timpeallachta agus ceisteanna comhshaoil ar

an lámh amháin – le céatadán ard den chontae cosanta mar limistéir faoi shonrú áirithe timpeallachta – agus soláthar réasúnta de thithíocht chónaithe don phobal áitiúil sna limistéir seo ar an lámh eile. Seachas i mbaile Dhaingean Uí Chúis, tá formhór d’fhorbairt tithíochta i gceantair Ghaeltachta Chiarraí teoranta go tithe aonair faoin tuath. Idir Márta 2015 agus Meán Fómhair 2021, déanadh 126 iarratas pleanála i nGaeltacht Chorca Dhuibhne. Ba mhic nó iníonacha le feirmeoirí nó úinéirí talún, nó daoine ón gceantar díreach thart ar shuíomh an tí ar a raibh cead á lorg dó, iad formhór de na hiarrthóirí. As na hiarrthóirí seo, tugadh cead pleanála do 101, nó 80%, acu. As na hiarrthóirí nár tugadh cead pleanála dóibh, ba ar bhonn innealtóireachta, mar shampla, fadhbanna le bóithre nó uisce, a diúltaíodh 56% acu. Ó anailís ar GeoDirectory An Post don tréimhse chéanna, tá a fhios againn go bhfuil 89 seoladh nua sa cheantar Gaeltachta. Cé go bhféadfadh go mbaineann cuid de na seoltaí nua seo le cead a tugadh roimh 2015, tugann na figiúirí seo le tuiscint gur tithe a bhfuil teaghlaigh ina gcónaí iontu go buan iad sciar maith de na háitribh sin.

Maidir le tionchar forbartha tithe saoire sa Ghaeltacht, le tamall de bhlianta anois, tá fás feicthe sa líon tithe saoire i gceantair cois cósta sa chontae. Tá sé tugtha faoi deara go bhfuil seachadadh na dtithe seo le hoidhreacht ó ghlúin go glúin tar éis athrú a chur ar an saghas cuairteora a thagann go dtí na ceantair seo. Is féidir nach í an Ghaeilge a gcéad teanga. Mar thoradh ar roinnt de na gabhálaí seo a bheith á ndíol ar an margadh oscailte, tá cuid acu anois in úinéireacht ag daoine nach cainteoirí Gaeilge iad in aon chor. Táthar tar éis a lán de na tithe seo a chur amach ar cíos ar bhonn gearrthéarmach, rud a chuireann a thuilleadh fós le praghas na dtithe sna ceantair seo. Tá an chomhairle i mbun fiosruithe ar an gceist seo maidir le tithe a bhíonn á ligean ar cíos gearrthéarmach i nGaeltacht Chorca Dhuibhne.

Maidir le dualgais an údarais áitiúla faoi na hAchtanna um thithíocht, tá neamhréiteach idir na hAchtanna a bhaineann le tithíocht shóisialta ar thaobh amháin agus na hAchtanna um Pleanáil agus Forbairt, 2000 go 2018, ar an taobh eile maidir leis an gcaoi ina mbaineann siad le cosaint oidhreacht teanga agus cultúrtha na Gaeltachta agus le cur chun cinn na Gaeilge mar theanga an phobail. Faoin gcéad cheann, tá sé d’oibleagáid ag an gcomhairle aird a thabhairt ar riachtanais tithíochta iarrthóirí ar thithíocht shóisialta, is cuma faoina gcumas Gaeilge. Sa chás go raibh tithíocht shóisialta á soláthar do dhaoine gan Ghaeilge i limistéir Ghaeltachta, chuaigh an chomhairle i ngleic leis an bhfadhb seo, agus tá sé i gceist go leanfar ag cur tacaíocht ar fáil do thionóntaí nua chun scileanna labhartha Gaeilge a fhoghlaim trí na háiseanna oideachais teanga atá ann cheana féin.

Tarraingíonn sé sin aird ar an réimse atá pléite sa réamhráiteas. Táimid ag iarraidh a léiriú go bhfuil an chomhairle thar a bheith gníomhach agus í ag tabhairt tacaíochta do réigiúin Ghaeltachta agus dá bpobail. Tá roinnt ceisteanna casta ann faoi láthair maidir leis na dúshlán leanúnacha a bhaineann le cúrsaí pleanála agus tithíochta i gceantair Ghaeltacht. Baineann go leor de na dúshlán seo le gach ceantar Gaeltachta sa tír.

Chairman: Bogfaimid ar aghaidh go Comhairle Cathrach agus Contae Phort Láirge. Ansin, ligfimid do na baill ceisteanna a chur ar gach comhairle. Feicim go bhfuil an Teachta Ó Muimhneacháin anois linn go fíorúil óna sheomra.

Mr. Michael Walsh: Táimid lánsásta a bheith anseo inniu chun labhairt leis an gcoiste ar chúrsaí pleanála i nGaeltacht na Déise. Is ceantar tuaithe é Gaeltacht na nDéise. Cuimsíonn sé ceantar geografach 62 km cearnach agus tá daonra de 1,816 duine sa cheantar, dar le daonáireamh 2016. Aithníonn an chomhairle gur cuid thábhachtach de thraidisiún teangeolaíoch, sóisialta agus cultúrtha an chontae í nGaeltacht Phort Láirge. Tá an t-ádh ar Ghaeltacht na nDéise toisc gur féidir le 75% den daonra Gaeilge a labhairt. Luaigh 45.6% den daonra go

labhraíonn siad Gaeilge ar bhonn laethúil i ndaonáireamh 2016. Tá méadú seasta tar éis teacht ar dhaonra Ghaeltacht na nDéise le 25 bliain anuas. Cé gur thit céatadán an daonra a labhraíonn Gaeilge ar bhonn laethúil idir 1996 agus 2002, cuireadh stop leis an meath seo agus léirigh an daonáireamh is déanaí go raibh méadú suntasach tar éis teacht ar líon na gcainteoirí Gaeilge le 20 bliain anuas, staitistic a théann in aghaidh na treochta náisiúnta.

Ar nós na bpobal Gaeltachta eile ar fud na tíre, tá brú ollmhór ar an gceantar seo maidir le sláine phobal labhartha na Gaeilge, brú a mbaineann ceithre phríomhfhórsa leis: tionchar na ndaoine nach cainteoirí Gaeilge iad ar mian leo tithe a thógáil agus a cheannach i gceantair Ghaeltachta; easpa tithe ar phraghas réasúnta sna ceantair; easpa seirbhísí chun forbairtí ar scála níos mó a éascú; agus fáil ar shuímh agus srianta ar thithíocht tuaithe.

Is dúshlán suntasach don phobal áitiúil inacmhainneacht tithíochta de bharr suíomh cósta, ardchaighdeán comhshaoil, éileamh ard ar áiteanna cónaithe tánaisteacha, ar thithe saoire agus ar ligean gearrthéarmach, chomh maith le ganntanas coibhneasta d'fhorbairt fhiontrach tithíochta. Ina theannta sin, níl tuilleadh suntasach breise sa líonra seirbhísí uisce sa cheantar tuaithe seo. Cuireann sé seo srian sa bhreis ar roghanna féideartha chun na fadhbanna a bhaineann le hinacmhainneacht a réiteach. Ina ainneoin sin, i go leor cásanna tá forbairtí ar scála níos mó ag teacht salach ar charachtar riachtanach an phobail Ghaeltachta seo. Cruthaíonn meascán den éileamh láidir agus soláthar teoranta dúshlán mór, agus dar le roinnt ceannaitheoirí céad uaire, níl de rogha acu ach féachaint lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht i gcomhar tithíochta inacmhainneachta. De ghnáth bíonn soláthar tithíochta an cheantair ar ardchaighdeán, agus tá formhór na dtithe úinéir-áitithe. Taifeadadh go raibh 20% de na tithe go léir folamh oíche an daonáirimh is déanaí. Léiríonn sé seo an líon cuíosach ard tithe saoire sa suíomh cois farraige seo.

Tá an t-údarás pleanála tiomanta do charachtar agus sláinte teanga Ghaeltacht na nDéise a chosaint agus a fheabhsú. Iarrann an t-údarás pleanála ar ráiteas tionchair teangeolaíochta d'aon fhorbairt fhiontrach tithíochta i gceantar na Gaeltachta. Is gá don ráiteas tionchair seo achoimre a thabhairt ar an gcaoi a gcaomhnódh agus a dtacódh forbairt bheartaithe le carachtar na Gaeltachta, sula ndéanfaidh an t-údarás pleanála cead pleanála a mheas. Go ginearálta bíonn clásal feidhme teanga ar cheann de na coinníollacha. Ceanglaíonn an clásal seo gur gá líon áirithe de na tithe a dhíol le daoine a léirigh don údarás pleanála go bhfuil líofacht réasúnta sa Ghaeilge acu. Deirtear i bplean forbartha Contae Phort Láirge 2011 go 2017 go mbeidh 70% de na tithe in aon fhorbairt nua in áitiú ag daoine a bhfuil líofacht réasúnta sa Ghaeilge acu. Éilíonn an dréachtphlean reatha go méadófar an líon seo go 80%. Agus moltaí á mbreithniú againn chun teach aonair a fhorbairt laistigh de Ghaeltacht na nDéise, chomh mhaith le cur chuige seicheamhach a chur i bhfeidhm agus a chinntiú nach mbeidh drochthionchar ag an bhforbairt ar charachtar an cheantair, lorgaíonn muid fianaise ar riachtanas soiléir eacnamaíoch, sóisialta nó áitiúil chun cónaí sa cheantar, nó toiliú le coinníoll áitíochta agus clásal feidhme teanga a cheangal ar feadh tréimhse 15 bliana ó chéad áitíochta an áitribh.

Tá gealltanas poiblí tugtha ag Comhairle Cathrach agus Contae Phort Láirge plean ceantair áitiúil do Ghaeltacht na nDéise, ar plean reachtúil é, a ullmhú i gcomhar leis na pobail áitiúla agus leis na gníomhaireachtaí náisiúnta ábhartha, ina measc Údarás na Gaeltachta, mar shampla. Is cuideachta forbartha teoranta faoi stiúir an phobail Comhlucht Forbartha na nDéise, a bunaíodh in 2005 ar mhaithe leis an nGaeilge a bhuanú agus a neartú i nGaeltacht Phort Láirge. Leag an cuideachta plean teanga uailmhianach seacht mbliana amach chun stádas na Gaeilge a neartú agus úsáid na Gaeilge a mhéadú i nGaeltacht na nDéise don tréimhse 2018 go 2024. Ní hamháin gur ghlac Comhlucht Forbartha na nDéise páirt sa phróiseas comhairliúcháin d'fhorbairt an dréachtphlean forbartha reatha ach chas ionadaí ó rannóg pleanála an chomhairle

le hionadaithe ó Chomhlucht Forbartha na nDéise chun cúrsaí pleanála sa Ghaeltacht a phlé mar chuid den phróiseas a bhain leis an dréachtphlean reatha a chur le chéile.

Tá roinnt dúshlán ann don chuspóir riachtanach lucht labhartha na Gaeilge a choinneáil agus tús áite a thabhairt dóibh i gceantair Ghaeltachta. Dúshlán mór is ea é do na húdaráis áitiúla na coinníollacha áitiúchá do lucht labhartha na Gaeilge a chur i bhfeidhm agus monatóireacht a dhéanamh orthu. Braitheann cur i bhfeidhm na gcoinníollacha ar cheannaitheoirí na dtithe ina dhiaidh sin ar smacht trí thíolacadh. D'fhéadfadh sé seo teacht salach ar chearta réadmhaoin bunreachtúla. Chomh maith leis sin tá neamhréir ann idir an reachtaíocht um thithíocht shóisialta agus na hAchtanna Pleanála agus Forbartha mar a bhaineann siad le chosaint na Gaeltachta, gan aon fhoráil i reachtaíocht ná i rialachán tithíochta tús áite a thabhairt do dhaoine a labhraíonn Gaeilge.

Fáiltíonn Comhairle Cathrach agus Contae Phort Láirge roimh bhunú na grúpa oibre idir-rannach ar ghnóthaí pleanála Gaeltachta i mí na Bealtaine 2021. Oibreoidh an chomhairle tríd an ngrúpa seo chun beartas agus nósanna imeachta comónta a fhorbairt chun déileáil le saincheistanna atá ina n-ábhair inni inár bpobail Ghaeltachta. Chuirfeadh Comhairle Cathrach agus Contae Phort Láirge fáilte mhór roimh rialachán reachtúla feabhsaithe ag an leibhéal náisiúnta maidir le polasaí pleanála agus tithíochta sóisialta sna limistéir Gaeltachta.

Ms Jackie Maguire: Due to my level of proficiency in Irish, my statement will be read by my colleague, Mr. Ciarán Mangan.

Mr. Ciarán Mangan: Tá dhá cheantar Gaeltachta sa Mhí agus is iad sin Ráth Chairn, suite 3.5 km soir ó Bhaile Átha Buí agus Baile Ghib, thart ar 7 km siar ó thuaidh ón Uaimh. Meastar go bhfuil daonra 156 ag Ráth Chairn, méadú 33% ar dhaonáireamh 2011, agus tuarar go mbeidh daonra 226 aige faoi 2027 de réir phlean forbartha Chontae na Mí 2021 go 2027. Tá dhá cheantar ar leith i Ráth Chairn: ceartlár an tsráidbhaile ina bhfaightear an siopa, an séipéal, halla an bhaile agus an pháirc Cumann Lúthchleas Gael, agus ansin tá an limistéar fiontraíochta agus fostaíochta ag an mbealach isteach go dtí an sráidbhaile ó thuaidh. Tá áiteanna cónaithe stairiúla a thagann ó aimsir Choimisiún na Talún agus áiteanna cónaithe nua-aimseartha araon fite fuaite idir an dá cheantar. Tá an bhunscoil lonnaithe ó dheas ar an mbealach isteach go dtí an sráidbhaile, agus tá an mheánscoil, Coláiste Pobail Ráth Chairn, lonnaithe idir lár an tsráidbhaile agus an limistéar fiontraíochta.

Tá forbairt ar Ráth Chairn mar áit lonnaithe ísealdlúis ina bhfuil áiteanna cónaithe scoite laistigh de cheapacha aonair. Leanann forbairt nuachónaithe an tsráidbhaile an múnla seo agus is é an cineál áirithe forbartha seo atá dílis d'fhoirmeacha agus do stíleanna fhoirgnimh traidisiúnta na háite a spreagar. Tá an ceantar a cheaptar a bheith in oiriúint i gcomhar forbartha nuachónaithe lonnaithe i gceartlár an tsráidbhaile in aice le crosaire an tsráidbhaile, mar aon le feidhmeanna lárionaid chun lárionad tráchtála an tsráidbhaile a dhaingniú. Tá forbraíocht chónaithe ísealdlúis cruinnithe le chéile taobh le lár an tsráidbhaile agus meastar gur seo an áit is cuí le haghaidh réiteach malartach inbhuanaithe in ionad tithe aonair a thógáil ann, agus chuirfeadh seo go mór le carachtar tuaithe an cheantair a chothú.

Leagtar amach an fhís i gcomhar Ráth Chairn i bplean forbartha Chontae na Mí 2021 go 2027 mar seo a leanas. Tá an fhís ann d'fhonn oidhreacht theanga agus chultúrtha Ghaeltacht Ráth Chairn a chur chun cinn agus cur le tréithe áirithe agus tús áite an tsráidbhaile agus an fhéiniúlacht ar leith a ghabhann leis a threisiú ar shlí a chuireann go mór lena shuaithinseacht theanga agus chultúrtha, mar aon le forbraíocht a sholáthar, rud a n-éascódh go mbeidh Ráth Chairn in ann forbairt go hinbhuanaithe mar áit chónaithe inar féidir obair nó fiú bheith ar do

shuaimhneas, agus mar áit ar féidir cuairt a thabhairt uirthi agus éagsúlacht an cheantair Ghaeltachta ar leith seo a chur chun cinn. Ní spreagfar ach fás cónaitheach nádúrtha agus orgánach thar shaolré an phlean forbartha i gcomhréir le croí-straitéis an phlean forbartha.

Aimsítear deiseanna sa phlean forbartha chun an sráidbhaile a fhorbairt tuilleadh laistigh de shaolré an phlean. Lena n-áirítear beidh acmhainn shuntasach turasóireachta an tsráidbhaile a fhorbairt mar Ghaeltacht ar leith chun cur le forbairt inbhuanaithe an tsráidbhaile, chomh maith leis an áit a chur chun cinn mar áit inar féidir an Ghaeilge agus an cultúr go ginearálta a chur chun cinn; na bealaí isteach go dtí an sráidbhaile a fheabhsú agus lár an tsráidbhaile a dhaingniú, a chuirfidh le meallacht Ráth Chairn i gcomhar feidhmeanna nua fiontraíochta agus fostaíochta; cuirfidh Fóram Forbartha Ghaeltacht na Mí stádas eacnamaíoch Ráth Chairn chun cinn agus tá sé mar chuspóir aige tacú leis na bearta a dhíríonn ar fhás gilleagrach a ghríosadh.

Maidir le Baile Ghib meastar go bhfuil daonra 81 duine ag Baile Ghib agus tuartar go mbeidh daonra 131 aige faoi 2027 de réir Phlean Forbartha Chontae na Mí 2021-2027. Ainmníodh Baile Ghib as Diméin Bhaile Ghib. Bhí an diméin comhdhéanta de Theach Bhaile Ghib, a tógadh in 1871, clós feirme agus na tailte a bhain léi, garraí daingean, foirgnimh feirme agus teach geata ina measc. Forbraíodh an sráidbhaile le taobh na diméine sna 1930idí nuair a fágadh an garraí daingean agus roinnt bealaí isteach chuig an diméin, lena n-áirítear bealach foirmiúil ar an taobh thiar agus bealach beag ar an taobh thoir taobh leis an limistéar tionsclaíoch atá ann anois. Tá fothrach an tí gheata, ar bhealach isteach eile chuig an eastát agus é lonnaithe os comhair na bunscoile.

Tá an sráidbhaile comhdhéanta de na teachíní stairiúla a bhain le diméin Bhaile Ghib agus de thithe scoite i stíleanna éagsúla teaghaisí, lena n-áirítear struchtúr aon urlár agus dhá urlár, le struchtúir feirme agus tráchtála ar chúl. Tacaíonn an plean le tabhairt chun críche an eastáit reatha neamhchríochnaithe agus le forbairt a dhéanamh ar áiteanna cónaitheacha inlíonta agus cuirtear chun cinn ann athchóiriú na bhfoirgneamh feirme stairiúla, a bhaineann leis an turasóireacht, ar an taobh thoir theas den sráidbhaile. Breithneofar forbairt úsáid mheasctha nuálach freisin a bhainfeadh leis na foirgnimh feirme atá ann cheana a bhíodh mar chuid den diméin, sa chás go mbeadh san áireamh inti moltaí chun úsáid inbhuanaithe a chruthú do na struchtúir stairiúla, tarraingteacha seo.

Leagtar amach an fhís i gcomhair Bhaile Ghib i bPlean Forbartha Chontae na Mí 2021-2027 mar seo sna hailt seo a leanas.

D'fhonn oidhreacht teanga agus chultúrtha Gaeltacht Bhaile Ghib a chur chun cinn agus chun a féiniúlacht fhisiciúil agus a ómós áite a shainmhíniú trí bhíthin gnéithe tráchtála agus cónaitheacha i lár an tsráidbhaile a chomhdhlúthú agus a threisiú, tógfar ar oidhreacht fhisiciúil Dhiméin Bhaile Ghib, as a n-ainmnítear an sráidbhaile, ar bhealach a chuirfidh feabhas ar a idirdhealaitheacht teanga agus chultúrtha, fad a dhéanfar soláthar don fhorbairt lena dtabharfar deis Baile Ghib a fhorbairt ar bhealach inbhuanaithe mar áit tharraingteach le bheith ag cónaí agus ag obair ann, i mbun fóillíochta ann agus ag tabhairt cuairte air, fad a léireofar a idirdhealaitheacht mar Ghaeltacht. Aimseofar deiseanna sa phlean forbartha chun an sráidbhaile a fhorbairt tuilleadh laistigh de shaolré an phlean. Lena n-áirítear déanfar na bealaí isteach chuig an sráidbhaile a fheabhsú, a chuirfidh le féiniúlacht Bhaile Ghib don lucht cónaithe, agus feidhmeanna nua fiontraíochta agus fostaíochta; daingneofar lárionad tráchtála an tsráidbhaile ar an taobh thoir den sráidbhaile, ag comhtháthú athúsáid acmhainneach na struchtúr stairiúil feirme, agus daingniú na scoile agus an chlibín tithe i lár an tsráidbhaile mar shuíomh d'fhorbairt chónaithe inlíonta; mianach san ascaill stairiúil isteach chuig Teach Bhaile Ghib chun bealach taitneamhachta a chruthú a cheanglódh leis na taitneamhachtaí áitiúla; agus anuas air sin, go

gcuirfeadh Fóram Forbartha Eacnamaíochta Ghaeltacht na Mí stádas eacnamaíoch speisialta Ráth Chairn chun cinn mar go bhfuil sé mar chuspóir aige tacú leis na beartais a dhíríonn ar fhás eacnamaíoch sa sráidbhaile a ghríosú.

Sa bheartas pleanála, leagtar amach na beartais agus na cuspóirí maidir le ceantair Ghaeltachta na Mí i roinn 9.12 de phlean forbartha Chontae na Mí, lena n-áirítear tionchar dearfach a bheith ag an bhforbairt nua go léir sna ceantair Ghaeltachta ar úsáid na Gaeilge sa limistéar agus ar oidhreacht chultúrtha an limistéir a chinntiú, agus féachaint chuig acmhainn eacnamaíoch agus fhorbartha an limistéir a chomhlíonadh ar bhealach cothrom agus inbhuanaithe thar shaoil an phlean. Tá sé i gceist é seo a dhéanamh ina cheangal go gcloífeadh na hiarratais go léir le haghaidh tithe tuaithe sna ceantair Ghaeltachta le hEolaí na Mí ar Dhearadh Tuaithe. Tá sé i gceist freisin é seo a dhéanamh ina cheangal go ndéanfaí staidéar tionchair teanga sula bpléitear aon iarratas ar thithíocht i gcomhair forbairtí tithíochta aonair agus iomadúla sa cheantar Gaeltachta. Trí thagairt a dhéanamh do chúlra teanga na n-úsáideoirí nó na gcónaitheoirí beartaithe, nó a chaidreamh le cuspóirí forbartha teanga nó cultúrtha na ngrúpaí a bhaineann le forbairt na gceantar Gaeltachta nó atá i bhfeighil uirthi a aithint, beidh ar a leithéid de staidéar a chruthú go mbeidh tionchar dearfach ag an iarratas ar chur chun cinn agus ar úsáid na Gaeilge mar theanga an phobail.

Cuirfear soláthar comharthaí i nGaeilge sna ceantair Ghaeltachta chun cinn maidir le sonraí míniúcháin ag pointí iontrála agus imeachta faoi thábhacht chultúrtha na limistéar le haghaidh cuairteoirí; soláthar gach comhartha gnó i nGaeilge; agus i dteannta leis na grúpaí ábhartha gairmiúla agus gairme, go mbeadh comharthaí ceantálaí agus comharthaí sealadacha eile i nGaeilge. Tacaítear leis na beartais agus na cuspóirí sin a thuilleadh sna beartais agus cuspóirí i ráiteas scríofa do Ráth Chairn agus Baile Ghib in imleabhar 2 de phlean forbartha an Chontae.

Leanfar leis an beartas seo d'fhonn oidhreacht teanga agus chultúrtha Ghaeltacht Ráth Chairn a chur chun cinn agus cur le tréithe áirithe agus tús áite an tsráidbhaile, agus an fhéiniúlacht ar leith a ghabhann leis a threisiú ar shlí a chuireann go mór lena suaithinseacht teanga agus chultúrtha, mar aon le forbraíocht a sholáthar, rud a n-éascódh go mbeidh Ráth Chairn in ann forbairt go hinbhuanaithe, mar áit chónaithe inar féidir cónaí, obair nó fiú bheith ar do shuaimhneas agus mar áit ar féidir cuairt a thabhairt uirthi agus éagsúlacht an cheantair Ghaeltachta ar leith seo a chur chun cinn.

Tá sé i gceist é a dhéanamh ina cheangal go ndéantar staidéar tionchair teanga sula bpléitear aon iarratas ar thithíocht i gcomhair forbairtí tithíochta aonair agus iomadúla sa cheantar. Trí thagairt a dhéanamh do chúlra teanga na n-úsáideoirí nó na gcónaitheoirí atá beartaithe, nó fianaise dá chaidreamh le cuspóirí forbartha teanga nó cultúrtha grúpaí a bhaineann le nó atá i bhfeighil fhorbairt na gceantar Gaeltachta, beidh ar a leithéid de staidéar a léiriú go mbeidh tionchar dearfach ag an iarratas áirithe ar chur chun cinn agus úsáid na Gaeilge mar theanga an phobail.

Maidir le hoidhreacht teanga agus chultúrtha na Gaeltachta agus d'fhonn oidhreacht teanga agus chultúrtha Gaeltacht Bhaile Ghib a chur chun cinn agus chun a féiniúlacht fhisiciúil agus a ómós áite a shainmhíniú trí bhíthin gnéithe tráchtála agus cónaitheacha i lár an tsráidbhaile a chomhdhlúthú agus a threisiú, tógfar ar oidhreacht fhisiciúil Dhiméin Bhaile Ghib, as a n-ainmnítear an sráidbhaile, ar bhealach a chuirfidh feabhas ar a idirdhealaitheacht teanga agus chultúrtha, fad a dhéanfar soláthar don fhorbairt lena dtabharfar deis Baile Ghib a fhorbairt ar bhealach inbhuanaithe mar áit tharraingteach le bheith ag cónaí agus ag obair ann, i mbun fóilíochta ann agus ag tabhairt cuairte air, fad a léireofar a idirdhealaitheacht mar Ghaeltacht.

Tá sé i gceist é seo a dhéanamh ina cheangal go ndéantar staidéar tionchair teanga sula bpléitear aon iarratas ar thithíocht i gcomhar forbairtí tithíochta aonair agus iomadúla sa cheantar. Trí thagairt a dhéanamh do chúlra teanga na n-úsáideoirí nó na gcónaitheoirí atá beartaithe, nó fianaise dá chaidreamh le cuspóirí forbartha teanga nó cultúrtha grúpaí a bhaineann le nó atá i bhfeighil fhorbairt na gceantar Gaeltachta, beidh ar a leithéid de staidéar a léiriú go mbeidh tionchar dearfach ag an iarratas áirithe ar chur chun cinn agus úsáid na Gaeilge mar theanga an phobail.

Tacófar le hÚdarás na Gaeltachta, Fóram Forbartha Eacnamaíochta Ghaeltacht na Mí agus forais agus gníomhaireachtaí ábhartha eile i bhforbairt feidhmeanna eacnamaíochta inbhuanaithe agus feidhmeanna eacnamaíochta atá bunaithe ar an nGaeilge sa cheantar Gaeltachta. Maidir leis an stair phleanála, fuarthas 149 iarratas ar an iomlán ag iarraidh cead phleanála sa dá cheantar Gaeltachta le linn na tréimhse 2016-20. Bhain na hiarratais sin le cineálacha éagsúla forbartha, amhail cead cónaithe nua, cead tráchtála, cead coinneála, cead sínidh ar fhorbairt reatha agus cead a bhain le talmhaíocht. Díritear ar iarratais a bhaineann le forbairt nua chónaithe agus thráchtála sa tuairisc seo. Fuarthas 62 iarratas ar an iomlán a bhain le forbairt nua chónaithe agus thráchtála sa tréimhse a leagadh amach. Léirítear miondealú na n-iarratas sin i dtábla 1 sa ráiteas. I mBaile Ghib bhí 33 iarratas phleanála, le 30 ceadaithe agus trí cinn diúltaithe. I Ráth Chairn bhí 29 iarratas, le 28 ceadaithe agus ceann diúltaithe. San iomlán, bhí 62 iarratas ann, 58 acu ceadaithe agus ceithre cinn diúltaithe. Léirítear miondealú na n-iarratas de réir cur síos forbartha i dtábla 2. I mBaile Ghib bhí 31 iarratas do thithe cónaithe agus dhá iarratas tráchtála. I Ráth Chairn, bhí 26 iarratas do thithe cónaithe agus trí do phleanáil tráchtála. San iomlán, bhí 57 iarratas cónaithe agus cúig iarratas tráchtála ann.

Déantar measúnú ar gach iarratas phleanála faoi RD POL 28, RD POL 29, RD OBJ 19, RD OBJ 20 agus tacaítear leo le haon bheartas agus cuspóir ábhartha sa ráiteas scríofa aonair don lonnaithe. Bíonn an chomhairle ag brath ar litir thacaíochta nó staidéar tionchair teanga chun comhlíonadh RD OBJ 19 a léiriú. Go ginearálta, is litir í seo ón gcomharchumann nó ó choiste ina gcuirtear in iúl go gcuirfeadh an t-iarrrthóir, má éiríonn leis, le leanúint na Gaeilge agus an chultúir sa cheantar Gaeltachta. Don chuid is mó, d'fhreastail na hiarrthóirí ar choláiste pobail nó an scoil iar-bhunscoile. Cé go bhfuil oifigeach Gaeilge i gComhairle Chontae na Mí, ní dhéanaimid measúnú teanga toisc gur beartaíodh go bhfuil an comharchumann nó an coiste áitiúil níos oiriúnaí chun a chinntiú go gcuirfeadh an t-iarrrthóir le leanúint na teanga agus an chultúir.

Mr. Tim Lucey: Beidh mé ag caint as Béarla inniu and our Irish officer will deliver the statement as Gaeilge thereafter. Within Cork County Council, there are two distinct Gaeltacht areas, namely, Múscraí and Oileán Chléire. The county development plan is currently under review and has been prepared having regard to other national regional guidelines, including the Gaeltacht Act 2012 and the national planning framework and regional planning guidelines.

Regarding our current county development plan from 2014, the planning policy framework for the protection of the Irish language is currently contained in chapter 12, on heritage, and section 12.5 on cultural heritage. The plan acknowledges that Cork county has a rich and diverse cultural heritage, which is a significant asset to the county economically, environmentally, socially and culturally. The current plan aims to encourage the further development of those cultural assets to increase local awareness of our heritage and the cultural identity and promote the cultural tourism industry. A dedicated section is attributed to Gaeltacht and linguistic heritage under paragraphs 12.5.9 and 12.5.10. Specifically, they state:

Cork County Council recognises the importance of our linguistic heritage to the people of the County and to the cultural heritage of the County. Parts of Cork County lie within

the Gaeltacht. These are Oileán Chléire, and an area to the west of Macroom and adjoining the Kerry boundary including Baile Bhuirne ... and Béal Atha an Ghaorthaidh ... commonly known as the Muscraí ... Gaeltacht. These areas require special treatment to protect their linguistic and cultural heritage without hindering development and with an appropriate response to opportunities and challenges. The challenge is to promote these areas as a focus for development, whilst ensuring that the development, which does occur, supports or complements the linguistic and cultural heritage.

The Development Plan policy approach for the Gaeltacht areas is based on the following principles:

- The cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht areas, including the use of the Irish language, deserves fostering;
- An economically and socially vibrant community is a precondition for sustaining Irish as the community language of these areas;
- Recognition that the relationship between development and Irish language and culture is a complex one not amenable to simplistic measures, and also that planning powers have significant, though indirect and not unlimited, influence on the protection and promotion of culture;
- The [Cork Gaeltacht areas] are interdependent with the wider areas in which they are located. They cannot function, or be properly understood, in geographic isolation. The Gaeltachtaí should play their full part in the life and well being of the County, Region and Country, and likewise should benefit from the resources of the territory around them;
- An isolationist approach, or one, which puts unnecessary obstacles in the path of development generally, would, in the current context, be damaging to the long-term sustenance of Irish language and culture in these areas.

The specific policy objectives are listed under HE 5-3 in our submission.

I turn to what is proposed in the review of the current county development plan for 2022 to 2028. As part of our current review, submissions were invited at pre-draft stage in March 2020 on planning policy matters, including linguistic heritage and Gaeltacht areas. The framing of the new text and objectives in the draft plans has been informed by those submissions, in collaboration with the Irish officer and heritage officer. Appendix 2 of our statement provides more detail on that. The draft plan will also include a dedicated section within chapter 16, which relates to heritage, on cultural heritage. Specific details relating to the Gaeltacht and linguistic heritage are contained in a dedicated subsection under paragraphs 16.4.12 to 16.4.17. These include additional text on the Gaeltachtaí in County Cork and the specific settlements that are part of these two distinct language planning areas, namely, Oileán Chléire in the west Cork municipal district and Múscraí in the Macroom municipal district. Recognition is also given to the Gaeltacht service towns of Macroom and Cork city, and Irish language networks as designated under the Gaeltacht Act 2012. The draft plan from 2021 now considers the requirement for use of demanding linguistic impact analyses with planning applications for particular major developments. Under draft objective HE 16-22, as suggested by Údarás na Gaeltachta at the pre-draft consultation stage, this will apply in cases where the potential impact of the development on the use of Irish as a community language is not immediately apparent and pivotal in the determination of the application. The expanded text and objectives in the draft 2021 plan

are outlined as follows:

The Gaeltacht Act (2012) provides a statutory footing to the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language, 2010-2030 and also recognises Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas (LPT), Gaeltacht Service Towns and Irish Language Networks. Within Cork County, the Gaeltacht is divided into two Language Planning Areas: Oileán Chléire LPT off the coast of Baltimore, and Múscraí LPT which includes an area to the west of Macroom and adjoining the Kerry boundary including Baile Bhuirne, Baile Mhic Íre, Cúil Aodha, Ré na nDoirí, Cill na Martra, Guagán Barra, and Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh. These areas require special treatment to protect their linguistic and cultural heritage. The challenge is to promote these areas as a focus for development, whilst ensuring that the development, which does occur, supports or complements the linguistic and cultural heritage.

Cork County Council recognises the importance of our linguistic heritage to the people and cultural heritage of the County. It also has an important role in the implementation of the LPT (Language Planning Areas) language plans, particularly as it relates to signage, service provision, and physical planning and development. In 2019 Cork County Council produced the Múscraí Conservation, Management and Interpretation Plan, which provides a holistic view of the heritage of this culturally unique area.

As a stakeholder in the development and preservation of the Irish Language, Cork County Council supports the vision of Údarás na Gaeltachta to “develop a vibrant, thriving, sustainable Gaeltacht community and economy and to strengthen and sustain Irish as the primary community language of the Gaeltacht so that the Gaeltacht is a world-class region.” [and] “To foster a sustainable Gaeltacht community where the Irish language is the primary language, with a strong economy utilising all available resources sustainably and with a first-class standard of living.”

The Plan recognises the narrow employment base of the Gaeltacht areas and the unique challenges they face. It is acknowledged that tourism can play an important role in the employment profile of the Gaeltacht communities focussed on its unique heritage including its linguistic tradition, musical and traditional craft industries within a spectacular landscape setting. There are opportunities to create greater linkages and synergies between the Irish speaking population of the County (44.9%) outside the Gaeltacht areas and the immersive Gaeltacht experience. Within the Gaeltacht areas there are also notable artisan food and craft producers which can also contribute to overall experience and package of cultural offer within both Oileán Chléire and Múscraí.

Gaeltacht Walks such as the Slí Gaeltacht Mhúscraí, have provided important tourism infrastructure within Gaeltacht Mhúscraí and the Plan supports the further expansion of walking and cycling routes within both Gaeltacht areas, including ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ infrastructure for outdoor adventure, sports, recreation, etc., that can enhance the tourist experience of the area.

The Development Plan policy approach for the Gaeltacht areas is based on the following principles:

The cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht areas, including the use of the Irish language, deserves fostering;

An economically and socially vibrant community with a high standard of living is a pre-

condition for sustaining Irish as the community language of these areas;

Recognition that the relationship between development and Irish language and culture is a complex one not amenable to simplistic measures, and also that planning powers have significant, though indirect and not unlimited, influence on the protection and promotion of culture;

The Gaeltachtaí are interdependent with the wider areas in which they are located. They cannot function, or be properly understood, in geographic isolation. The Gaeltachtaí should play their full part in the life and well being of the County, Region and Country, and likewise should benefit from the resources of the territory around them;

Cork County Council will co-ordinate with Údarás na Gaeltachta in the implementation of the LPT (Language Planning Areas) language plans, particularly as it relates to signage, service provision, and physical planning and development;

An isolationist approach, or one, which puts unnecessary obstacles in the path of development generally, would, in the current context, be damaging to the long-term sustenance of Irish language and culture in these areas.

There are specific policy objectives in our draft plans to support those.

I will talk about zoning approach in the Gaeltacht areas. At a settlement level, the key villages of Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh, Baile Bhuirne and the village of Cill na Martra have been allocated growth targets under the core strategy and additional text has been included in the draft plan, arising from submissions at a pre-draft consultation stage.

Oileán Chléire is dealt with specifically under section 226 in volume 2, part 2, of the west Cork municipal district plan. Additional text now reflects the completion of works on the development of a digital hub on the island, as per the Údarás na Gaeltachta submission. Updated text is also included to reflect the fact there are supports in place to maintain the island as a functioning Gaeltacht. Reference is also made to the fact Oileán Chléire's language plan has been submitted for approval to An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir, Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán and has since been improved.

Further proposed amendments, which are now under consideration, arising from my chief executive's report of 24 September 2021, are as follows. A further round of public consultation on the draft plan resulted in a series of further proposed text updates to strengthen the policy framework on the Gaeltacht areas via amendments which are contained in the chief executive's report and are due to be considered by members as part of the statutory planning making progress. The submissions received are outlined in appendix 1, which was submitted to the committee, and the proposed amendments arising from those are outlined in appendix B of the longer statement submitted.

The current county development plan provides a dedicated section on the importance of placenames to the cultural heritage of Ireland. This is supported by reference to the council's leaflet, preserving our placenames heritage in the naming of new developments. The existing text and objective are outlined as follows:

Irish placenames are an integral [though often forgotten] part of the cultural heritage of Ireland. They are a valuable source of knowledge [of the past, giving meaning to the landscape and defining the relationship between communities and their physical environment]. Much of the thought, folklore, genealogy, religion, daily life and work of those living in and

interacting with their landscape can be appreciated through [the study of placenames] ... There are over 5,600 townlands in the County and over 100,000 references to [Cork placenames collected by the Cork placenames survey or the Cork placenames archive].

Cork County Council has also produced a leaflet, preserving our placenames heritage in the naming of new developments. The purpose of this document is to encourage the use of existing placenames in the naming of new residential and other developments and there is a specific objective, from a planning perspective, which supports that. The draft plan 2021 continues to include this text and has expanded the section to include townland boundaries. I will not read through specific details of that. It is effectively a slight change to the referenced townland boundaries.

From a procedural perspective within Cork County Council, we have the following development management procedures in place: the Irish officer is available for translation of policy documents and development management applications, translators from the translators framework are used for larger translation projects and clear guidance documentation is also provided for all staff. Statutory bodies and agencies, as well as internal consultees, would be referred to as required on applications within the Gaeltacht areas. No specific conditions have been attached to permissions issued on Oileán Chléire or within Múscraí Gaeltacht in the last decade. Generally, an area planner assessing the planning application would have a degree of fluency in Irish.

There are no formal procedures in place for the assessment and processing of applications within the Gaeltacht areas of County Cork. While preservation of the Irish language within Gaeltacht areas does not form part of the council's scheme of letting priorities for social housing, it is an issue the council would have regard to in the planning and acquisition of schemes and a member of the development management planning team has to attend the Gaeltacht planning working group organised by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in May 2021.

The housing department works closely with the two local approved housing bodies on nominations for both the capital assistance scheme, CAS, in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh and Baile Bhuirne, but the ten units at Cluain Réidh, Baile Bhuirne, were allocated as normal via the choice-based letting system. When the Cluain Réidh development was advertised, an extra line was added on choice-based lettings advising applicants that this development was within Cork's Gaeltacht area, if approved applicants wished to apply to live there.

Details of the scheme would also have been shared informally with Údarás na Gaeltachta which supports a number of local industries in the Gaeltacht area via the local authority's Irish officer and local councillors were also advised. Efforts were made to encourage approved applicants who had an interest in living in the Gaeltacht area to apply.

It was thought that this might attract people who might not necessarily be fluent, but who had an interest in learning the language or in educating their children through Irish in the local schools. However, interest was limited and all of the houses were allocated, but the majority of tenants came from outside Baile Bhuirne and were neither fluent nor interested in learning or speaking Irish.

There are three recent approved housing body developments in the Gaeltacht areas. Clúid has a ten-house scheme at Cluain Réidh completed in 2020. Comhlacht Tithe Sóisialta agus Forbairt an tSuláin has three houses in Baile Bhuirne under a CAS scheme under construction and Coiste Tithe Uibh Laoire Teoranta has three houses in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh, under the

capital assistance scheme, completed in 2019.

This council also has a site in Baile Bhuirne that could accommodate 14 to 15 houses. Some preliminary design was done for an initial phase of ten, but it was decided to put the project on hold as there was limited interest in the Clúid development and the council was unsuccessful in attracting Irish language speakers to the scheme. With regard to Baile Mhic Íre, Baile Bhuirne, there are 30 families on the housing list, of which only one person has given an interest in the Irish language as the reason of his or her choice. Demand under recent schemes has been low. There are 11 families on the housing list for Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh and, apart from units for older people, only three units have been provided in the last five years. There is a table in our submission showing the offers made and refusals received in respect of social houses in the Múscraí area. These figures are not out of line with the rest of the county. Cork County Council has two properties on Oileán Chléire in its ownership. We currently have nine applicants seeking housing on Oileán Chléire, eight of whom are living on the mainland and one of whom is living on the island.

Moving on to planning permissions granted for housing, the summary in our submissions shows that, within the Cork Gaeltacht areas of Múscraí and Oileán Chléire, there were 148 grants of planning permission for individual housing units and developments of multiple units.

With regard to complaints in respect of the county development plan, the council acknowledges that a number of complaints about the plan and how the Gaeltacht areas are dealt with in different municipal districts were made in the media. Chapter 16 deals with the overarching policy in respect of the Gaeltacht areas and includes a dedicated section on Gaeltacht and linguistic heritage. The land use only approach for the lower order settlements of the Múscraí Gaeltacht villages and Oileán Chléire are included in the appropriate municipal district volumes. This council recognises the discontent expressed by people from the Gaeltacht in respect of State and local authority support, especially with regard to planning, houses and services, as shown through movements such as Todhchaí na Tuaithe. Cork County Council is involved with the wider working group and liaises with the Irish officers, planners and relevant practitioners in other local authorities. We continue to engage with stakeholders on how best to support the Gaeltacht communities. This includes collaboration with local Gaeltacht groups such as comharchumann and Tuismitheoirí na Gaeltachta and with Údarás na Gaeltachta and local language planners. Cork County Council has also worked with the local group Acadamh Fódhla in Múscraí to produce the award-winning Múscraí heritage plan, which was approved by the Minister.

Chairman: Gabhaim buíochas as sin. Measaim go bhfuil muid ullamh chun ceistanna a chur. Is é an chéad duine ar an liosta atá agam ná an Teachta Daly. Ina dhiaidh sin, beidh an Teachta Ó Muimhneacháin agus ansin an Teachta Ó Cathasaigh.

Deputy Pa Daly: Gabhaim buíochas leis na finnétithe go léir as teacht isteach. Tá cúpla ceist agam do Tim Lucey ó Chorcaigh mar gheall ar an bplean forbartha. Bhí cúpla gearán againn. Dúirt daoine liom go raibh sé ar fáil i mBéarla amháin. Is ar éigean a rinneadh aon tagairt do Chúil Aodha sa phlean agus ní raibh tagairt ar bith do Chill na Martra ann. Cén coinníollacha atá ann, nó cén mhonatóireacht atá ar bun ar thithíocht, chun a chinntiú go bhfuil tithe ag Gaeilgeoirí nuair nach bhfuil seirbhísí ar fáil trí Ghaeilge? The development plan was apparently only available in English and made barely any reference to Cúil Aodha and none to Cill na Martra. What conditions are in place to make sure that Irish speakers have houses? Cad atá ar bun chun a chinntiú gur féidir le Gaeilgeoirí tithe a thógáil sa Ghaeltacht chun na glúine atá amach romhainn a choimeád san áit? What is being done to ensure that Irish speakers can

build houses in the Gaeltacht?

Cuirim fáilte roimh an toscaireacht ó Chomhairle Contae Chiarraí. Gabhaim buíochas leis an gcomhairle as an ráiteas go léir a bhí ag Moira Murrell a bheith as Gaeilge. Tá cúpla ceist agam. An aithníonn Comhairle Contae Chiarraí go raibh cúpla botún déanta aici, mar shampla, i leith na conspóide a bhain le Pairceanna na Glas? An bhfuil obair déanta aici chun rudaí mar sin a choimeád as na nuachtáin? Tá an-chuid fhadhbanna ann maidir le Airbnb, sa Daingean ach go háirithe. Cad atá á dhéanamh ag an gcomhairle mar gheall air sin? Is é sin an fáth go bhfuil praghsanna tithe lasmuigh den bhaile ag dul in airde. An bhfuil plan ann rud a dhéanamh mar gheall ar Airbnb agus cead pleanála? Chomh maith leis sin, an bhfuil aon tithíocht shóisialta á cruthú ag Comhairle Contae Chiarraí sa Ghaeltacht in Uíbh Ráthach nó i gCorca Dhuibhne?

Ina ráiteas, dúirt Moira Murrell go bhfuil coiste um polasaí straitéiseach na Gaeltachta ann agus go bhfuil pleananna, tionscadail agus polasaí eacnamaíochta á bhforbairt faoi phlean forbartha an chontae. Dúradh sna comh-mholtaí, nó joint recommendations, go bhfuil rudaí á ndéanamh mar gheall ar affordability agus ar theastas nó scrúdú maidir le fluency. Cén leibhéal Gaolainne a bheidh ar na daoine a bhfaighidh tithe sa Ghaeltacht? An bhfuil leibhéal B2, C1 nó rud éigin eile in aigne ag an gcomhairle? Mar gheall ar na pleananna sin, conas a chruthóidh Comhairle Contae Chiarraí gá don teanga sa Ghaeltacht, rud a chabhródh le daoine a choimeád agus leis an teanga a choimeád beo sa Ghaeltacht? Is iad sin na ceisteanna atá agam. What schemes are in those plans to promote the Irish language?

Chairman: Casfaidh mé ar Chomhairle Contae Chorcaí chun na ceisteanna a d'ardaigh an Teachta a fhreagairt. Ní chloisim na finnétithe. Tá brón orm. Tá siad ar mute. Tá fadhb theicniúil ann. Tá rud éigin cearr leis an link. Tiocfaidh mé ar ais chuig an gcomhairle i gcúpla nóiméad. Iarrfaidh mé ar Moira Murrell nó duine eile d'fhoireann Chomhairle Contae Chiarraí labhairt ar dtús.

Ms Moira Murrell: Tá lán rudaí ansin. Déanfaidh mé iarracht gach ceist a fhreagairt ach freagróidh mé as Béarla. For the purposes of clarity and explaining our position properly, I would be comfortable answering in English. The Deputy raised the botún made in respect of Pairceanna na Glas. While this is a fine scheme that is housing quite a high number of Irish-speaking people in a Gaeltacht area, there was quite a lot of coverage over the name, Pairceanna na Glas. Like any organisation, we learned from this. In my opening statement, I outlined that we have done quite a number of things to strengthen our approach in respect of the Irish language. A very important structure we have put in place is the three-person independent committee chaired by Éamonn Ó hArgáin and including representatives from the Uíbh Ráthach and Daingean Uí Chúis Gaeltachts. This committee will advise us in respect of specific matters in future. One of the matters that comes under its remit is the naming of estates. That has been a very important intervention.

Deputy Daly raised the issue of Airbnb. I said in my opening statement that the level of short-term lets in a county like Kerry generally, and in Gaeltacht areas, comes into competition with the local community who are trying to acquire houses and raise their families. They are the primary residents. Killarney is an identified rent pressure zone in the county, so we have targeted it and we have seen the benefits of looking at the market and balancing around short-term lets. It is our intention as a council to begin the same process as I have outlined in the west Kerry Gaeltacht. We have done quite a lot of analysis on this and we can see there are a substantial number of properties and a very high number of short-term lets. We believe those require further examination because they are being brought into direct conflict with local people trying to acquire and set up homes for themselves.

On some of the measures in the county development plan, as I set out, an awful lot of work is being done to try to support the Gaeltacht areas. Deputy Daly will be aware we have multimillion euro schemes in development with regard to rural regeneration and Sleah Head traffic management. That project relates to tourism and we are working with Fáilte Ireland on the tourism development plan, which includes the two Gaeltacht areas. We are working with the Uíbh Ráthach task force, and a Gteic is being established there with Údarás na Gaeltachta. There is also funding of €40 million, with €20 million for regeneration and another €20 million in amenities for the broader Cahersiveen area. All of that will support the Gaeltacht areas. There is a huge volume of work being done there, along with the sean-nós sa Daingean project, which is an-tábhachtach dúinn and do gach duine sa Daingean. There is an awful lot of work happening generally.

Looking specifically at the county development plan, we have put in a measure holding 66% of multi-unit developments for the Irish-speaking community. That is a very important move. We have moved from 31% in the current plan and there is no percentage in the current plan for Uíbh Ráthach. We are hoping that is another measure that will lead to support. While we do not have infrastructure and we do not really have hope of infrastructure coming, either across the county or in the Gaeltacht areas in particular, it is important we try to facilitate some limited type of development and accommodation for local people. We have identified four settlements, two in the Uíbh Ráthach Gaeltacht and two in the west Kerry Gaeltacht, that would facilitate small housing cluster developments with their own water and wastewater services. We will try to encourage that and allow that within our county development plan in these four areas. We are constantly trying to move and think of new ways of supporting our Gaeltacht areas. In addition to the Irish officer, we have employed an Irish development officer for the county, who is looking at the Gaeltacht service town of Cahersiveen. We have taken on this officer at a more senior grade because we need advice on how to develop and move. We as a council need to keep moving to support the Gaeltacht and Gaeltacht communities. That is the remit of the Irish development officer as well.

This has been an especially strong year for the development of Irish. We are all aware that, during Covid, our communications and supports to communities have to be particularly strong. We have been very focused on providing those supports and ensuring all that messaging is being provided through the medium of Irish. We are very much focused on that.

The level of Irish was mentioned. It currently stands at TEG leibhéal B2. I hope that answers the ceist.

Deputy Pa Daly: Labhair Moira Murrell mar gheall ar serviced sites agus na rudaí sin. Tá sé go maith é sin a chloisteáil. Gabhaim buíochas leis an bhfoireann go léir. Chuala mé le déanaí go raibh gealltanas ó Chomhairle Contae Chiarraí go mbeadh freagra tugtha ar gach iar-ratas pleanála as Gaolainn. Tá sé sin ag tarlú agus gabhaim buíochas as sin. Sna moltaí a fuair muid ó gach comhairle dúradh go raibh plean ann chun clarity a fháil ó Oifig an Ard-Aighne. An bhfuil sé sin faighte fós? Cé atá ag lorg an clarity, mar gheall ar occupancy agus rudaí mar sin, chun níos mó flexibility a thabhairt do na daoine sa Ghaeltacht atá ag lorg ceadúnas pleanála?

Ms Moira Murrell: To clarify, I should have mentioned we have reviewed and are reviewing organisation-wide services and we have strengthened our planning services. For the services being delivered at the local area office, we have staff who speak fluent Irish and are native speakers. The obair laethúil can be done in the area offices. At this time, anybody who has submitted any part of their planning application to the council in Irish will receive all parts

of the planning decision and everything that goes with that in Irish. That is a very strong message we are sending as a council. Was the Deputy's question about the social housing anomaly?

Deputy Pa Daly: No. It might have been unfair of me to ask Ms Murrell specifically about this. One of the recommendations in the joint statement we received from the various councils was that clarity be sought from the Office of the Attorney General on the legal enforceability of conditions relating to the ability of occupants to speak the Irish language. That probably relates to the Belgian decision. My view is that extra flexibility can be given to Irish speakers from a cultural point of view when they are seeking planning permission sna ceantair Ghaeltachta.

Ms Moira Murrell: This goes back to the point about single rural dwellings. In our case in Kerry at this time, it is a requirement under our county development plan that a person be local to receive planning permission. You would hope that would support the language as there would be a reasonable expectation that the majority of people applying would be from the Gaeltacht. In Kerry a seven-year occupancy clause applies and it is not specifically tied to the language because we are taking the view that if people are local and tied to the area that would suffice. It is no different to any occupancy clause anywhere else in the county. That is as far as we feel that the seven-year occupancy clause can apply.

Chairman: Déanfaimid iarracht eile dul i dteagmháil leis na finnétithe ó Chomhairle Contae Chorcaí.

Ms Aileen Loughrey: Táim buíoch as an gcuireadh labhairt leis an gcoiste. Bhí plean againn an ráiteas gairid a léamh trí Ghaelainn chomh maith ach is dócha nach bhfuil sé sin ag teastáil a thuilleadh. Freisin, bhíomar chun an comhráiteas a léamh thar ceann na gcomhairlí ar fad. An bhfuil sé sin fós ag teastáil nó an leanfaimid ar aghaidh chuig na freagraí?

Chairman: Glacaim leis go raibh sé i gceist ag Tim Lucey é sin a dhéanamh ag an deireadh. Nuair a bheimid críochnaithe leis na ceisteanna tabharfaidh mé an deis do Tim é sin a léamh amach thar ceann na gceithre comhairlí contae.

Ms Aileen Loughrey: Leanfaimid ar aghaidh leis na freagraí mar sin. Tabharfaidh Michael Lynch na freagraí.

Mr. Michael Lynch: I will respond to Deputy Daly's queries. On the issue of persons from the Gaeltacht obtaining planning permission in the Gaeltacht, we would point out that our policies support local members of the community receiving planning permission within their communities. There is no disadvantage to being from the Gaeltacht when applying for permission there; it is to the contrary. When we made our development plan and rural housing policies our line Department referred to them as being exemplary in giving effect to rural housing policies. In that regard we have sought to bring those forward into our draft development plan, which will be completed in 2022, until such time as rural housing policy guidelines are updated, which we believe is imminent. Within settlements there is no impediment on people from the Gaeltacht receiving planning permission and again our policies are based on supporting people living in their local communities, be that in a rural area or within settlements generally.

Cúil Aodha was specifically mentioned. In broad terms we are rationalising our settlement structure within the county, which has resulted in a number of settlements, not just in the Gaeltacht but countywide, having their development boundaries removed and Cúil Aodha was one of those. We have had discussions with our elected members about including a list of communities that have had their development boundaries removed, recognising that they continue

to be communities and an important part of our county and they will still be recognised by the county council and eligible for supports where appropriate. The advantage in the delivery of housing in the Gaeltacht for people from the Gaeltacht will be that the removal of the boundary will mean that only people from that local community could obtain planning permission there. That is significant in terms of sustaining the local community and there could be a benefit there. We worked with the local community when we commissioned the Múscraí heritage plan and there is significant discussion of each individual community and the overall issues of heritage and linguistics within the Múscraí Gaeltacht in that heritage plan. If there are any holes in the countywide development plan we have sought to address those by commissioning this plan, which is the first of its kind.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: Gabhaim buíochas leis na finnétithe as na cuir i láthair. Tá an-chuid eolas ann. Cuirim fáilte faoi leith roimh na finnétithe ó Chomhairle Contae Chorcaí. Tá sraith cheisteanna agam a bhaineann le gach comhairle agus ansin b'fhéidir go mbeidh ceist nó dhó agam do na finnétithe ó Chomhairle Contae Chorcaí.

An bhfuil tús áite tugtha do Ghaeilgeoirí nuair atá siad ag lorg cead pleanála sa Ghaeltacht nó an bhfuil aon teanga in aon chor san áireamh? Tá seo tábhachtach nuair a táimid ag caint mar gheall ar thithe aonaracha mar is minic atá siad ann i gcomhair an iarrthóra féin. Má fhéachaimid ar Bhéal Átha an Ghaorthaidh, mar shampla, is beag forbartha in aon chor atá sa sráidbhaile toisc an córas séarachais. Feicimid an tslí a bhíonn Gaeilgeoirí líofa ag lorg tithíocht ar a dtalamh féin agus go ndiúltaítear dóibh toisc nach bhfuil siad sa sráidbhaile. Is cailliúint í don Ghaeltacht nach bhfuil deis ag Gaeilgeoirí cur fúthu i measc a phobal féin. An bhfuil aon iarracht á dhéanamh tús áite a thabhairt don teanga agus chun an Ghaeltacht a chothú leis na hiarratais phleanála?

Nuair a bhíonn iarratas pleanála ann, tá sé sofheicthe go mbeadh special area of conservation sa cheantar nó b'fhéidir foirgneamh éigin le stádas cosúil le lios nó gallán agus caithfear sin a chur san áireamh nuair a bhíonn an t-iarratas pleanála á mheas. Níl an Ghaeltacht leagtha síos sa léarscáil céanna áfach agus mar sin níl sí á tógáil san áireamh nuair a bhíonn an t-iarratas á mheas. An bhfuil aon iarracht á dhéanamh chun é sin a cheartú chun go mbeadh an Ghaeltacht leagtha amach ar na léarscáileanna i gcomhair na hiarratas pleanála agus chun a chinntiú go bhfaigheadh sí an t-aitheantas agus an stádas chun go mbeadh sí san áireamh i gcomhair iarratas pleanála?

Tagraím d'fheirmeacha gaoithe agus d'infreastruchtúr mór ar nós línte leictreachais agus mar sin de. Is minic a bheadh ciste pobal bainteach lena leithéid. De ghnáth, nuair a bhíonn an t-airgead sin á chaitheamh bíonn sé treoraithe i dtreo cúrsaí comhshaoil nó rud éigin a bheadh bainteach leis an bhfeirm gaoithe. Is cuid tábhachtach den phobal í an Ghaeltacht chomh maith. An féidir aon sciar de na cistí pobail sin a threorú i dtreo teanga agus cultúir nuair atá na forbairtí sin sa Ghaeltacht? Tagraím do thithe sóisialta. Cén meáchan a fhaigheann an teanga nó tacaíocht don Ghaeltacht nuair atá measúnú á dhéanamh ar iarratais i gcomhair thithe sóisialta? An mbíonn sé san áireamh in aon chor, an mbíonn pointí breise ann nó cén iarracht a dhéantar?

Tá ceist eile agam i gcomhair Chomhairle Contae Chorcaí go háirithe. Baineann sé leis na figiúirí i gcomhair na ndaoine gur ceadaíodh agus gur diúltaíodh cead pleanála dóibh. Má táim ag léamh an méid seo i gceart, níl ach triúr a diúltaíodh ceadanna pleanála dóibh de réir fhigiúr 3. Chuirfeadh sé sin ionadh orm. An bhféadfaí, más é toil ár bhfinnéithe, míniú a thabhairt ar na figiúirí atá ar fhigiúr 2, maidir leis an 140 teach atá ceadaithe? Cén scéal atá ann maidir leis an 165? An é go bhfuil daoine ag iarraidh tithe a leagan agus a atógáil? Go minic maidir leis na hiarratais a bheinn ag plé leo, is amhlaidh gur daoine a bheadh ag tógáil ar pháirc nua ghlas

agus feicim ón staidéar ar na figiúirí seo nach mbeadh ach 13 i gceist leo. Tá míthuiscint éigin ansin mar gheall ar an tábla sin, figiúr 2 agus an bhféadfaí míniú a thabhairt air sin dom, le toil na bhfinnéithe, mar de réir an fhiigiúir sa dara colún deireanach, níl ach triúr ceadaithe?

Chairman: Gabhaim buíochas leis an Teachta agus tosóimid an uair seo le Comhairle Contae na Mí. Tá na ceisteanna á gcur agam ar gach uile chomhairle contae agus críochnóidh mé le Comhairle Contae Chorcaí. I dtús báire glaoim ar Jackie Maguire nó duine dá foireann chun cheisteanna sin an Teachta sin a fhreagairt. Chuir an Teachta ceithre cheist ar dtús, dírithe ar gach uile chomhairle contae. Ba é an chéad cheann ná an tosaíocht mar gheall ar an nGaeilge do cheadanna pleanála sa Ghaeltacht. Bhí an dara ceann faoi iarracht an Ghaeilge a leagan amach, measaim, sna cheadanna pleanála.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: Is é sin na ceantair Ghaeltachta a bheith leagtha amach ar an léarscáil i dtreo is go mbeadh sé san áireamh nuair a bheadh iarratais phleanála á ndéanamh agus sa chaoi a bhíonn an special area of conservation, SAC, nó na struchtúir le cosaint go héasca a fheiceáil ar an léarscáil. Níl an Ghaeltacht le feiceáil orthu faoi láthair.

Chairman: Bhí ceist a trí maidir leis an gciste pobail a bhíonn ann de ghnáth faoi infreast-ruchtúr mór cosúil le muilinn ghaoithe agus a leithéid. Bhain ceist a ceathair leis an meáchan a ghabhann leis an nGaeilge sna hiarratais phleanála le tithe a thógáil agus a leithéid. Bhí ceist a cúig dírithe ar Chomhairle Contae Chorcaí. An bhfuil freagra againn anois ó Chontae na Mí nó is féidir linn bogadh ar aghaidh go dtí Contae Phort Láirge, mura bhfuil?

Ms Jackie Maguire: I understood the Teachta's question on the priority given to Irish. Within both of the cases of areas of Meath, Ráth Chairn and Baile Ghib, the majority of applications are from locals. They must first meet local need and the planning requirements attached. We also attach the linguistic impact study and the assessment of that for the candidate. In both cases that is predominantly with support from Comharchumann na Gaeilge in Ráth Chairn agus Baile Ghib. As the Deputy will see from some of the details given in the opening statement, the majority of our planning applications are one-off houses and we have a very high percentage of grants within that area.

Chairman: Bogaimid ar aghaidh anois go dtí Comhairle Cathrach agus Contae Phort Láirge maidir leis na ceisteanna céanna, má tá freagraí acu.

Mr. Michael Walsh: On the question of priority being afforded to Irish speakers the answer is simply "Yes". The policy is there and we apply planning conditions in respect of same. On wind power and strategic infrastructure development, we have not had any of such of that scale in the Gaeltacht so it is not something we would address, but there is a provision for community contribution and we would certainly consider it going towards language development or the development of Irish generally.

On social housing and the weighting for same, one of the comments we made in the common statement was that there is not a clear policy platform that allows us to give that weighting. There is an issue on the national regulations governing the scheme of letting priorities which constrains us in many respects in doing that. It would be our collective wish, to be honest, that that is changed and that, ultimately, there would be a national policy platform specifically to work for that.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: Cad faoin léarscáil i gcomhair na gceadanna pleanála? Tá a fhios ag ár bhfinnéithe an tslí a bhíonn SACanna le feiceáil ach an bhfuil an Ghaeltacht leagtha

sa léarscáil chomh maith?

Mr. Michael Walsh: Tá an léarscáil sin againn and is reflected in the planning applications when they come in.

Chairman: Bogaimid anois go dtí Contae Chiarraí.

Ms Moira Murrell: Similarly, on the social housing issue, this is the point I would strongly like to make because we have no policy framework. That is the constant conflict between the social housing policy and the planning policy when it comes to Gaeltacht areas. There is an issue there which we have jointly put before the committee today.

On wind farms, we contribute 20% to the national grid in Kerry and that is primarily based in the north of the county. We do not have the grid in our Gaeltacht areas but there are very significant works being done on the Dingle Peninsula with communities around energy generation. In our draft plan we have made very strong commitments to micro energy generation which is, of course, community led and is the type of development we want to encourage. We see that very much playing a part of the plan into the future. I would strongly say that will be community led. This will also help with language and in keeping some of the community funds as they are generated so that they will go back to the community.

On the Gaeltacht areas, I outlined previously to Deputy Moynihan that, similar to Cork, our Gaeltacht policy is around planning in the rural area. It is a rural policy, pertains to the Gaeltacht area, and is very much about local people being facilitated to build a house in their local area. It is strongly tied, therefore, to being local to the area. While this is not specific to the Gaeltacht area *per se*, it is linked very much to the local people so that the impact is the same for both areas with a similar outcome.

On the multi-unit question, our draft plan is make a 66% allocation across the two Gaeltacht areas specifically for Irish speakers.

On the mapping question, we have identified this mapping on our county development plan and in our draft county development plan and have mapped these areas. Is é sin é.

Chairman: Bogaim anois ar deireadh go dtí Comhairle Contae Chorcaí maidir leis na ceisteanna sin agus an ceann a bhí dírithe díreach ar an gcomhairle contae sin.

Mr. Tim Lucey: I will bring in Mr. Michael Lynch, our director of planning, on one or two of the specific questions such as the SAC and I will then bring in Mr. Maurice Manning on the social housing because he is our director of housing.

To go back to and add to what Ms Murrell was saying on rural housing and the opportunities for those who are native Irish speakers or Irish speaking, this comes back to the nature of our rural housing policy and our objective is to try, in the first instance, to ensure those who are local to an area receive planning permission. These are people with an intrinsic connection with the language, a social and economic connection with the local area, whether it is a townland or a parish, or with the catchment area of the local school that one attended. This applies in particular to the sons and daughters of farmers in the first instance and to those who are living for more than seven years in the area, returning emigrants or people who have a real and direct link to the social and economic life of rural areas. That is what strengthens the opportunity for anybody who is from those areas and is a native Irish speaker or is from the area and may not be a fluent speaker but who has an interest in Irish language, culture and heritage. All of our

development policies in terms of rural housing support those who are local and can sustain the Gaeltacht areas in that way. There is no question of our policies in that regard lacking in that way. When one looks at the planning permissions granted that were mentioned, 148 of which were new dwellings and 165 of which included demolitions, rebuilds and some change of uses into houses, and one links that to three refusals over the period we have shown the committee, it clearly shows there is a very supportive planning policy in place. Those refusals were on specific issues. One could have been potentially in relation to wastewater treatment, which I will come to.

There are significant challenges, not just in Ballingeary but outside of the Gaeltacht area and through a range of villages that are deficient, to some or a very significant degree, in water and wastewater infrastructure. It is not all of them but quite a few of them. That is certainly a challenge to sustaining rural communities, not just Gaeltacht communities. It is a challenge to Ballingeary, in particular.

It does not come directly within the remit of local government. We clearly run the water services, in conjunction with Irish Water, but the capital investment programme that drives the improvement of water and wastewater facilities in those types of areas is driven by the availability of the funding at a national level to Irish Water and how it carves that up to meet its criteria for where investment should go for water services.

That is the particular issue there. If one looks at our development plan, we have gone through every individual settlement, including those in the Gaeltacht, and we can show clearly where there is capacity or some capacity or where capacity is to be delivered in the next six years, within the lifetime of our next development plan. I suggest that Ballingeary is one that is challenged in that way.

Where there is a community fund or a contribution from a wind farm developer who has received planning permission and is developing out, generally they are administered through the establishment of a local community group. This group works and determines, in conjunction with the wind farm operator or developer, its priorities for the area. We do not have a role in that. I do not know the particulars and we should not discuss them here, but certainly, if there are particular ones Deputy Moynihan wishes to take up with us after the meeting to get a deeper understanding, we are happy to do so. However, the community funds are there for the purpose of ensuring it is the community who influences how that spend is allocated and on what programmes, etc. There should be opportunity there, subject to the appropriate consultation by the developers with the community and in the right framework.

Mr. Michael Lynch: In terms of the mapping question, special areas of conservation, SACs, were given as an example. My understanding is the question was why Gaeltachtaí were not similarly mapped and decisions did not reflect the fact persons were from the Gaeltacht. The Deputy will find from the long statement that our new development plan, with the amendments, would put a significant emphasis on the Gaeltacht and Gaeltacht communities in response both to submissions we have received and to our own council members and their views. That is more from a cultural heritage perspective. In terms of the decision-making process and mapping, our rural housing policy decision-making process, reflected by the mapping, is very much faithful and reflects the regulatory system provided for in the section 28 ministerial guidelines. We have sought to focus on delivering housing to members of the local rural community, be they in the Gaeltacht or otherwise. It has the positive effect in the Gaeltacht of local persons benefiting from grants and planning permission, which is reflected in our statistics. We are very much reflecting the section 28 guidelines in that regard.

Mr. Maurice Manning: The Gaeltacht areas in County Cork are not locations where there is an especially high demand for social housing and there is nothing in our allocation scheme that gives priority to Irish speakers. We recognise we have an obligation to try to attract Irish speakers to any schemes that are available. Demand is low and social housing developments have been limited over recent times in Gaeltacht areas. We have set out our experience with the most recent scheme of ten houses in Baile Bhuirne. We try to attract Irish speakers, either local speakers or those coming into the area who might have had an interest in being housed in that scheme. However, interest has been limited and that will certainly impact on future plans for social housing in the Gaeltacht area.

Mr. Tim Lucey: I will update members on the specifics. I referred to Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh in terms of water and wastewater capacity in the village, for which we have an objective. In Baile Mhic Íre and Baile Bhuirne, we have an objective to grow both of those settlements in the order of approximately 30 dwellings each in the next six years, but the fact is we have identified there is no wastewater capacity in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh and no drinking water capacity in Baile Mhic Íre and Baile Bhuirne. That is the challenge that is faced, which is common to quite a few villages and settlements throughout the county and the country. We will continue to engage with Irish Water on that matter, but that is the current situation.

Deputy Aindrias Moynihan: Níl meáchan breise á thabhairt don Ghaolainn nuair atá iarratas pleanála á mheas. Ciallaíonn sé sin go bhfuil áiteanna cosúil le Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh nach bhfuil an deis ag daoine forbairt laistigh den sráidbhaile agus go bhfuil bac orthu forbairt lasmuigh den sráidbhaile chomh maith toisc go bhféadfadh na gnáthchoinníollacha pleanála cur isteach orthu. Tá fadhb le hUisce Éireann, ach fós tá sé de dhualgas ar an gcomhairle chontae freastal ar phobal na Gaeltachta. An bhfuil aon slí sa phlean forbartha chun meáchan breise nó claonadh a thabhairt i dtreo phobal na Gaeltachta nuair atá siad ag lorg chead pleanála sa cheantar mórtimpeall orthu? Bheadh sé ina bhuntáiste breise seachas na gnáthrialacha pleanála a bheith ann agus ag cur baic orthu.

Maidir leis an léarscáil agus an sampla don SAC, níl an Ghaeltacht ar an léarscáil. An féidir í a chur isteach sa tslí go mbeadh sí sofheicthe ar gach iarratas pleanála agus go bhfaigheadh an Ghaeltacht an stádas agus an t-aitheantas nuair atá iarratas á mheas?

Deputy Marc Ó Cathasaigh: Gabhaim buíochas leis na finnéithe go léir as ucht a gcur i láthair agus as ucht an ráitis a choimre comónta a sheol siad chugainn freisin. Tá luach faoi leith ag baint leis an gcáipéis sin agus go háirithe na hocht moladh atá ag deireadh an doiciméid sin. B'fhéidir go dtiocfaidh mé ar ais chuige sin. Cuirfidh mé cúpla ceist shonrach ar Chomhairle Cathrach agus Contae Phort Láirge agus ansin cuirfidh mé cúpla ceist níos ginearálta ar na comhairlí eile. I dtosach báire, aithním an méid oibre atá ag dul ar aghaidh i nGaeltacht na nDéise agus Gaeltacht na Rinne. Ní féidir a rá go bhfuil muid ag dul ó neart go neart ach is féidir a rá go bhfuil dul chun cinn á dhéanamh agus go bhfuilimid ag bogadh chun cinn ó thaobh na bhfigiúirí agus líon na ndaoine atá ag úsáid na Gaolainne go laethúil. Chím Máire Seosaimhín Breathnach ar líne. Aithním an obair atá á déanamh aici agus ag leithéidí Caibríní de Barra, Críostóir Ó Faoláin ó Chomhlucht Forbartha na nDéise agus an Cumann Lúthchleas Gael sa Rinn a dhéanann an-obair go deo i dtaobh na teanga. Tá an obair sin rithabhachtach.

Ó thaobh mo cheisteanna sonracha, b'fhéidir go mbeidh Michael Walsh nó Máire Seosaimhín Breathnach in ann a rá liom an bhfuil measúnacht den éileamh i gcomhair tithíochta i nGaeltacht na nDéise ann. Cén líon dóibh atá ina nGaeilgeoirí atá ag iarraidh bogadh isteach, mar chéatadán? Mar a luadh, tá costas tithíochta thar a bheith ard, go háirithe i Heilbhich ach i nGaeltacht na nDéise go ginearálta freisin. Tá sé thar a bheith deacair do mhuintir na háite

teacht ar thithe. Cé mhéad iarratas ar chead pleanála a fuair Comhairle Cathrach agus Contae Phort Láirge le blianta beaga anuas? Cé mhéad dóibh a ghlacadh leis agus cé mhéad a dhiúltaíodh dóibh?

Aithním go raibh an chéad dréacht de phlean forbartha Chontae Phort Láirge lag i leith na Gaeilge. Chuir mé aighneacht isteach ina leith sin. Tá an dara dréacht i bhfad níos fearr. Ba mhaith liom aird an choiste a tharraingt ar rud amháin atá istigh anseo. Tá sé os mo chomhair i mBéarla so gabh mo leithscéal faoi sin. Deirtear “A Language Enurement Clause (LEC) shall be applied requiring a minimum of 80% (rounded up) of the occupants of the proposed development be capable of using the Irish Language on a daily basis”. Is é an rud atá suimiúil faoi seo ná go bhfuil tagairt déanta do céard is inniúlacht ann. Is rud é seo atá pléite go maith againn ar an gcoiste seo. Deirtear sa dréachtphean “The standard of fluency in Irish required to demonstrate compliance with the LEC shall be the standard required to pass Level B2 Meánleibhéal 2 in the Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge (TEG) exams”. Is é seo an chéad uair a chonaic mé é scríofa síos in black and white, mar a deirtear, gurb é sin an coinníoll.

Is iad sin na ceisteanna sonracha atá agam do Chomhairle Cathrach agus Contae Phort Láirge.

Ba mhaith liom deis a thabhairt do na comhairlí contae eile díriú isteach ar na comh-mholtaí sin. Tá siad thar a bheith tábhachtach. Téann siad go dtí croílár na faidhbe. Tá ocht gcinn ansin. Céard iad na cinn is tábhachtaí dar leis na finnétithe? There are eight joint recommendations included in the common summary statement, which is a very useful document. Do any of the other councils want to come in and speak to which they identify as the most important? Numbers 3 and 4 jump out for me. They relate to the statutory local area plans and the national certified method to assess linguistic competency which, as I said, is mentioned in Waterford’s draft development plan. Would the other councils like to comment on that more general question, perhaps after Waterford City and County Council has answered the more specific questions I have posed?

Ms Máire Seosaimhín Breathnach: Pléifidh mé leis an gcéad cheist a bhí ag an Teachta Ó Cathasaigh, a ngabhaim buíochas leis. Ó thaobh measúnacht ar éileamh tithíochta, tá sé fíor le rá nár dhein an chomhairle aon mheasúnacht fhoirmeálta ach tá Comhlucht Forbartha na nDéise, an comhlacht forbartha áitiúil, againn agus tá bearta maidir le héileamh agus tithíochta inacmhainne a chur ar fáil do mhuintir na Gaeltachta ach go háirithe mar chuid den phlean teanga. Mar chuid den obair atá ar siúl ag meitheal tithíochta an chomhlachta, tá measúnacht agus suirbhéanna áirithe déanta go háitiúil. Tá éileamh áirithe ann, go háirithe éileamh ó lánúineacha óga agus ó dhreamanna óga ón gceantar nach acmhainn dóibh tithe a cheannach ann. Tá sé sin mar chuid den chás atá curtha le chéile ag an gcomhlacht forbartha chun tithíocht inacmhainne a thógáil sa Rinn ach go háirithe. Is é sin an t-aon bhunús eolaíoch atá againn faoi láthair ó thaobh éilimh thithíochta. An féidir leis an Teachta an dara ceist a bhí aige a chur arís?

Deputy Marc Ó Cathasaigh: Cé mhéad iarratas ar chead pleanála atá curtha isteach ag daoine laistigh de Ghaeltacht na nDéise? Cé mhéad dóibh sin a ghlacadh leo agus cé mhéad a dhiúltaíodh dóibh?

Ms Máire Seosaimhín Breathnach: Níl na figiúirí sin agam. Ní dóigh liom go bhfuil an céatadán againn.

Deputy Marc Ó Cathasaigh: Tiocfaidh mé ar ais chuig an gcomhairle le ríomhphost.

Ms Máire Seosaimhín Breathnach: Cinnte.

Mr. Michael Walsh: With regard to the bigger points, I consider them all important. I suppose that is easy to say. Some are more easily delivered than others. We would certainly welcome the standardisation of the Irish tests. I do not think that should be beyond the wit of man. It should also not be beyond the wit of man to make some provision for social housing. One point we are trying to make through the common statement is that there are a number of anomalies we have to operate with. A member previously raised the question of preference or priority being given to Gaeilgeoirí. The Planning and Development Acts do not make provision for such preference to be given. The reality is that the more oppressive force here is rural housing policy because of the inherently rural character of the majority of our Gaeltachtaí. With regard to affordability issues, with the exception of Múscraí and Ráth Chairn, the majority of Gaeltacht areas are coastal communities, which brings pressure in respect of affordability, demand and so on. There are also limitations with regard to the planning regulations. It is frustrating that, while we can apply language conditions, the enforcement of them is dubious at best. I certainly would not like to sit in front of a High Court judge arguing that somebody should be thrown out of a house because they were not in compliance with the condition, whether at the time of sale or afterwards. We operate them reasonably effectively but they operate in a sort of lacuna.

It is more about that overall consideration. That is why we welcome the working group and this engagement with the committee for this high-level strategic view of the issues. The biggest problems in the Gaeltacht areas, as in gach ceantar tuaithe eile, are fostaíocht agus tithíocht. The simple reality is that housing has become a problem. In our case, affordability has become a particular problem. We welcome this engagement and would welcome a common approach being taken at national level.

Chairman: Bhí roinnt de na ceisteanna dírithe ar na comhairlí eile. Níl a fhios agam cé atá ag iarraidh freagra a thabhairt ar an tríú ceist a bhí ag an Teachta.

Deputy Marc Ó Cathasaigh: Is ceist ghinearáta a bhí ann faoi na moltaí. Of the eight joint recommendations, are there any in particular to which the witnesses would like to draw the attention of the committee?

Mr. Tim Lucey: Seeing as we are in public session I think we should read the recommendations into the record. I will come back to what I view as the three more important ones that underpin everything.

The first recommendation is formalisation of membership and terms of reference for the working group on Gaeltacht planning matters, which was referred to earlier and was established earlier this year by the Departments of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. Further work is needed on that. As Mr. Walsh said, having that in place would be of significant value to local government and national Departments in order to work through these matters.

Second is the introduction of statutory guidelines by the Minister under section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 to specifically address housing and physical planning policy in Gaeltacht areas, as well as mechanisms for the implementation and enforcement of such policies. That is critical because it is the basis upon which we can then take those guidelines at a local level and structure them in a manner that reflects the issues that are facing the various Gaeltacht areas, both commonly across the country and at a local level. Without those, we do not have a basis for either a common approach of any nature or for an individual approach to the

matters that are most particular to our two Gaeltacht areas here in Cork, or specific Gaeltacht areas in other counties.

Third, consideration should be given to the preparation of statutory local area plans for all Gaeltacht areas by local authorities, in consultation with the local communities and the relevant national agencies, such as Údarás na Gaeltachta. That would certainly be of benefit. It is a further manifestation of the local importance and local expression at a deeper level of what is important or intrinsic to a Gaeltacht area in a local area plan.

The fourth recommendation, which has been referred to, is for the use by all local authorities of a national certified method to assess linguistic competency.

Fifth is the introduction of national standards and guidelines regarding linguistic impact statements.

The sixth and seventh recommendations, in conjunction with the second, are critical. One could argue that there is no point in having a national certified method to assist linguistic competency, or national standards and guidelines regarding linguistic impact statements, unless the legality of applying them in some way is assured. We recommend the introduction of specific provisions in the social housing legislation that would allow for the prioritisation of Irish speakers in the allocation of social housing in Gaeltacht areas. On the planning side of things, we recommend that clarity be sought from the Office of the Attorney General on the constitutionality and legal enforceability of conditions of that nature relating to the ability of occupants of certain properties to speak the Irish language. Without those two critical things being clarified in legal terms, we will have difficulty in applying things that are not enforceable. A non-enforceable condition is a worthless one.

The final recommendation relates to affordability issues, to which Mr. Walsh has referred. We recommend the introduction of specific affordability measures in Gaeltacht areas. We recognise that there is an affordable housing scheme and a strong commitment from Government to affordable housing but perhaps there could be a further definition of that for Gaeltacht areas. Recommendations 2, 6 and 7 are the key ones that can enable local government to assist, in a more structured way, the sustainability of our Gaeltacht areas.

I would like to clarify one thing regarding the matters Deputy Moynihan raised. There is no question of any disadvantage in any way for native Irish speakers or those from Gaeltacht areas in getting planning permission in those areas. In fact, it is of benefit to have rural planning policies that recognise intrinsic cultural, language and social links to a local rural area. That is of advantage to those who are in the area, as opposed to being a disadvantage.

On the mapping issue, we are on our final amendments to our draft development plan and we will be publishing that in early January. As stated in the appendix to our submission, we will be mapping the two Gaeltacht areas in Cork county. It is important to note that while they might not be mapped in the hard copy of the development plan at the moment, the mapping of all the Gaeltacht areas appears in our geographic information system, GIS, which is what we use for development management purposes and assessing planning applications.

Ms Jackie Maguire: I concur with Mr. Lucey and Mr. Walsh. It is hard to differentiate the eight recommendations but from our perspective here in Meath, if we were to rank them in order, we would see recommendations 2, 4 and 5 as the most specific to us. The section 28 guidelines speak for themselves across the board. On recommendations 4 and 5, having an inde-

pendent authority that can assess the linguistic assessments for applicants would be extremely beneficial for the future development of both the language and the culture in both the very small Gaeltachtaí we have. If we were to rank them in order those would be our three preferences to be dealt with first. We welcome the establishment by the Department of the working group. We hope that work would continue into next year in order to take these recommendations further and bring them to a conclusion. I thank the members for their time.

Ms Moira Murrell: I agree with what has been said. All the recommendations are inter-linked. The important thing is that there is a working group in place. If anything, some of the considerations show that the county development plan is not the place to solve all issues. Support is needed through changes to national legislation, clarification and regulation, as well as through support and implementation, be that with regard to the level required for the Irish language competency or the linguistic impact statement. In delivering those services on the ground, it is very important that we have standards that we can all stand over. For the validity of any process, it is good to have standards and guidelines in place.

Chairman: Tá roinnt ceisteanna agam féin, agus beidh an Teachta Danny Healy-Rae ag iarraidh teacht isteach nuair a bheidh sé ar ais sa seomra i gceann tamaillín. Má táimid críoch-naithe faoin am sin, sin mar a bhíonn sé.

Tá ceist gasta agam do mhuintir Chorcaí. Cén uair a fheicfidimid plean séarachais do Bhéal Átha an Ghaorthaidh? Deirtear liom go bhfuil oileán caca ar an Laoi agus go sileann sé isteach sna páirceanna. Tá a fhios agam nach bhfuil an dualgas go hiomlán ar Chomhairle Contae Chorcaí agus go bhfuil Uisce Éireann in ainm is a bheith i gceannas. An féidir leis na finnéithe cuidiú linn an cheist sin a fhreagairt?

Tá an ráiteas ó na comhairlí ar fad agus na hocht bpointí ann tábhachtach agus sin an fáth go raibh mé á fhágáil chun deireadh. Is rud maith é. Beidh an tAire Tithíochta, Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht, an Teachta Darragh O'Brien, os comhair an choiste go gearr. Dúirt sé go raibh sé chun treoirlinnte nó scéim ó thaobh tithíochta agus pleanáil sa Ghaeltacht a chur faoi bhráid an choiste, nó faoi bhráid an phobail, roimh an Nollaig so beidh sé anseo i gceann coicíse. Déanfaimid é seo a chur os a chomhair, ag lorg go ndéanfaidh sé obair dá réir. Tá sé seo tábhachtach. Leagan sé síos na fadhbanna atá ag na comhairlí contae agus na dualgais atá ar an státhóras cuidiú leo cinntí a ghlacadh. Glacaim leis go bhfuil na finnéithe ar fad ar an eolas faoin gcinneadh a glacadh san Ard-Chúirt mar gheall ar an gcás a ghlac Comharchumann Ráth Chairn i gcoinne An Bhoird Pleanála agus go bhfuil roinnt de na pointí seo ag teacht as sin agus roinnt cásanna eile le déanaí.

Tá na figiúirí tugtha ag na finnéithe sna doiciméid a thug siad dúinn don mhéid iarratais phleanála a diúltaíodh dóibh. Dúradh liom gur minic nach gcuireann daoine isteach ar chead pleanála mar go n-insítear dóibh sa chomhairle réamhphleanála nach mbeidh cead pleanála ar fáil agus mar sin ní chuireann siad an obair isteach le hailtirí agus a leithéid ar an gcéad dul síos. An ritheann sin leis an gcleachtadh in bhur gcontaetha?

Molaim don phobal, má tá siad ag éisteacht in aon chor, leanúint ag dul i ngleic leis an bpróiseas agus leis na dréachtphleananna forbartha sna contaetha. Tá sé amuigh don phobal, go bhfios dom, i ngach uile chontae agus tá deis acu á mhéara a chur isteach sa phota arís. Glacaim leis go mbeidh sé ag dul ar ais chuig na comhairleoirí contae nó cathrach chun déileáil leis roimh dheireadh na bliana nó ag tús na bliana seo chugainn. Beidh siad ar fad rite ansin chomh tapa agus is féidir.

Luadh tithe ar phraghas réasúnta. Tá scéim tithe inacmhainneachta á leagan amach ag an Rialtas faoi láthair. An bhfuil na comhairlí contae nó an grúpa oibre ag féachaint ar scéim ar leith do cheantair Ghaeltachta? Luadh gur minic nach eastáit tithíochta a bhíonn á dtógáil sa Ghaeltacht ach tithe aonaracha. An bhfuil a leithéid de scéim ann chun dul i ngleic leis an bhfadhb atá ann go bhfuil an praghas an-ard ar thithe nuathógtha? Ba cheart go mbeadh scéim ar leith ann chun déanamh cinnte de go mbeadh praghas níos ísle ar fáil dóibh siúd atá lonnaithe sa Ghaeltacht cheana féin nó atá ag iarraidh lonnú sa Ghaeltacht.

Luaim na tithe samhraidh. Measaim gur Michael Walsh a luaigh an méid tithe folmha a bhí i gceantar Gaeltachta oíche an daonáirimh agus go raibh sé timpeall 20%. Measaim go mbíonn sé níos airde ná sin fiú i gceantair Ghaeltachta eile. An tithe folmha iad nó an tithe samhraidh iad? Más tithe folmha iad an raibh siad tréigthe nó an é go raibh siad folamh agus ar díol nó an seo an líon tithe samhraidh atá ann? Más tithe samhraidh iad, cén seasamh atá ag an gcomhairle maidir le cead pleanála a thabhairt do thithe samhraidh a thógáil nó ar athrú ó thithe cónaithe? An bhfuil aon bhealach ann chun é sin a stopadh ionas gur tithe teaghlaigh a bheadh ann seachas tithe samhraidh?

An dtabharfar aird speisialta d'iarrthóirí le Gaeilge feasta? Ní díreach siúd a bhfuil cónaí orthu sa Ghaeltacht atá i gceist agam, fiú má chloínn sé leis na polasaithe tithíochta tuaithe nuair atá plean forbartha á leagan amach. Uaireanta leagtar plean forbartha amach a bhíonn dírithe ar an gcontae ar fad ach bíonn eisceachtaí ag teastáil chun cuidiú le ceantar beag Gaeltachta ar nós Baile Ghib nó ceantair i gcontaetha eile.

Mr. Michael Walsh: The existing affordable housing schemes require some degree of density of development that is generally not available in the Gaeltacht areas and the use of those in any respect is limited. We will possibly look at some form of social and affordable housing in An Rinn but as of now there is no clear scheme in place, other than the general provision of planning permission for a scheme; in other words that 10% of the housing be affordable. Beyond that there is no scheme in place and we will not have too much development that would deliver significant numbers of units in An Rinn under that category where 10% of the units have to be affordable.

I refer to the tithe samhraidh. We would see the vacancies as predominantly being summer houses. We can put the language conditions on a property but as houses become older they are sold on the open market and it is generally first come first served in terms of price. The second house market in An Rinn is being ruled out for first-time buyers and many locals because of price. We would look at the local need requirements for somebody applying for planning permission for a summer house. We would include the Irish language competency in that. We do not allow new summer houses to be built in that context.

Mr. Tim Lucey: I concur with the Cathaoirleach's comments on encouraging the public to engage with development plan reviews. We are probably three quarters of the way through our draft development plan and we have had 1,400 submissions to it. The development plan period is about 99 weeks and we have had 64 direct meetings with our councillors during that time. That would reflect what every local authority does but there is a significant benefit to having public submissions come in because the plans shape matters for a period of six to eight years.

On Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh, the sooner there is a resolution to the wastewater and water service facilities there, the better from our point of view and from the point of view of those who wish to live in an Ghaeltacht. It is not something that I or the county council have control of; it is a matter that would need to be put to Irish Water in terms of its capital investment pro-

gramme. I cannot answer for that directly. That is not avoiding the question but I have no legal authority to deliver water services; investment decisions are made elsewhere.

On planning policy and rural housing guidelines, we understand that the publication of new rural housing guidelines is imminent. Maybe members of the committee will have more information on whether the specific issues we are raising here, including an Gaeltacht and more supportive and definitive rural policy guidelines that support Gaeltacht areas, would be incorporated into that. I am uncertain on that and I do not expect that there will be. Let us wait and see what emerges.

We are aware of the Ráth Chairn issue and our recommendations underpin that matter. Michael Walsh said mentioned holiday homes and our Gaeltachtaí are in rural areas that are either under strong urban influence or that could be classified as going through a period of rural diversification in tourism. Even in those areas we would not grant planning permission for one-off houses or holiday homes. Our policies do not provide for that.

Ms Moira Murrell: We are very much focused on short-term letting, especially in the west Kerry Gaeltacht, because we have evidence there is a very high number of homes potentially there that could provide a relief to an under-supplied market and are let on a short-term basis. The local authority is pursuing that. It is primarily once-off housing in the Gaeltacht. That is reflective of the lack of infrastructure and water and wastewater infrastructure throughout our Gaeltacht area, which is reflected in many other rural areas in the county. Our rural policy in those areas is that one has to be intrinsically linked to the area, such as being a son, daughter or landholder. Our plans do not support or countenance speculative development or non-family-home second home development.

We are drafting the development plan review and we are out for public consideration. Similar to what Mr. Lucey was saying, we have had numerous meetings. Public engagement is hugely important. I spoke earlier about the small cluster development we have included in the draft county development plan which is in some way to address the housing need we note is there and allow some form of development where we know we do not have water or wastewater provision.

With regard to the affordable housing scheme, outside of An Daingean itself we do not have multi-unit developments. The water and wastewater is the inhibitor in that. The affordable template would only apply in that context. Outside of that category, a development would not qualify under the current scheme of affordability.

Ms Jackie Maguire: We do not have the issue of short-term lettings in either of the Gaeltachts and within the county it would be limited. With reference to the most recent court case in Ráth Chairn, because both of our Gaeltachts are very rural areas, its predominantly one-off, local applicants who apply. That was the first multiple application we received in Ráth Chairn. Meath County Council refused that planning application and it was appealed to An Bord Pleanála which granted the application subsequently, the outcome of which is known. There has been no further engagement as yet with the applicant on the site. Obviously, if the applicant can address some issues, the applicant can return with the application. I made a point earlier on recommendations four and five. Our desire has always been to have a third-party independent assessment of the linguistic testing and the resulting case proves our point to a certain extent. If the working group was to continue and take those things on board and that was to develop, it certainly would aid our ability to decide planning applications more favourably disposed towards promoting Irish language and culture within our Gaeltachts. We will have to

wait and see the further advancement of that application, or not.

Deputy Danny Healy-Rae: I welcome all the guests, especially our guests from Kerry; our CEO, Ms Moira Murrell; our director of services, Mr. John Breen and our senior planner, Mr. Damien Ginty. I welcome all of them and thank them for the massive amount of work they have put into the county development plan, on which they are still working. I appreciate all the work the councillors in Kerry are doing in that regard. It is a very busy time. I was involved in it at least three times. I understand what goes on and the long hours.

Planning is a big issue in many parts of our county and it is a big issue in the Gaeltacht areas, because of the considerable scenery and views to be had. While some people may not want any houses in areas like that, along the Gaeltacht in Cahersiveen or Dingle, people must put a roof over their heads. The one ambition that every young fella and young girl has is to put a roof over their heads, to start a family and to rear their family in the area in which they were brought up.

Recognition has to be given to that and I welcome what Ms Murrell said about people looking for planning permission. The one place I hope the objective is adhered to that they have to have family links, because sites and planning are in demand in those areas because of the reason I outlined. However, we must see after young locals to ensure our culture, heritage and language in those areas is continued. As it has been handed down to the present generation, we want to hand it on to the generations to come.

The big worry that I have is objectors. When Kerry County Council finally grants permission and they go through the further information process and all that is satisfied, lo and behold, someone from outside the area objects to someone getting planning to put a roof over his or her head. It is wrong and I worry about that.

I have no problem with people who have genuine reasons or are local and a new house would be impeding them in some way. However, I take someone from outside of the parish or the county objecting to young people getting planning permission like this to be criminal. I abhor that kind of action. It is usually by people who are not working, have plenty of time on their hands and are on the dole and getting money for nothing, without doing any work for it. That is the kind of person who usually objects.

There is a problem with short-term letting in some parts of the country. However, in many parts of Kerry, a house close to or on a farm is being rented out for a short time to make up the yearly income and help a family along the way when it is not making the income it should from farming. This is a help. Those people should be left alone and allowed to carry on because many of these houses, if they were not being let or having some such use, would become derelict in a very short time. They could not be maintained or their doors kept open if they were not allowed to do that.

I welcome and appreciate all of our guests who have attended here or on Zoom and I hope that they will continue the great work in the future that they have all been doing.

Chairman: Gabhaim buíochas leis an Teachta. B'fhéidir go bhféadfadh Moira Murrell é sin a fhreagairt maidir leis an ábhar inniu, tithíocht agus cúrsaí pleanála sa Ghaeltacht. As this pertains to Gaeltacht areas, Moira will answer as this is the theme today.

Ms Moira Murrell: Gabhaim buíochas leis an gCathaoirleach agus leis an Teachta Healy-Rae. Certainly, I have probably addressed these issues already and I outlined in my opening

statement that, taking the Gaeltacht area, we have granted 80% of all the applications that have been made to us on the once-off rural housing. The Deputy also mentioned that these are very sensitive and fragile areas with many environmental and archaeological designations within them. We try very much to find a balance between sustainable planning development and being aware and very much trying to facilitate local people who are trying to provide homes for themselves. In the opening statement I also showed where quite a high number of these particular planning applications would appear to have been transitioning into permanent houses and homes in the Gaeltacht areas for people which is the objective which we are all trying to reach.

On the short-term lettings, I totally take the point that it is not something that is across the board. It is targeted in those areas where it is competing with permanent homes, is driving prices up and is taking homes away from the local population. I mentioned in this context the west Kerry Gaeltacht, where we are going in and examining the position. There will be cases which will be fine and will be perfectly acceptable to the planning authority but it certainly warrants an examination where it is going into direct competition with the local property market.

Chairman: Mura bhfuil focal scoir le rá ag aon duine eile, gabhaim buíochas dár bhfinnéithe. Is é atá i gceist againn, sa chaoi go mbeidh na finnéithe ar an eolas faoi, nuair a bheidh an tsraith seo cruinnithe críochnaithe cuirfimid tuarascáil le chéile. Bhí an trí chomhairle contae againn ina bhfuil Gaeltacht iontu os ár gcomhair an tseachtain seo caite. Beidh Comharchumann Ráth Chairn agus Conradh na Gaeilge os ár gcomhair an tseachtain seo chugainn. An tseachtain ina dhiaidh sin beidh an tAire Tithíochta, Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht, an Teachta Darragh O'Brien, os ár gcomhair.

Má tá ár bhfinnéithe ag iarraidh go n-ardóimid aon cheist eile seachas na moltaí a chur siad faoinár mbráid nó má tá siad ag iarraidh soiléiriú a dhéanamh ar aon rud a dúirt siad inniu, níl fadhb ar bith leis sin. Iarraim orthu iad sin a chur ar aghaidh chugainn agus déanfaimid cinnte de go mbeidh siad curtha sa tuarascáil agus scaipthe ar bhaill an choiste.

Gabhaim mo bhuíochas leis na finnéithe ar fad: leo siúd ó Chomhairle Contae Chiarraí, Moira Murrell agus an fhoireann a bhí aici inniu; ó Chomhairle Cathrach agus Contae Phort Láirge, Michael Walsh agus a fhoireann; ó Chomhairle Contae na Mí, Jackie Maguire agus a fhoireann; agus ó Chomhairle Contae Chorcaí, Tim Lucey agus an fhoireann atá aige freisin. Gabhaim buíochas freisin as na doiciméid a chuir siad chugainn agus, go háirithe, an ceann coiteann leis na moltaí a tháinig uathu ar fad.

Ar an 8 Nollaig pléifear an t-ábhar céanna: tithíocht agus cúrsaí pleanála fisiciúla sa Ghaeltacht arís, mar a dúirt mé níos luaithe, le hionadaithe ó Chonradh na Gaeilge agus Comharchumann Ráth Chairn.

Cuireadh an comhchoiste ar athló ar 4.15 p.m. go dtí 1.30 p.m. Dé Céadaoin, an 8 Nollaig 2021.