

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Minutes of the Planning, Economic Development & Community Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held in Room GO1 on Tuesday 9th October 2018

I LATHAIR:

Baill: Cllr. James Charity, Chairperson
Cllr. Dermot Connolly
Cllr. Shaun Cunniffe
Cllr. Donal Burke
Cllr. Thomas Welby
Mr. Gus McCarthy

Oifigigh: Ms. Eileen Ruane, Director of Services
Ms. Valerie Loughnane, Senior Planner, Planning
Ms. Denise Feeney, Public Participation Network (PPN)
Ms. Sinéad Burns, Assistant Staff Officer, Planning

Apologies: Cllr. Aidan Donohue
Cllr. Frank Kearney

Cllr. Charity welcomed all to the meeting. A vote of sympathy to Cllr. Donohue and family on the passing of Cllr. Donohue's brother was proposed by Cllr. Charity and seconded by Cllr. D. Connolly. As a mark of respect the meeting was adjourned for 5 minutes. All members present joined in their sympathies to Cllr. Donohue.

Item No. 1 - Minutes of the meeting of the Planning & Community SPC held on 20th July, 2018

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 20th July, 2018 were proposed by Cllr. D. Connolly and seconded by Cllr. Cunniffe and agreed.

Item No. 2 – Tuam Local Area Plan Update

V. Loughnane confirmed that The Tuam Local Area Plan 2018-2024 was on public display for 6 weeks. The Chief Executive's report was circulated to the Elected Members and the members agreed to material alterations to the Local Area Plan. The alterations were on public display for a further period. Six submissions/observations were received in relation to the proposed Material Alterations and the full contents of each submission were considered in the preparation of the Chief Executive's Report. This report is to be included at the next Council meeting. An invitation will also be sent to the Tuam Elected Members should they wish to discuss the Chief Executive's report prior to the October meeting.

Cllr. Cunniffe asked about 2 issues – lands rezoned to residential and lands marked on flood plains. V. Loughnane said that some lands have been rezoned to residential, the OPW have made comment on flood issues and amendments have been made to the Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA). Recommendations have also been made by the Planning Authority.

Cllr. Welby asked if the flood plains have been identified by the OPW on their maps. V. Loughnane clarified that these areas are identified on the OPW's maps.

Item No. 3 – Urban and Rural Regeneration Funding Schemes Update

V. Loughnane outlined that one application under the Urban Regeneration Category has been submitted and two by the CEED Section in the Rural category (Tuam and Ballinasloe). Acknowledgements of the applications has been received.

Cllr. Charity asked what level of funding has been applied for.

V. Loughnane advised that three areas in the Eastern Environs of Galway City (in the County area) have been identified. Category B funding is for Feasibility and Master Planning with the hope that these projects will be moved to Category A for funding.

G. McCarthy asked if Category B was for an infrastructure project.

V. Loughnane replied that the guidelines were specific in their criteria and that 10 strategic outcomes of the National Planning Framework (NPF) was the basis that the bids for funding were to be assessed.

Should funding be secured, there will be engagements with various stakeholders – Irish Water, IDA Ireland, Irish Rail and Galway City Council etc.

Cllr. D.Connolly asked if there are any projects to help anti social areas.

V. Loughnane said that elements associated with placemaking have been identified in Tuam and Ballinasloe areas.

E. Ruane added that the theme of Ballinasloe is healthy living and well being.

Cllr. Charity asked if there are specific uses for these areas.

V. Loughnane said that there are principles to be followed and engagement with stakeholders will take place. Uses of the sites were not specified and no particular plans have been made pending what money can be secured.

Members will be kept informed of developments.

V. Loughnane also confirmed that Galway City Council have supported our applications.

Item No. 4 – Update on the Working Group for the Waste Water Treatment Plants

V. Loughnane shared that a meeting was held with the Working Group. A report is being compiled by the Environment Section and will be circulated which will set out recommendations. The report then has to be approved by the Director and Chief Executive and thereafter brought before the SPC members and Full Council. A Policy document with recommendations will be put in place if approved.

A number of issues have been identified. There may be issues under the powers of the Multi Unit Developments (MUDs) Act 2011. Questions such as what should happen if developers go into liquidation, do the Developers set up Management Companies, can we hold Management Companies responsible for compliance. Provision of bonds is being investigated in terms of costing and apportionment of the cost of dealing with non functioning systems.

G. McCarthy said that the bones of the proposal is workable and that Galway County Council needs to be safeguarded. Issues could arise with the developer. A lot of rural towns do not have Waste Water Treatment Plants and Irish Water are not in a position to provide WWTPs. There is new legislation in place to deal with this. A proposal is that Management Companies requires a sinking fund and the developer puts money into this fund. A possibility is that a company would supply,

fit and manage the Waste Water Treatment Systems and deal with any difficulties that may arise. The agreement would be similar to leasing arrangements.

E. Ruane asked would the company be contracted through the developer.

G. McCarthy answered that the proposal would be that the developer would put the initial money into the fund and get reputable management companies to come on board.

Cllr. Charity asked what if a management company were to go into liquidation.

G. McCarthy answered that payment would be made on an annual basis and that the company would have no access to the sinking fund otherwise.

V. Loughnane added that the Environment Section does have a lot of concerns and that further discussions will continue. Another meeting of the Working Group has been scheduled for the 22nd of October.

E. Ruane said that a timeframe should be set to finish the report.

Cllr. Welby commented that 3 staff from the Environment Section have been working on this project. They have confirmed that there are 130 estates with 120 estates with 8 or more houses in the county with private Waste Water Treatment Plants. There are serious concerns in relation to legacy issues and that the householder needs to be protected and also that Galway County Council needs to be protected. An email should be circulated to the Elected Members informing them of developments. He also added that Irish Water will not give WWTPs to small villages.

E. Ruane said that the legacy issues were one issue to be dealt with and separately the work underway now is to determine if there is a robust way forward.

Cllr. D. Connolly added that Irish Water are not putting in infrastructure to save smaller communities and that rural villages need to thrive.

Cllr. S. Cunniffe asked would this apply to new estates.

V. Loughnane clarified that this is only an issue for towns that don't have public system.

G. McCarthy said that a long term arrangement would have to be put in place and continue over time without problems. The value of the sinking fund would depend on the type of plant built.

Cllr. Charity asked would the bond from the developer from the outset be paid to the sinking fund. He also asked what would the cost per house be.

G. McCarthy answered that there should be a contribution of 50% of the cost of the plant. It costs an average of €4,000 - €5,000 per house. The recommended amount would be €200 per house per annum for the sinking fund.

Cllr. Welby said that this would need to be communicated clearly to whoever is buying a house.

E. Ruane asked how clear would this be from a conveyancing angle.

Cllr. Charity questioned if the legislation would be robust enough.

G. McCarthy added that if the task is too onerous, developments will not go ahead and that the alternative to having schemes of houses with individual Treatment Plants is not sustainable. One shared plant may work better.

V. Loughnane stated that even with a policy document, any application would more than likely be refused by An Bord Pleanála as the policy would be going against National Policy. Irish Water don't have a funding scheme. Under the National Planning Framework – Irish Water were promised funding for rural developments.

Cllr. S. Cunniffe said that Government should be funding Irish Water.

Cllr. Charity thanked Cllr. Welby, Valerie Loughnane, Gus McCarthy and other members of the Working Group who have been working on this project.

Item No. 5 – PPN Presentation

This presentation was given by Denise Feeney, Resource Worker from the PPN showing the content of the website and a flyer was circulated. There is a Public Participation Network in each Local Authority. It is an independent umbrella organization and network that provides a voice for all community & voluntary, environmental and social inclusion groups throughout the county.

The PPN also facilitates groups to nominate representatives to local authority policy making boards and committees including the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), the Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs). The Sports Partnership, Joint Policing Committee etc. When a group registers it becomes part of the County PPN Structure. There is no charge. Registered groups receive regular updates, information on funding opportunities and also benefit from advertising their own community activities free of charge. It helps new groups and also provides training and workshops. The workshops are geared towards Voluntary Groups and also assist on governance, leadership and use of Social Media. There are approximately 800 groups registered with the PPN. Information

is available from major stakeholders. Concerns can be submitted online through the website www.galwaycountypn.ie. The main decision making body of the PPN is the Plenary (i.e. all the independent member groups) which should meet at least twice every year to review the workings of the PPN and set the agenda for the coming period. There is an AGM and a constitution. The biggest challenge is that lots of representatives from the PPN work during the day and have difficulty to attend day meetings.

Cllr. Charity thanked D. Feeney for the presentation and detailed information and also acknowledged the fantastic work that the PPN do.

Cllr. Cunniffe complemented the website and the work of the PPN.

Cllr. Connolly added that the PPN is very transparent and it is important to encourage groups to register with the PPN. There is good advice available and structures for groups to set up.

D. Feeney also pointed that the training and seminars are free which is very beneficial to groups.

Cllr. Charity said that many community groups have good ideas and may have adequate funding in place but that insurance is the problem. He asked if there is some role for the PPN to negotiate in terms of insurance.

D. Feeney said that there was in the past but it was not successful and that an insurance regulator would be vital.

E. Ruane said that the submission of issues online was a good idea and if possible to indicate where repeated issues are so they could be dealt with.

Item No. 6 – AOB

Cllr. Cunniffe asked from a Planning point of view if there is a maximum road width allowed for developments. There is an issue in Tuam outside the mart where the road is very wide and difficult to cross.

V. Loughnane said that certain standards are to be met depending on the level of HGVs but that proper crossing points are put in place and this is the safer option to use.

Cllr. D. Connolly said that there is an issue with derelict sites in urban settings. Monaghan have had success in the listing of derelict sites for housing.

E. Ruane said that it was a torturous process establishing ownership and that funds have to be made available.

V. Loughnane added that it is not possible to purchase as there are financial constraints. The only mechanism would be for the Government to put Schemes in place. A letter can be submitted to the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and put forward a proposal.

In advance of submitting a proposal E. Ruane will consult with the Director of Housing, V. Loughnane will speak with the Technical side of Housing.

Cllr. Charity stated that the Powers of the Municipal District should be an item on the agenda at the next SPC meeting. None of the decisions on the Local Area Plans or County Development Plans can be made at the MD meetings and must be made at the full Council meeting.

Cllr. Cunniffe said that the Municipal Districts have no budget and no powers.

Cllr. D. Connolly said that the redrawing of boundaries made no sense.

It was agreed that the next meeting date would be December 3rd at 10am.