



**Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe**  
**Galway County Council**

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

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2017, 2.00pm

**Council Offices, 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. Tom Healy	Galway County Council
Cllr. Karey McHugh	Galway County Council

**Present**

Alan Farrell	Galway County Council
Kieran Coyne	Galway County Council
Brian Barrett	Galway County Council
Breda Mulrennan	Galway County Council
Dan Dowling	Community representative
Paul Mannion	Scott Tallon Walker Architects

**Apologies**

Cllr Joe Byrne	Galway County Council
Kevin Kelly	Galway County Council
Paul Quinn	Trade Union Representative
Breda Fox	Galway County Council
Michelle Murphy	Business / Commercial representative

## **Welcome & Introductions**

In the absence of the chairperson Cllr McHugh proposed Cllr Mary Hoade as deputy chair of the SPC and Cllr Tom Healy seconded. Cllr. Mary Hoade welcomed those in attendance to the meeting and read out the apologies.

Alan informed the meeting that Catherine McConnell will be taking up a position as Director with Mayo County Council shortly and that he will now be Acting Director of Planning and CEED within Galway County Council.

All in attendance at the meeting expressed their best wishes to Catherine and thanked her for her professionalism during her time with Galway County Council.

### **1. Minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2017 & matters arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2017 were approved on the proposal of Cllr. Tom Healy and seconded by Cllr. Seán O' Tuairisg.

There were no matters arising.

### **2. Galway West of Ireland European Region of Gastronomy 2018 Update (Report Attached)**

Alan Farrell updated the committee on the status of the European Region of Gastronomy 2018. He said that Galway County Council had appointed Elaine Donoghue as European Region of Gastronomy co-ordinator. 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 who are all engaging with our communities and businesses within the county on rolling out some new events for the year of designation.

Cllr. Peter Feeney, then joined the meeting and began chairing.

### **3. Bia Innovator Update (Report Attached).**

Alan Farrell gave a presentation to the committee on the Bia Innovator Project. Cllr Tom Healy stated that the facility is of huge importance to the region and that it does offer opportunities for people in peripheral areas and enquired as to whether this model can be introduced to other areas, but we should be mindful of saturation of the market. He also enquired as to whether there is a budget for this as it is a great opportunity for the County to market itself on a National basis and wondered as to how we intend working with the Local Abattoirs.

Alan replied that the facility will address the infrastructural deficit in the region and it would be hoped that it will support all local businesses and all business across the region.

With regards to local abattoirs we are working at promoting them with our Veterinary Office. The supports from the Local Authority with regards Veterinary goes over and above but we could look at assisting with promotion of our local abattoirs and producers for example Connemara Lamb. With regards to saturation we hope to focus on innovation of products so we hope that saturation will not be a problem.

Concerning the budget we will make the best use of our current resources and we hope to utilise the traction of other agencies in this regard. The Local Enterprise Office will be the primary area of contact for the Hub. The Company will be limited by guarantee and is already established. Teagasc will put the lease for the site in place and we are just waiting on funding.

Cllr Sean O Tuairisg stated that he sees great possibilities for seafood in the peripheral areas. Hopefully Pairc na Mara will come to fruition and can collaborate with the Hub as Carna where it is envisaged that Pairc na Mara will be located is an unemployment blackspot.

Alan replied that the Local Authority engaged with BIM as we see seafood as a very important aspect to this project going forward.

Cllr McHugh complemented all on the work that has taken place to date and the agency partnerships are to be commended especially as only a small number of ETB's have become involved with Chef Training. She enquired as to whether the Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Association can be involved in the process?

Dan Dowling enquired as to whether it will be used for the export or local market?

Alan answered that both will be available.

Cllr Feeney wanted to acknowledge all of Alan's assistance in progressing the project to this stage.

Brian then updated the meeting on the regional project with Roscommon (Report Attached)

Dan Dowling stated that most of the enterprise accommodation in the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre is now occupied.

#### **4. Galway Airport.**

Brian gave an update on Galway Airport and stated that there is currently a call out for Expressions of Interest for the two hangars for use as a film studio. Once we have compiled the Expression of Interests, we will seek full business plans from interested parties with regards to signing contracts by year end.

Cllr Hoade enquired as to whether the studios would interfere with the Flying Club, Brian answered no.

Paul Quinn queried whether the Local Authorities will be issuing a long term lease and Brian informed him that yes that is the intention.

Cllr McHugh stated that the skill base we have within the County for this industry is phenomenal and welcomed the forward thinking of the Local Authorities in this regard.

#### **4 Town and Village Renewal Update**

Kieran Coyne updated the committee on the status of Town and Village Renewal Scheme. He stated that this is the second phase of Town and Village and that the second call came earlier in the year, Galway County Council publically advertised the scheme and all expressions of interest were assessed and the Local Authority submitted 15 applications of which 13 received approval from the Department. There was just over €1 million funding approved and of the 13 approvals they include a mix of projects which are either Council or Community led.

Cllr Feeney enquired as to what stage we are at in drawing down the 2016 funding. Kieran replied that all bar one project is drawn down. Cllr Hoade stated that once funding in an area has not been drawn down it is very difficult for us to look for extra funding. Alan responded that we are hoping to meet with the Department to look at what issues are facing us. Paul Quinn queried as to whether the timeframes set down by the Department are a hindrance? Kieran replied that yes the deadlines are very difficult to meet and Alan added that we need to be conscious of capacity within both the Local Authority and Community.

Brian also added that we are also involved in two regional projects one in Knock Airport and the other is a Blueway around Lough Derg.

#### **5. REDZ (Rural Economic Development Zone) Update**

Galway County Council was awarded €100,000 funding under REDZ II to develop a Capacity Building programme within five REDZ zones (Glenamaddy, Carraroe, Galway Rural, Oranmore and Gort) in County Galway. Specifically this will involve implementing a call for five of the REDZ zones to apply for supports to develop a zone team and zone action plan with the key objective of accessing resources from relevant National Schemes such as Town and Village renewal, LEADER, to name but two. The five zones listed were chosen on the basis that intervention is more likely to have greater impact if the zone in its entirety is the focus rather than a specific town within the zone. This is because traditionally and historically people would tend to utilise services across the zone rather than in one particular town located in the zone. The proposal will

ensure as far as possible that there is consistency with existing policies such as the Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) and Local Area Plans (LAPs) that Galway County Council are overseeing as well as giving due consideration and cognisance of the Action Plan for Jobs.

A very robust tender specification was compiled to ensure that the objectives of the proposal are adhered to. Consultants have been contracted and have begun working with some of the zones.

## **6. National Broadband Plan Update**

Brian gave an update on the National Broadband Plan and stated that the national tendering process was open and that two companies had tendered. It is anticipated that work will begin by the middle of 2018. The Department has signed a contract with EIR on the roll out of rural broadband.

Dan Dowling enquired as to whether the Local Authorities are planning on using the MAN infrastructure. Brian replied that they will be using the MAN but that they will have to dig into the individual residences.

Cllr Hoade enquired as to what rationale are EIR using to pick the locations, Brian answered that they used a commercial business case for it. Mary responded that it leave the people outside of the limits in a very difficult position, Brian replied that unfortunately people outside of the locations will have to wait until the National Plan is rolled out. Cllr Healy asked if Galway County Council could introduce a webpage for people to petition to EIR to see if they will include missing residences on their loop. Cllr Feeney enquired as to whether all of the MANS are lit and Brian replied that he thinks that their some activity on them all.

## **7. Business Incentive Scheme**

Alan gave a brief update on the Business Incentive Scheme which he hopes to launch shortly. The scheme will be facilitated by the Local Enterprise Office who currently have received four applications to date. Cllr Healy questioned as to what can be done to roll out the scheme and to make it more accessible. Alan replied that the scheme can be examined and see if any areas can be added.

## **8. LECP – Economic Actions (Report Attached)**

Brian gave an update on the LECP Economic Actions. Cllr Healy stated that with regards to the Towns and Villages not growing this may possibly be down to lack of housing, once housing supply is a problem our towns and villages will dissipate.

Alan Farrell detailed that the Economic SPC has the responsibility for overseeing the economic actions and the Local Community Development Committee oversees the implementation of the community actions.

#### **9. Tourism Strategy.**

Brian updated all on the Tourism Strategy and stated that the strategy is in draft format at the moment and that the Local Authority are confirming that the resources required to implement the strategy are in place prior to printing.

Brian also informed the meeting about the Strategic, Tourism and Amenity Infrastructure Investment Scheme (information attached). Brian stated that a flagship project for County Galway would be welcomed.

#### **10. AOB**

Cllr Hoade enquired as to whether the staffing and financial levels are sufficient within the Community, Enterprise and Economic Development Unit, Alan replied that our staffing levels are limited but the team is doing all that they can. We would always welcome an increase in staffing levels. Cllr Feeney asked if the Broadband officer had been appointed, Alan informed the meeting that the position is currently being filled. Cllr Healy asked about the Galway Outer Bypass and Alan stated that he will update all on this at the next meeting. The next meeting was then scheduled for Wednesday the 6<sup>th</sup> of December, the meeting then concluded.