

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Minutes of the Planning, Environment, Agriculture & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 13th September 2022 at 11am in the Council Chamber.

I LÁTHAIR:

Baill:

Cllr. Shane Curley, Chairperson
Cllr. Michael Connolly,
Cllr. Donagh Killilea
Cllr. Daithí Ó Cualáin
Cllr. Dermot Connolly
Aodán MacDonncha, Uasal
Mr. Mark Green

Oifigigh: Mr. Michael Owens, Director of Services
Ms. Valerie Loughnane, Senior Planner, Planning
Mr. Brendan Dunne, Senior Executive Planner, Planning
Ms. Eileen Keaveney, Administrative Officer, Planning
Ms. Mary Hughes, Assistant Staff Officer, Planning

Apologies: Cllr. Michael Maher,

Item No. 1 - Minutes of the meeting of the Planning, Environment, Agriculture & Emergency Services SPC dated Tuesday 5th July 2022

The minutes of the meeting dated 5th July 2022 were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Daithí Ó Cualáin, seconded by Cllr. Michael Connolly.

Matters arising: Cllr. M. Connolly asked could the SPC write to the Department of Agriculture to see if legislation could be put in place regarding the infestation of cats.
Cllr. D. Killilea asked was there any update on a Community Warden for Tuam and was there any update on the Ministerial Direction of the County Development Plan.
Mr. Green asked was there any update on the Marine Spatial Planning and whether a date had been agreed for a joint SPC meeting with Galway City Council.

Mr. Owens said that the Development Plan is subject to a Draft Ministerial Direction now and that there was no further update in relation to the Marine Plan. Galway City Council were not able to hold a joint SPC meeting in September there will possibly be one in October. Community warden interviews have been held and appointments will be made in the Tuam area. Mr. Owens said there will be an update on the MASA research project at the joint SPC meeting.

Cllr. D Killilea asked could we look at a voluntary community warden force and has any consideration been given to that.

Mr. Owens said that it can be included in the review of services process once all staffing levels are back to full quota.

Item No. 2: Residential Zoned Land Tax

Mr. Dunne made a presentation regarding the Residential Zoned Land Tax, he informed the meeting that this was a new tax, under the Housing Policy Objective 15.2 of Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland.

Cllr. D. Connolly wished Cllr. Shane Curley best wishes as Chair of the SPC, he said resources are tight and asked if resources are being given to carry out this extra body of work for the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the Department of Revenue.

Cllr. D. Connolly also asked if someone has land that is zoned residential (a farmer) are they liable for the tax.

Cllr. M. Connolly said he could see the merits for this new tax, he had some Phase 1 lands removed, and asked is it only Phase 1 and Phase 2 lands that will be included, that the problem of idle land needs to be tackled, and if someone makes a planning application on a site will that be excluded from the tax.

Cllr. D. Killilea asked are the Local Authorities going to advertise this Residential Zoned Land Tax.

Ms. V. Loughnane replied that we will be advertising, the maps will be put on display, she also said that all lands will be included not just Phase 1 and Phase 2 lands.

Cllr. D. Killilea said three farmers in Tuam have all their lands in Phase 1 and Phase 2 and asked were they included for tax purposes.

Ms. V. Loughnane confirmed that all lands will be included if they are zoned and serviced.

Mr. B. Dunne said the five criteria to determine whether lands were within the scope of the land tax are as follows:

- Roads/Footpaths
- Public lighting

- Foul Sewer Drainage
- Surface Water Drainage
- Water Supply

Cllr. D. Killilea stated that farmers may be looking for a material alteration of the County Development Plan regarding the zoning of their lands., which will in turn increase the volume of work for the Planning Department and enquired would any additional staff be allocated to Planning Department.

Ms. Loughnane said that maps must be produced by 1st November 2022 which is a very tight deadline.

Cllr. O' Cualain enquired as to what would happen if we didn't meet the deadline.

Ms. V. Loughnane said they were statutory guidelines and timeframes to be adhered to.

Mr. MacDonncha asked would a preview of the maps be made available.

Mr. B Dunne replied that the maps would not be distributed before 1st November 2022.

Mr. Green said there is a large volume of work involved and enquired how did the Planning Department anticipate doing the public display and informing the public, he also asked would land that did not meet the criteria be mapped.

Mr. Dunne replied that land must meet all the parameters to be included, and that the Planning Department would not be writing to landowners. The maps would be available online and hard copies available at the public counter.

Mr. MacDonnacha said it was up to the public to engage.

Cllr. Curley asked could we write to the Minister for an extension to the timeline, he also asked would lands zoned in flood areas be included.

Ms. V. Loughnane said some lands in flood zones would be included in scope, as these lands had been zoned residential in the new County Development Plan despite the Executive advising against the rezoning of lands in flood risk areas.

Mr. M. Owens said this was a significant piece of work and was not a discretionary item and had to be completed and prioritized to meet timelines. It was not a financial but recruitment issue, as there is a difficulty recruiting planners at present, the Planning section has started to employ engineers until planners can be recruited. He said there was resource implications for the planning section and IT section as the workload had increased. Land zoned from 1st January 2022 will be included, there will be a once off provision to allow landowners to request an amendment to the zoning of lands. No further legislation/guidelines or policy currently available in relation to this.

Cllr. D. Killilea enquired would consideration be given to looking at the County Development Plan as there would be a large volume of work with Material Alterations.

Ms. V. Loughnane said Loughrea and Athenry would not be included within the scope as their plans have currently expired, Irish Water would be given the maps and asked would the areas be upgraded with services.

Cllr. D. Killilea noted that Irish Water said there was limited capacity in Athenry,

Mr. B. Dunne noted that numerous submissions came in for rezoning to R1 in the draft stages of the County Development Plan, where lands were rezoned against the core strategy.

Cllr. D. Killilea said some people expressed interest in rezoning to build, there are huge volumes of greenbelt areas in Tuam and other areas where the landowners did not request rezoning, and this results in the town boundary being pushed out.

Item No. 3: E-planning update

Ms. E. Keaveney gave a presentation on ePlanning.

Cllr. S. Curley said it was very encouraging to see it had more than halved the paper being used.

Cllr. D. Connolly asked did people making an online submission have to pay €20.

Ms E. Keaveney said yes you pay online.

Cllr. D. Connolly enquired as to what the situation with pre-planning meetings was and

Mr. M. Owens confirmed that pre-planning meetings had recommenced, that they were on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings and the last meeting each day was being held for councillors.

Mr. M. Green asked if ePlanning catered for statutory bodies and Ms E. Keaveney that statutory bodies are included in the process and each body has a dedicated email address.

Mr. M. Green enquired did we know the statistics for Galway and asked when did the system go live.

Ms. E. Keaveney said that it went live in December 2021 and to date 47% of planning files were ePlanning files.

Mr. M. Green said this was a great system to have in place.

Mr. D. Killilea thanked Ms. E. Keaveney for report and asked were councillors on the list.

Ms. E. Keaveney said councillors could just make a submission as before and are exempted from payment.

Item No. 4: Department Circular- EUIPR 3/2022

European Union (Planning and Development) (Displaced Persons from Ukraine Temporary Protection) Regulations 2022

Mr. M. Owens gave an outline of this circular and said that it came into effect on 4 March 2022 for a period of one year with the provision to increase to a maximum of three years and is to provide immediate protection in EU countries for persons displaced by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, including the need to provide emergency accommodation and support to these displaced persons.

Cllr. D. Killilea asked could modular homes be put in place without planning permission.

Mr. M. Owens said no, only by the OPW or the Department of Local Government, Housing and Heritage.

Cllr. D. Connolly said he was not sure of the number of premises available for this, he said St. Brigid's Hospital in Ballinasloe could be utilised for refugees, could the circular be sent to the HSE with the volume of folios available to them. He also asked was there any engagement with Galway County Council in relation to St. Brigid's Hospital.

Mr. M. Owens replied that he was not aware of any direct engagement between Galway County Council and the HSE.

Item No. 5: Any Other Business

Cllr. D. Killilea proposed that a reserve community warden scheme be considered, this was seconded by Cllr. D. O' Cualain.

Cllr. M. Connolly proposed that legislation be put in place for the control of cats, this was seconded by Cllr. D. Connolly.

Next SPC meeting will take place on 29th November 2022 at 11.am

Cllr. D. Killilea asked could online meetings be looked at for future meetings and asked was there any correspondence in relation to Kilronan and was there any update at this SPC meeting as there seems to be issues.

Cllr. S. Curley said he had no issue with holding fully hybrid meetings.

Mr. M. Owens said the focus was with the CPG to look at the standing orders and would be on the agenda for the December meeting. The Plenary would be adopting standing orders in December. The SPC operate under a single set of standing orders, it was open to the members to look at hybrid/remote meetings and bring to the CPG and Plenary Council meetings and adopted by the MD's

Mr. M. Owens said he was aware of email correspondence in relation to Kilronan and that it was being reviewed and correspondence would be issued.

Mr. M. Green asked could we as SPC request that hybrid meetings be brought forward for consideration.

Cllr. S. Curley emphasised how important it was to have hybrid meetings.

Mr. M. Owens explained it was a matter for the CPG and Plenary Council to decide on standing orders for SPC'S.

Mr. M. Green asked for an amendment to page 7 of minutes of the meeting dated 5th July 2022 to read - Mr. Green felt it would not be viable for Local Authorities to employ vets if most of their functions were removed.

Mr. M. Owens informed the meeting that a Planning workshop would be held on 22nd November 2022 for agents. He asked was there anything for the agenda for the Joint SPC meeting.

Meeting concluded.

