

Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)

Via Microsoft Teams

Dé Céadaoin 22 Mean Fomhair 2021

Wednesday 22nd September 2.30 pm

Member in attendance:

Cllr. Thomas Welby (Chair)	Galway County Council
Cllr. Declan Geraghty	Galway County Council
Cllr. Mary Hoade	Galway County Council
Dave Hickey	Business Representative
Dan Dowling	Community Representative
Paul Carey	Construction/Business Representative

Present:

Liam Hanrahan	Galway County Council
Alan Farrell	Galway County Council
Kieran Coyne	Galway County Council
Ruth Mulhern	Galway County Council
Kieran Wynne	Galway County Council
Hazel Fox	Galway County Council
Loretta Raftery	Galway County Council

Apologies:

Cllr. Karey McHugh	Galway County Council
Cllr. Gerry Finnerty	Galway County Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC held on 22nd September 2021.

Cllr. Thomas Welby welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 30th June 2021 were approved on the proposal of Cllr. Mary Hoade and seconded by Dave Hickey.

Matters Arising:

Mr. Dave Hickey queried in relation to Breda Fox's update at the last SPC meeting, she had mentioned a difficulty in recruiting staff, is this a funding issue or can Galway County Council help? Mr. Liam Hanrahan replied that there are ongoing discussions taking place for additional resources, the LEO has additional funding secured for grants and recruitment will be done by our Human Resources Department.

Tourism – Tourism Strategy update – by Ruth Mulhern, Tourism Officer

Cllr. Thomas Welby introduced the first of the meetings speakers, Ruth Mulhern, Tourism Officer, Galway County Council who gave a presentation on the Tourism Strategy. Ruth ended her presentation by stating that the Tourism strategy would take 10 months to deliver while working with the SPC to deliver. The Strategy will be a Tourism and Marketing Strategy that will incorporate sustainability, economic and community development, product development, branding and marketing objectives, deal with environmental assessments and have an easy executive summary at the end.

It was agreed that the presentation would be emailed to all members of the SPC after the meeting.

Cllr. Welby thanked Ms. Mulhern for her presentation and invited questions/observations from the floor.

Cllr. Declan Geraghty stated that the Connemara area was highlighted more than the east side of Galway. Ruth Mulhern responded that the presentation has featured lots of pictures of Mountbellew and Ballinasloe, photography is a key part of the Tourism Strategy and developing the image bank. We are getting huge hits on Social Media and that is due to our delivery and images and of late all our images are East Galway based. We have secured funding through the Hidden Heartlands Team for a training programme for East Galway stakeholders to work together for them to buy into our Tourism Strategy.

Cllr. Mary Hoade queried that Ruth had mentioned that Galway County Council is teaming up with the City, is this for greater financial power? Cllr. Hoade would be concerned that the areas close to the City would have huge gain but to make sure that all the County benefits. Ruth agreed with Cllr. Hoade's point and stated that a very measured approach will be taken.

Mr. Liam Hanrahan stated that the tourism strategy will have a lot of consultation to come and there will be a lot of opportunities for all areas to pitch. The timeline for the strategy is imminent, it is a tight timeframe but will come back to the SPC's at all stages. The people who tender will be not only marked on pricing but also for quality and based on previous plans. The reason the tourism strategy has not been done to date is because over the covid period Ruth was involved in the grants and the outdoor tourist sector for businesses to get them over the covid period. This strategy is a long-term strategy and put in place for after covid.

Cllr. Declan Geraghty brought up the issue of insurance and referred to an incident in Wicklow as they failed to get insurance for a play area is this an issue going forward? Ruth responded that it is an issue that is well noted and is having an impact on all adventure tourism. Mr. Liam Hanrahan stated that if a motion was requested it can certainly be looked at and how to word for the next council meeting. Kieran Coyne stated that if there is to be a motion it should be routed through the insurance Allianz of Ireland as there is a lot of work going on nationally. Mr. Liam Hanrahan agreed with Kieran and stated that he would work with Kieran on getting the motion written. It was agreed that a motion would be put forward on this issue.

Regeneration update – Ciarán Wynne Senior Executive Engineer

Cllr. Welby introduced Ciarán Wynne, Senior Executive Engineer to the committee and he gave an update and the current position of Athenry, Tuam, Loughrea, Kinvara, Portumna, Clifden, Dunmore, Gort and Ballinalsoe for Regeneration.

Cllr. Welby thanked the speaker Ciarán for his update and invited questions from the floor.

Mr. Liam Hanrahan stated that the larger projects are now at the stage that design and details are now Capital projects and securing funding is next, in relation to the Ballinasloe design painting project the level of funding in some instances have been very large but level of spend in a tight timeframe has been difficult, the street scape programme that we are working on with Emer Dolan, timeframe is not possible. Tight timeframe for spending is a difficulty we must watch going forward.

Cllr. Declan Geraghty asked Ciarán have all the properties in Dunmore been acquired? secondly could letters be sent to the people of Ballinasloe again to take up on this scheme?

Mr. Ciaran Wynne responded stating that a letter can be sent to the people of Ballinasloe and it will be considered, regarding properties in Dunmore they are still advancing the detail and design and he can come back to the committee on this. It was agreed that Mr. Ciarán Wynne would email the committee an update on Dunmore properties.

Cllr. Welby asked if the derelict buildings that Mr. Wynne referred to were retail or residential? Mr. Wynne confirmed that there is a mixture of both, it gives an opportunity to go forth with renovating of some kind.

Town & Village Streetscape 2021 Overview – Mr. Liam Hanrahan, Director

Cllr. Welby introduced the next item on the agenda, overview on Town & Village Streetscape 2021. Mr. Liam Harahan gave figures stating that out of 320,000 over 550,000 has been applied for, Loughrea have 88 applications, Headword 67, Gleannamaddy 33, Ballygar 26, Oughterard 25 and Oranmore 16, all applications are being processed to see which are eligible. Over 250 applications received, we are looking at which applications will have the best impact on main streets.

Cllr. Mary Hoade asked when will people know whether to proceed ahead. Liam Hanrahan stated the people will be informed quickly of their eligibility and the amount approved.

Cllr. Welby stated that he felt the Streetscape scheme will end up with jobs not complete, team are doing their best in Galway County Council, but timeline is unrealistic, the scheme way to late by the Department.

Any other Business

Ruth Mulhern stated that the deadline for the outdoor dining scheme is the 30th September 2021, staff at Galway County Council are all working very hard to get all these schemes over the line.

Cllr. Declan Geraghty queried if there were any schemes coming on board for the smaller towns and villages? Liam Hanrahan responded that under the Town and Village Schemes the smaller towns are eligible, 'housing for all' is looking at town centre renewal, and first-time buyers buying a property in a small town can get a grant to do it up. All these schemes will be rolled out with smaller towns being the focus.

It was agreed that dates would be discussed with Cllr. Karey McHugh as to when the next SPC meeting would be scheduled.

As there was no other business to be discussed Cllr. Thomas Welby thanked all for attending the meeting and the officials that presented.

The meeting then concluded.