

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Minutes of the Planning, Economic Development & Community Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held in Room GO1 on Tuesday 4th December 2018

I LATHAIR:

Baill: Cllr. James Charity, Chairperson
Cllr. Dermot Connolly
Cllr. Aidan Donohue
Cllr. Frank Kearney
Cllr. Shaun Cunniffe
Cllr. Donal Burke
Cllr. Thomas Welby
Mr. Diarmaid Kelly

Oifigigh: Ms. Eileen Ruane, Director of Services
Ms. Valerie Loughnane, Senior Planner, Planning
Ms. Sinéad Burns, Assistant Staff Officer, Planning

Cllr. Charity welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies were noted from Gus McCarthy who could not attend.

Apologies were received later from Frances O'Reilly

The new Environment Representative Mr. Diarmaid Kelly was welcomed as a new member of the S.P.C.

Item No. 1 - Minutes of the meeting of the Planning & Community SPC held on 9th October, 2018

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 9th October, 2018 were proposed by Cllr. Donal Burke and seconded by Cllr. Tom Welby and agreed.

Matters arising

Cllr. D.Connolly referred to the derelict sites problem that was discussed at the previous meeting and asked that a big focus be put on trying to deal with this issue as it is impacting on communities as a whole especially in rural areas.

As the role of derelict sites falls within the remit of E.Ruanes Directorate, members are invited to discuss any particular issues/sites with her.

E.Ruane added that it is a very complex area and significant resources are required. The objective of the Derelict Sites Legislation is to remove dereliction and facilitate working with property owners.

Cllr. Welby said that Monaghan and Louth have done significant works in dealing with derelict sites.

Cllr. Kearney pointed out that there are many derelict sites outside town centres that are privately owned and are an eyesore plus in many cases are a danger and asked what can be done with these.

E.Ruane said that these sites can be put on a derelict sites register once investigated, and a levy applied of 3% of the market value.

Cllr. Welby asked about legislation for change of use from commercial premises to residential.

V.Loughnane explained that legislation came into effect in February 2018 and will be in place until 2021. It stipulates that a change of use to residential from commercial can only occur under this exemption if it previously has not had a commercial use in the previous 2 years.

Cllr. Welby asked if these regulations could be circulated.

V.Loughane said that these regulations can be circulated to members via email.

Cllr. Donohue asked for clarity on legislation that Minister Ring mentioned with regard to Local Authorities who could CPO buildings, complete works on it, the building is valued in its original condition and revalued after the works are completed and the new value and the owner pays the difference

Item No. 2 – Update on the Working Group for Waste Water Treatment Plants.

V.Loughnane explained that information was compiled by the Environment Section on existing WWTPs. G.McCarthy did work on the sinking fund with a proposal that a mandatory annual fee of €200 per house in estates be charged. The possibility

of a bond was also investigated with a suggested price of 50% of the cost of the treatment system per house be charged. The estimated price of a treatment system is €40,000 - €45,000. Therefore, a once off fee of €2,000 - €2,500 per house be applied.

V.Loughnane said that recommendations with conditions will be put together once members have brought feedback, brought to the Director of Services, the Chief Executive and thereafter to the SPC group. Cllr. Welby added that an email had been prepared by himself, Cllr. Burke and V. Loughnane and circulated to members asking for input/feedback on this issue but to date no replies/feedback have been received. Cllr. Welby asked that the members discuss with their party members and ask for feedback.

V.Loughnane stated that there was national policy that Irish Water would not be taking existing WWTPs in charge.

D.Kelly said that the maintenance of WWTS's are very important and that that water quality is the key. He said he would encourage all to work in moving this issue forward. He also asked if an audit had been carried out.

V.Loughane clarified that there has been an audit done, the Environment Section know the number of existing systems in the county and have identified the plants that are in difficulty and not working properly.

D.Kelly added that the householder, the owner and the Environment need to be protected.

Cllr. Donohue said it was difficult to see any new WWTP's being built and asked the question how long it might be before the existing systems will be worked on.

V.Loughnane said that Irish Water may have to fund smaller schemes.

D.Kelly asked what was the situation with the East Galway Main Drainage Scheme which was talked about over 20 years ago.

V.Loughnane said that a feasibility study was done on East Galway Main Drainage by the Water Services Section of Galway County Council. This has been passed on to Irish Water. The Environment, Water and Planning Sections have pushed to get it included in a national document. It is included in the National Planning Framework but funding is the big issue. The Council will continue to work towards delivery on this project.

Item No. 3 – Flemish Decree

V.Loughnane said that the European Commission has been in contact with the Department. The European Commission needs clarity on some issues – there should be some further development by the end of January.

There is an amendment to a section of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines – Section 3.2.3 relating to this decree. The Commission have to be satisfied first so there will be some discussions back and forth before the amendments come into effect.

Cllr. Welby asked if enurement clauses as they currently stand be affected by any change.

V.Loughnane said that as it is ongoing, she is not 100% sure but that the Commission did not seem overly concerned and that she thought the occupancy clause would still be applied.

Item No. 4 – A.O.B.

Cllr. D.Connolly stated that due to the upturn in building, it is difficult in getting suitably qualified tradesmen for house builds etc. for example blocklayers, engineers, roofers, plumbers. Training and upskilling courses should be available. Is it possible to flag to the Department that this is a major problem.

Cllr. Kearney added that a lot of tradesmen are not now registered in the industry.

Cllr. Donohue said that it is impossible to get people across every business – not just tradesmen in the building industry.

Cllr. Charity added that a lot have emigrated and there is no incentive to return as opportunities are better abroad.

Cllr. Cunniffe said that tradesmen need to be protected as they are not getting paid for work completed.

Cllr. D.Connolly proposed that we contact the Department on behalf of the Planning & Community SPC to highlight the deficit of trades availability and the impact on the construction industry. Cllr. T.Welby seconded.

Cllr. Cunniffe raised the subject of the Tuam Local Area Plan. A draft direction was issued in relation to Four Material Alterations on this plan. Cllr. Cunniffe asked if it would be better to discuss a draft plan with Councillors first before a draft is put on public display.

V.Loughnane clarified that the first stage is a pre-draft consultation with the relevant Municipal Districts, a draft plan is then prepared and put on public display. Thereafter, submissions can be made on the draft plan. The submissions are then brought before the Full Council and if there are alterations to the plan, it is again put on public display. A draft direction issued from the Department and submissions were asked for on this direction. A report will be formulated and circulated to the members in due course.

Meeting Schedule for the next two SPC meetings

Tuesday – February 19th at 10am

Tuesday – April 9th at 10am