



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Coiste Polasaí Straitéiseach Gnóthaí Forbairt Eacnamaíochta & Fiontraíochta
Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)
Cruinniú /Meeting

Thursday 6th April 2017, 10.00am

Council Chamber, Galway County Council, Galway

Members in attendance

Cllr. Peter Feeney, Chairperson	Galway County Council
Cllr. Mary Hoade	Galway County Council
Cllr. Seán Ó Tuairisg	Galway County Council
Cllr. Jimmy McClearn	Galway County Council
Cllr. Tom Healy	Galway County Council
Cllr. Karey McHugh	Galway County Council
Cllr. Joe Byrne	Galway County Council

Present

Catherine McConnell	A/Director of Services, Galway County Council
Alan Farrell	Galway County Council
Kieran Coyne	Galway County Council
Breda Mulrennan	Galway County Council
Dan Dowling	Community representative
Michelle Murphy	Business / Commercial representative

Apologies

Cllr. Michael Finnerty	Galway County Council
Kevin Kelly	Galway County Council
Paul Mannion	Scott Tallon Walker Architects
Breda Fox	Galway County Council
Paul Quinn	Trade Union representative

Welcome & Introductions

Cllr. Peter Feeney welcomed those in attendance to the meeting and read out the apologies and he thanked Cllr. Jimmy McClearn for his chairmanship of the committee and welcomed Cllr Joe Byrne who replaced Cllr Gerry Finnerty on the committee.

1. Minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC held on 19th October 2016 & matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th of October 2016 were approved on the proposal of Cllr. Jimmy McClearn and seconded by Cllr. Seán O' Tuairisg.

There were no matters arising.

2. Galway West of Ireland European Region of Gastronomy 2018 Update

Alan Farrell updated the committee on the status of the European Region of Gastronomy 2018. He said that Galway County Council has hosted two meetings of the expanded steering committee to date and currently the committee are compiling an audit of prospective projects for the year of designation and the lead in period. Regarding the food hub progressing in Athenry, Teagasc have agreed to put a full time food technologist in place on completion. Galway County Council is currently in the process of contracting a consultant to work on the food hub initiative. He stated as the Food Festival will be the first public gathering for the European Region of Gastronomy Galway County Council is currently compiling promotional material and a video which will be available for use at this event and all future events leading up to the year of designation. Galway County Council have already supported a number of festivals and events under the Community Support Scheme 2017 and a team within all sections of GCC has been compiled and who are all engaging with our communities and businesses within the county on rolling out some new events for the year of designation. The European Region of Gastronomy was showcased at the Croatian Presidential visit to Galway which garnered a lot of publicity on all social media platforms.

Cllr. Feeney enquired as to the financing of the possible food hub, Alan replied that there is a funding call coming from Enterprise Ireland which we would hope to be able to use. The Education and training board are also hoping to come on board. Catherine also added that the Councils contribution would be that the planning application would be possibly made under Part VIII.

3. Town and Village Renewal 2016 Update

Catherine gave a brief update on the Town and Village Renewal Scheme (update attached)

It is envisaged that the 2017 scheme will give up a longer application time and we expect that it will become a multi-annual scheme.

4 REDZ (Rural Economic Development Zones) Update

Kieran Coyne updated the committee on the status of REDZ (Information attached).

Cllr. Jimmy McClearn stated that some communities have more capacity than others and would it be possible to do workshops around the county in order to build capacity. Cllr Mary Hoade agreed and stated that communities need to be ready for the call for funding.

Kieran replied that REDZ phase II is different, we noticed that a lot of community structures were not ready for when the funding calls came, so Galway County Council applied for 2 proposals under the REDZ scheme and one got supported under the scheme. It is proposed to assign a proportion of that funding to build capacity within some of the REDZ areas. We will be engaging consultants to work with the communities with the designated REDZ areas and a portion of the funding will be used to progress some of the projects that come from the capacity building.

Catherine stated that we do take on board the point that there are some groups which need more assistance than others and we will endeavor to organize some information seminars. She also informed the meeting that the framework for the scheme has been arranged by the Department themselves so we have no input into what changes are made to the scheme on an annual basis.

Cllr. Byrne informed the meeting that Burren Lowlands launched Burren Biz who are engaging with every community group in South Galway, he stated that all the work which the Burren Lowlands group carry out cannot be achieved on a voluntary basis, financial assistance to manage the groups is what is required we do not need an outside consultant to come and meet us what we do need is financial assistance to put structures in place for the future.

Cllr. Feeney enquired as to whether there would be a possibility that the Burren Biz group would eventually be able to sustain themselves, Cllr Byrne replied that it is a definite possibility if the funding and assistance is put in at foundation level.

Dan Dowling suggested that all information could be disseminated through the PPN and enquired whether there would be funding possibilities for groups through the LEADER /SICAP programmes.

Kieran Coyne replied that REDZ is not about funding one off projects or single groups, unfortunately under REDZ phase II the constraints set down by the Department will not allow us to fund individual projects.

Cllr. Healy expressed concern over the administration involved for the amount of funding available. Cllr. Feeney asked whether anything could be learned from the fact we got a relatively small REDZ allocation this time around.

Catherine McConnell noted that funding was also received through regional projects.

5 Community Facilities Scheme update

Catherine McConnell gave a brief overview on this scheme. This scheme will have to be approved by the LCDC and it is hoped that supported projects under this scheme could achieve some of the objectives under the LECP. Once the roll out of the scheme is agreed by the LCDC we will disseminate all the information through the PPN, SPCs and elected members.

Cllr McClearn was of the opinion that it will cost more to administer the scheme than the value of the scheme itself in terms of funding available. Cllr Healy suggested that the administration time should be tracked with the detail routed back to the Department. Catherine also gave an overview of the CLÁR 2017 scheme whereby each Local Authority is capped at a maximum of 20 projects.

Cllr Hoade asked can we make a call for additional staff. Moreover she queried if it was right that only projects funded under the Community Facilities scheme come under the themes of the LECP. Catherine noted that it will be rolled out under the auspices of the LCDC and it would be useful if we could look at measuring the scope of the project to make sure that value can be achieved.

Cllr Byrne agreed that the strategy of how the community facilities scheme is being rolled out with best value being achieved under the LECP. He asked was there any way that the CLÁR funding could be given to the Municipal District engineers to administer. Catherine was of the opinion that they would be very efficient in spending the funding under the relevant category but find it difficult to administer the community side.

6 AOB

Catherine suggested that we are looking at putting together the Advisory Steering Group and we will be communicating to all previous members to reconvene it.

Alan Farrell said in relation to the Tourism Strategy we would hope to have a draft ready for public display in the course of the coming weeks. Moreover we would hope to get SPC approval on the strategy document within the next couple of months. Cllr Byrne asked in relation to the Galway Tourism map could we coordinate all maps that are being produced so that all current tourism points can be included. Cllr Healy informed the meeting that there is a mapping platform for Connemara called 'my connemara' and asked could this be linked also.