



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

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

Friday 26th April 2019
Council Offices, Galway County Council, Galway

Members in attendance

Cllr. Peter Feeney	Galway County Council
Cllr. Mary Hoade	Galway County Council
Cllr. Jimmy McClearn	Galway County Council
Paul Mannion	Development/Construction Sector Representative
Dan Dowling	Community Representative

Present

Kieran Coyne	Galway County Council
Bernie O Connor	Galway County Council

Apologies

Cllr. Joe Byrne	Galway County Council
Cllr. Séan Ó Tuairisg	Galway County Council
Cllr. Karey McHugh	Galway County Council
Cllr. Tom Healy	Galway County Council
Kevin Kelly	Galway County Council
Alan Farrell	Galway County Council
Breda Fox	Galway County Council
Paul Quinn	Trade Union Representative
Michelle Murphy	Business/Commercial Sector Representative

1. Minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC held on 04 December 2019

Cllr. Peter Feeney welcomed everyone to the meeting. The minutes of the meeting held on 15th February 2019 were approved on the proposal of Mr. Dan Dowling and seconded by Cllr. Peter Feeney.

Cllr. Peter Feeney then stated there was huge disappointment in relation to Páirc na Mara and the decision by An Bord Pleanála to overturn the planning permission granted by Galway County Council. Mr. Kieran Coyne stated that we could appeal the decision, however Cllr. Peter Feeney stated that there was no point. Cllr. Peter Feeney wanted to note his disappointment that it did not go ahead as it would have given a huge lift to one of the weakest economic areas in the County and it would have been a huge plus. Cllr. Jimmy McClearn stated that he agreed with Cllr. Peter Feeney and said that the area could have done with it.

2. Rural Regeneration & Development Fund (RRDF)

3. Departmental schemes 2019 (Town & Village, Outdoor Recreation Infrastructural Scheme, CLÁR)

Mr. Kieran Coyne stated that he would run through items 2 & 3 together. He had a progress report printout on all funding schemes up to April 2019 and one was submitted to each member (attached).

He started by stating that the Community Support Schemes were the Elected Members own scheme, from our own budget which was passed in March, and while they were small interventions they were very valuable to all in receipt.

Moving on to the Clár scheme Mr. Coyne advised that it was now closed for 2019, the submissions closed the day previous, the 25th of April. There would be an announcement in June regarding same he stated. Clár was broken down into 3 measures, Measure 1 was a job for the Roads Department, Measure 2 was for Corporate and Measure 3 was for ourselves in Economic Rural and Community Development. It was to be led through Mary McGann and the Community arm of the Section. Measure 3 referred to the Sensory Garden and he stated that the 3 Sensory Gardens for Galway were to be Laurencetown, Connemara and Creggs. Cllr. Jimmy McClean stated that the Sensory Gardens were a fantastic example of what the Community could do. Cllr. Peter Feeney queried whether the maintenance of the Sensory

Gardens would be done locally. Mr. Kieran Coyne replied yes it would be done locally and the County Council would be reluctant to get involved.

The Community Enhancement Programme was again an agenda for the Community side of the house. To bring the Members up to date Mr. Coyne stated that last year we received funding in 2 allocations and that there were 2 thresholds available – up to €30,000 and up to €15,000.

The National Community Weekend as stated by Mr. Kieran Coyne was a very good concept, however it was very admin heavy for limited money. Mr. Coyne also advised that should the members want to view a list of all that were granted funding, that could be made available to them.

In relation to the Town and Village Renewal Scheme we are now looking at expressions of interest, which would close on the 23rd of May and be submitted to the Department in June. Mr. Coyne advised that we could submit 12 applications and that we would be submitting 12. He stated that it would be interesting to see what we can get and we are trying to spread the distribution as widely as possible without diluting the impact.

Mr. Kieran Coyne stated that in relation to the 1st call on the RRDF we did reasonably well. It has been put to the Management Team what resources we would need, as we would need technical staff as well as admin. Rural Regeneration he stated, that while very welcome was a huge challenge. The second call for Applications is fast approaching, and we need to decide what areas are we looking at, and what resources we would need. Town and Villages and the Clár programme were going to focus on smaller locations. No decision has been made yet on what or who will be considered. Mr. Coyne advises that Athenry won't be considered as it was successful in the first round, Kinvara is not part of the initial thinking and the Dunmore plan was submitted by the area office. There is pressure there to include Gort Mr. Coyne advises. He stated that leaves Ballinasloe, Clifden and Loughrea to be repackaged, however he re-emphasised that no decision has been made yet. Cllr. Jimmy McClearn stated we can learn lessons on why we were not successful the last time in relation to Loughrea Town Hall. Mr. Kieran Coyne agreed with Cllr. Jimmy McClearn and argued that a bigger application reimagining the Council is needed. He stated that Tuam Town Hall, Loughrea Town Hall, Headford could be packaged as one and not just running with Loughrea Town Hall. Dan Dowling stated that he thought Ballinasloe could run a strong application. Mr. Kieran Coyne stated that the reality was that only a certain amount can be given. Cllr. Peter Feeney stated that it was a 10-year plan and we are not going to run out of money, there is an allocation every year he states and Ballinasloe need to play a long game. He emphasised that Athenry were extremely disappointed when they didn't get through on the first round, however he states that it was the best thing that even happened as they went back and re-examined their proposal and their costings and they ended up getting €3.5m, in where they had only asked originally for €1.5m.

He stated that you must be ambitious and you can be successful. Cllr. Jimmy McClean agreed with Cllr. Feeney and stated that Community Groups who didn't get their application right the first time were on the ball the second-time round. Cllr. Mary Hoade concurred with Cllr. Feeney and Cllr. McClearn. Mr. Kieran Coyne re-stated that the closing date for the second call was on 6th August and stated that a specific regeneration team was not going to be in place for this call realistically, the work is going to have to be outsourced this time as the capacity is not inside. Cllr. Jimmy McClearn stated that Loughrea was not in harmony with the Council, an issue which he states needs to be overcome. He states that unless we are united it will be very difficult to secure funding. He also stated that we need to come to a common agreement and learn from the stumbling blocks. Cllr. Peter Feeney stated that there is substantial funding available and that it was time to allow the Community to decide. Cllr. Peter Feeney also queried about funding availabilities for Public Realm eg. Paving etc... to make towns nicer places to live and/or visit. Cllr. Mary Hoade stated that there was little or no money pumped into this over the years. Mr. Paul Mannion stated that many years ago you could spend any amount of money on Public Realm, the square in Tuam got done he said 20 years ago.

Moving on to the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme Mr. Kieran Coyne stated that these were trails in the Countryside by and large. In relation to the Connemara Greenway there is another leg to be done he states, for Measure 2 there's a couple that need more work and for Measure 3 he states that it was overseen by LEADER last year.

Next on the list was Healthy Ireland which Mr. Coyne stated was not part of the Economic side of the house, it is dealt with by the Social Inclusion unit.

In relation to the Fisheries Local Action Group Mr. Coyne states that there is one application per year and that the 2019 funding has been allocated. In relation to the Local Improvement Schemes they were a matter for the Roads Department Mr. Coyne advised.

Mr. Coyne advised the members that is where we are at with all the schemes for now. Cllr. Jimmy McClearn stated that the document provided was very useful. Cllr. May Hoade agreed with Cllr. Jimmy McClearn and stated that it was great to see all the schemes in one document and she said it was very useful.

4. Bia Innovator Food Hub

Mr. Kieran Coyne stated that the food hub was an economic driver and a key enterprise in which the County Council and Teagasc are two key partners. He states that the Service Level Agreement between County Council and Bia Innovator is currently being finalised, there is a separate Service Level Agreement between Teagasc and Bia Innovator. The project manager position has been filled and they will be starting very soon. For the moment, we are providing

back-up and support he advises. In relation to the location Mr. Coyne stated that it was in a very good location strategically, beside the motorway and it would enhance employment. Cllr. Peter Feeney stated that he was the Chairman of the Board, and a huge amount of work has been done, there was a meeting with Tobins last week and they were going to Tender on the 14th of May. He anticipates that work would start in July and that it would be completed by next July. Mr. Feeney also stated that the GRET B was a strong partner and will be using the facilities for training as they are anxious to put on new courses. He stated that they would be a main tenant and they would be providing a good income stream. Mr Dan Dowling queried what kind of work they do? Cllr. Feeney stated that they are a food hub, a kitchen can be rented for a day, where you can develop a product and provide help. If you are successful you can then move into another building. Start-ups he states stay for 3-4 years. It is a good news story he states and great for Athenry.

5. AOB

Mr. Dan Dowling stated that he had read an article in the Connacht Tribune in relation to the Data Centre being pulled from Athenry and he says it baffles belief that approval was not given. Cllr. Peter Feeney stated that it was a very slow process and that was the problem.

Mr. Kieran Coyne wished to thank all the members for their co-operation as this was to be the last SPC of the current sitting Council. He wished best of luck to those seeking re-election and to those who would be leaving. Cllr. Jimmy McClearn stated he wished to acknowledge his colleague Cllr. Peter Feeney, he was shocked to hear he would not be going for election again and he stated that the work he did in relation to the Food Hub was huge. He wished Cllr. Feeney luck with his future endeavours. Cllr. Mary Hoade concurred with Cllr. McClearn, it was a privilege to work with Cllr. Feeney, she said and he was the epitome of a true public representative, she stated that it was our loss that he was not seeking re-election and she wished him well. Mr. Dan Dowling, on behalf of the PPN also wished Cllr. Feeney well and Cllr. Sean O Tuairisg and wished those seeking re-election the best of luck. Mr. Paul Mannion also wanted to wish everyone well and stated that the Elected Members do wonderful work and while there may be party differences the meetings were always about getting the job done. Cllr. Mary Hoade also wished to acknowledge the work of Mr. Kieran Coyne and stated that he was never found wanting. Cllr. Peter Feeney concurred with Cllr. Hoade and as Chairman he wanted to acknowledge the Staff of the Economic Rural and Community Development Unit.

The meeting then concluded.