

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Minutes of the Planning, Environment, Agriculture & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee meeting held in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 19th May 2020

I LATHAIR:

Baill: Cllr. Albert Dolan, Chairperson

Cllr P.J Murphy

Cllr. Donagh Killilea

Comh. Daithí O’Cualáin

Cllr. Dermot Connolly

Cllr. Shane Curley

Mr. Mark Green

Aodán MacDonncha, Uasal

Ms Anne Mitchell

Mr Colm Ryan

Oifigigh: Ms. Eileen Ruane, Director of Services

Ms. Valerie Loughnane, Senior Planner, Planning

Mr. Gerard O’Malley, Chief Fire Officer

Ms. Rita Gately, Veterinary Inspector

Mr. Mike Melody, Senior Executive Engineer, Environment

Ms. Ann Dolan, Executive Scientist, Environment (via MS Teams)

Ms. Eileen Keaveney, Administrative Officer, Planning

Apologies were noted from Cllr. Michael Maher

Item No. 1 – Introduction by the Chairman

Cllr. Dolan welcomed everybody to the first meeting of the new committee. He spoke about the policy making role of the Committee and said he was fully committed to working towards formulating policy through this committee.

Item No. 2 – Introduction by the Director of Services

Ms. Ruane welcomed the members to the first meeting of the SPC. She then outlined all the procedures in place for protection from the Covid 19 virus. She stated that the building is closed but that the majority of staff are working as normal. There are no site visits allowed but that they would recommence shortly. (after 23rd May 2020) She acknowledged the staff working in the community role assisting vulnerable people who are isolated etc through the Community response helpline

She then introduced the staff and they outlined their role and what policies they expect to bring before the SPC in the coming year.

Valerie Loughnane outlined the changes to procedures in the Planning due to the Covid 19 emergency. She told the meeting that the Council website would be updated with details of when appointments can be made to attend at the Planning office. She outlined the structure of the Planning Department, i.e. Forward Planning, Development Management and Enforcement sections. She also informed of the situation with the pause in Planning timeframes since 29th March. Ms. Loughnane then outlined the first major piece of policy which would come before the committee, i.e. the making of the new County Development Plan 2022-2028.

Ann Dolan (via MS Teams) outlined the work of the Environment section in relation to Water and Waste and Enforcement . She particularly mentioned CCTV usage and the development of a Council policy for the use of CCTV in combating illegal dumping. Ms. Dolan also discussed the River Basin management plan and the implementation of same. The current plan expires in 2021 so a new plan will have to be developed for 2022 – 2027.

Mike Melody outlined his responsibilities in Environment which include Waste Infrastructure Management & Development ie Civic Amenity Sites, Landfills including historic ; 3rd Party Waste Management Services ie Glassco Rehab ; Burial Ground Development and Community & LA Energy Projects.

He informed the meeting that the Environment section are examining 19 historic landfill sites in line with the EPA code of practice and would be seeking funding for remediation as required. He also mentioned progress in managing energy related grant schemes.

Rita Gately outlined the role of the Veterinary Department under 4 headings –

1.Primary Role: Veterinary Public Health

Abattoirs (Cattle, Sheep, Pigs, Wild Game, Poultry)
Meat Processing Plants
Animal Disease Control & Sampling Programs
Members of the Western Zoonosis Committee

2.Dog Control and Dog Breeding Establishments

3.Animal Care/ animal welfare (within the remit of GCC. Control of Horses – Advisory input, administered by Housing Directorate).

4.Advisory Role to GCC on Veterinary & Public Health Matters

Ms Gately informed the meeting that the primary work of the veterinary services was the work undertaken under a Service Level Agreement with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. The work involves inspecting and auditing meeting processing plants to ensure adherence to protocols with respect to food safety. This work is undertaken by the vets for both the administrative areas of Galway County Council and Galway City Council through a Shared Service Agreement. In addition to the Food Safety element of the work the veterinary services provides essential support and guidance for small/medium sized business in this area which is invaluable in terms of continuity of work and associated employment.

Gerard O'Malley informed the meeting that he was appointed 3 months ago to the post of Galway Chief Fire Officer. He gave a detailed outline of the structure and role of the Fire Service. He explained that the service included the processing Fire Safety certificates, Disability Access Certificates as well as the fire fighting role. The Civil Defence Officer also comes under the Fire Service.

He told the meeting that there are 10 Fire stations and that a priority at present is to seek a site for a new station in the City to replace the old station at Fr. Griffin Road.

He also discussed the role the service plays in raising awareness about fire prevention with the public and this has led to a large reduction in calls to the Fire brigade in the past

10 years. He also covered other areas such as the Major Emergency Plan and the role in the licensing laws.

Section 26 Fire and Emergency Plan will be the first piece of work to go before this committee for review

Item No. 3 Round table introduction

The members introduced themselves and outlined the issues they hoped to see discussed during the term of the committee. These issues included tackling illegal dumping, locations for burial grounds, litter control, Municipal Waste water Treatment Plants in town and villages and additional supports for the farming community.

Item No. 4 Work programme for the year

Ms Ruane suggested the following work programme for the year which was agreed by the members of the SPC:

- County Development Plan process
- Galway City Ring Road update
- Policy for use of CCTV
- River Basin Management Plan
- Section 26 Fire and Emergency Plan

Item No.5 – Schedule of meetings

It was agreed to wait until the next meeting to decide on a schedule of meetings in view of the covid 19 restrictions. A discussion took place as to whether meeting could be held virtually on Teams but the chairperson said he wanted the next meeting to be held in the Council Chamber.

The Next meeting was fixed for the 7th July 2020 at 2pm.

CRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN