

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Minutes of the Planning, Economic Development & Community Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held in Room GO1 on Friday 20th July 2018

I LATHAIR:

Baill: Cllr. James Charity, Chairperson
Cllr. Dermot Connolly
Cllr. Shaun Cunniffe
Cllr. Aidan Donohue
Cllr. Frank Kearney
Cllr. Thomas Welby
Mr. Gus McCarthy

Oifigigh: Ms. Valerie Loughnane, Senior Planner, Planning
Mr. Brendan Dunne, Assistant Planner, Planning
Ms. Hazel Fox, Assistant Planner, Planning
Mr. Kieran Coyne, Rapid Co-Ordinator, C&E
Ms. Caroline Hannon, Assistant Staff Officer, Planning
Ms. Sinéad Burns, Assistant Staff Officer, Planning

Apologies: Ms. Eileen Ruane, Director of Services

Item No. 1 - Minutes of the meeting of the Planning & Community SPC held on 10th April, 2017

Cllr. Charity welcomed all to the meeting and apologised for the delay in rearranging the meeting date originally scheduled. The next meeting date to be agreed at the end of the meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Cllr. Kearney, seconded by Cllr. Cunniffe and agreed.

Cllr. Kearney asked if there was any update of the Flemish Decree. Valerie Loughnane said this was still with the Department. A Working Group had been set up approximately 1 year ago. Enquiries were made 2 months ago to the Department but there has been no progress. V. Loughnane is to enquire with the Department again and bring an update to the next SPC Meeting.

Item No. 2 – Update on the Working Group for the Waste Water Treatment Plants.

V. Loughnane outlined that an internal meeting was held on the 22nd of June regarding issue from the environment and technical side. Guidance for applicants needs to be more detailed and advanced.

Cllr. Welby said that there are many issues with management companies structure and how they are managed. It would need to be ensured that Galway County Council would have some control. Issues can arise if developers leave and there are problems about who should be on committees of the Management Company. Professional Management Companies are easier to manage and run. It was discussed if there would be a possibility to lodge details of a management arrangement with a planning application and if a bond separate to a Housing Estate Bond could be put in place.

V. Loughnane said that legislation is now stronger than in the past. Fintan Donnelly and Ann Dolan are currently investigating Proposed costs for a bond for Waste Water Treatment Plants. Another meeting is due to be scheduled and an update will be then given after this takes place.

Cllr. Welby said the public are not aware of who is involved in the management companies – people think it doesn't apply to them and it is for developers only. Property owners need to be made aware that they should have to take ownership if an estate is not taken in charge. The Council need to be cautious - a sinking fund and bond should be put in place without exposing Galway County Council to long term costs.

Cllr. Donohue said he is an advocate for these schemes but they would need to be put in place correctly. Property owners currently are lucky to have 50% of people in estates contributing to costs e.g. grass cutting etc.

V. Loughnane added that legislation would have to allow for proper running of schemes and maintenance of schemes thereafter. Problems occurring are

nobody managing estates after time. The cost of a bond for a treatment plant is being explored extensively by Fintan Donnelly and Ann Dolan.

Cllr. Kearney added that during the Celtic Tiger people decided to set up Management Companies – some worked well and some were not effective. Proper companies need to manage estates with effective legislation.

Gus McCarthy said that new legislation is now very different to that in the past. People have had bad experiences with Management Companies. Agents are employed by estate owners to manage estates. Legislation provides how a management company is to be set up and how it is passed to owners. There should be a requirement for a sinking fund and all developments must comply with legislation. A lot of estates don't have Public Waste Water Treatment Systems. New policy is forthcoming on shared Waste Water Treatment Plants where safeguards are a lot tighter.

V. Loughnane stated that there may be enforcement issues and there would be a requirement to have resources available to enforce and have staff to implement. She added that ongoing maintenance would be a major issue down the line. A policy needs to be formulated to complement the County Development Plan policy.

Cllr. Connolly added that the creation of a bond separate for Waste Water Treatment Facilities would be welcomed and that we would need to force compliance.

Cllr. Welby stated that a sinking fund wouldn't come from developers and owners are the ones who should fund. When people buy a house they need to be made aware of the fact that they are shareholders of the estate. If a plant is to be replaced in 20 years, there should be a fund in place for this.

Cllr. Cunniffe asked if estates are available to be taken in charge.

V. Loughnane replied that the policy currently is that estates with a Waste Water Treatment Plant are not being taken in charge.

Cllr. Kearney said that when a house is being sold there should be a management charge included in the price.

G. McCarthy said that new legislation does show this and is very structured.

Cllr. Cunniffe added that legislation needs to be mandatory and enforceable but it would fall back on the Council.

Item No. 3 – Update on National Planning Framework (NPF) / Regional Social & Economic Strategy (RSES) / Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)

V. Loughnane stated that the NPF had been adopted in February 2018. She advised that the RSES is currently underway.

With regard to MASP she advised that she received the outline last week – and that this would be a chapter within the RSES instead of a separate document. She highlighted that Galway County Council had put forward a proposal re the boundary but what has been received back was different, it was a very tight area and Moycullen was not included.

Once the RSES is adopted - the CDP will be started within 4 months of the adoption. Discussions are ongoing on MASP with both Chief Executives of Galway County and City Council and with the Director of RSES.

Submissions were made to the NPF, RSES and MASP and once a draft is in place, it will be brought to the SPC meeting and a further submission will be made.

MASP is larger than the city boundary. There will be a cohesive approach for Infrastructure, Housing and Amenity.

Cllr. Kearney firstly welcomed the news that Claregalway and Oranmore were within the MASP boundary. He stated that when the Members of the Council were last elected, a new CDP started. Now that the County and City Councils are to be amalgamated and only 2 years left on the County plan, should the County Development Plan be deferred.

V. Loughnane confirmed that there is no provision in legislation to defer the CDP. The new pre-draft CDP will be brought before the new Elected Members. She said that the MASP may join up the gap between Galway City and Galway County Development Plans.

Cllr. Cunniffe said that there is a crossing of political boundaries.

V. Loughnane said that there is a logic to this and will take time to bed in.

Item No. 4 – Urban and Rural Regeneration Funding Schemes

V. Loughnane explained that the funding schemes were launched in Portlaoise on the 9th of July. A Rural Regeneration and Development Fund of €1 billion has been committed by the Government from 2019 to 2027 with initial funding of €315 million allocated to the Fund on a phased basis over the period.

An Urban Regeneration and Development Fund of €100m will be available for expenditure in 2019 and an overall allocation of €550m allocated to the fund up to the end of 2022.

K. Coyne circulated a handout and outlined details of the schemes. There are 2 different categories or proposals

1. 'Ready to Go' proposals
2. Projects coming to fruition but require further development.

Tuam and Ballinasloe can be applied for under either scheme but not both.

The closing date for completed applications for the Rural Regeneration & Development Fund is the 27th September, 2018 and the 28th September, 2018 for the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF).

Ideas for the applications are welcomed.

Cllr. Kearney asked what types of projects and what funds are available.

K. Coyne said that the potential projects are mostly in Category B and amounts are €500,000 minimum.

Cllr. Donohue asked if under the Rural Development Fund is there any category for areas larger than 10,000.

K. Coyne clarified that there is no other category for larger populations. He added that existing Community Groups are working on making applications under the Schemes and groups that have previous involvement with the Community & Enterprise Section are being also targeted.

Cllr. Connolly asked if it is Galway County Council or an outside agency that will be sending the applications. He said that GRD had statistics regarding Anti-Social Behaviour in Tuam and Ballinasloe which was a big problem. Galway County Council can play a very positive role in improving this. Cllr. Connolly also asked if the funding is ringfenced.

K. Coyne said that the funding is secured for a 5 year period. Public bodies will be the lead. Applications will be spread out throughout the county to maximise opportunities.

Cllr. Connolly asked that further updates be reported back to the Municipal District meetings and that the Members should be kept in the loop and asked for advice. He also said that the deadlines were too tight.

Item No. 5 – Update on Clifden Local Area Plan

V. Loughnane outlined that the Clifden Local Area Plan is on public display from the 6th July until the 17th August. There was a public consultation meeting held on the 19th of July.

Hazel Fox said that the aim is to accommodate residential development as close to the town as possible. Revised housing land zoning will lead to an increase in development in the future.

A Chief Executives report will be prepared for the October Council meeting.

V. Loughnane relayed thanks to Hazel Fox and Brendan Dunne for their hard work in preparing this plan.

Cllr. Welby asked for interaction at the Connemara M.D. meetings in relation to the Clifden Local Area Plan. H. Fox said that the Forward Planning staff are always available to meet with members.

Cllr. Connolly said that some buildings etc. are eyesores and left in a bad state and asked what the approach to these situations was.

V. Loughnane said that the Council can pick areas to highlight and identify but resources are not available to work on these areas. It may be possible to check with Environment Section under the Derelict Sites and Dangerous Structures areas.

Cllr. Kearney asked if any retail was planned for Clifden. H.Fox said no and that residential development will be as close to the town as possible.

Cllr. Charity formally put on record appreciation to Hazel Fox and Brendan Dunne on the preparation of the Clifden Local Area Plan on behalf of the Elected Members.

Item No. 6 –Town and Village 2018 submission

K. Coyne stated that he had circulated an email regarding the 12 projects which have gone forward - €1.3 million. He advised that it was a spatial spread with 5 driven by Galway County Council and 7 local anchor groups. He highlighted that a decision would be made on these by September or October.

Item No. 7 – Outdoor Recreation 2018 submission

K. Coyne said that 6th July was the closing date for submissions.

3 measures – number 1 small grade works on trails – funding up to €200,000, number 2 & 3 large grade works and larger funding.

13 applications received and 5 have been put forward.

An update has been presented to the Chief Executive Team.

Item No. 8 – Community Enhancement Scheme 2018

K. Coyne stated that the 30th July was the closing date for this Scheme which targets projects for commercial buildings in disadvantaged areas. Funding for small scale projects is € 1,000 and for larger projects is € 15,000, total funding available is € 143,000.

Item No. 9 – Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) review

K. Coyne advised that a midterm review had just been carried out. He said that under this programme rural isolation and connectivity is being focused on. Galway Rural Development are employing staff to work in this area.

Cllr. Charity asked why Clarinbridge was left out of funding under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme as pointed out by Cllr. Kinnane at the last Council meeting. K. Coyne explained that the Clarinbridge projects were not yet ready. Cllr. Charity commented that it should be looked at that towns are not left behind with funding.

AOB

Cllr. Connolly pointed out that a lot of the vacant homes around the county have become an eye sore in some estates as they look abandoned. He stated that this was unfair on neighbors and was causing vermin in some estates. Ms. Loughnane stated that Galway County Council would love to be able to do something with these houses. She advised that other Local Authorities have a team set up to deal with this but Galway County Council just does not have the resources available at present. She explained that when carrying out a Local Area Plan of a town they try to highlight these sites. She stated that there may be legislation available re derelict sites and advised Cllr. Connolly to speak to the Environment Section regarding same.

Date for next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Thursday the 13th September 2018 at 11.30am in County Hall.