

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

**Minutes of the Planning, & Community Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held in G01 on
Monday 12th June 2017.**

I LATHAIR

Baill: Cllr. Jim Cuddy (Chair)
Cllr. Aidan Donohue.
Cllr. Tom Welby
Cllr. Frank Kearney.
Cllr. Dermot Connolly
Mr. Gus Mc Carthy

Oifigigh:

Catherine Mc Connell A/ Director of Services.
Valerie Loughnane, Senior Planner.
Mairead O Malley, ASO, Planning & Sustainable Development Unit.
S. Kennedy, Senior Executive Planner,
Kieran Coyne, Rapid Co-ordinator
Alan Farrell, Senior Executive Officer.
Brendan Dunne, Assistant Planner.
James Russell, Executive Planner.

Apologies:

Cllr. D. Burke.

Minutes of Meeting held on 4th April 2017.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 4th April 2017 were proposed for adoption by Cllr .Frank Kearney and seconded by Cllr T. Welby. A slight amendment was made to the minutes.

Town & Village Renewal 2017.

Kieran Coyne gave an update to the Meeting and stated that the CEED unit were currently working on the Town & Village Renewal schemes for this year. Last year a fixed amount was allocated and eight projects were successful. This year there is no set amount but a longer time frame was given. Towns with a population of greater than or less than 5,000 will be considered in two different categories.

50 possible proposals were received and this has been narrowed down to 22 and will be further broken down to 15 projects. Each project can apply for the funding and be allocated €100,000 and €200,000 would be allocated to projects with a strong economic benefit. It can range from promotion to infrastructure and greater flexibility for smaller villages. Some of the projects will be led by the area offices and some will be community led. Nationally 60% of the funding will be allocated to towns with a population on less than 5,000 and there are only 3 towns with a population of greater than 5,000 in County Galway.

It is hoped that all projects submitted will be successful.

Cllr. Cunniffe queried Tuam's submission on the second phase of the project and K. Coyne stated work was ongoing with applicants and the unit was providing assistance with their applications.

Cllr. Connolly queried what the total budget for these projects was. K. Coyne informed him it was 20 million nationwide and it would provide funding for 300 projects. Each Local Authority can submit 15 applications, we need to have strong plans. In the last plan we got funding for 6 out of our 7 projects.

A. Farrell stated we would have liked to have submitted more than 15 projects but in the event of additional calls, we have a reserve list available.

C. Mc Connell informed the meeting it was a rolling scheme and it would be a big advantage to those not successful this year as they would be well positioned to get funding next year.

REDZ.

K. Coyne stated that work began on this project at the end of 2016. There are 10 REDZ Zones - 5 focussed on towns and 5 which focus on the REDZ rural areas. Two separate proposals were made - the town led project was not successful but the rural led project was successful. €100,000 in funding was received for this scheme and will procure consultants to work on preparing these plans. That is what the department has given us the funding for and it has to be used for this purpose.

Cllr. Welby queried if Barna and Moycullen were included in the rural area and he was informed it was.

Pride Of Place 2017.

K. Coyne stated that there was three projects going forward for this completion. His team were working with the applicants to help them be ready for the judging on 24 to 27th August. We had success with the Clonbur project last year and hoped we would be successful with our projects this year.

Tidy Estates Competition (Ballinasloe)

K. Coyne informed the meeting that this was a long established competition taking place every year with a large number of small and large gardens taking part.

D. Connolly welcomed the saying it was well supported and a worthwhile initiative.

Cllr. A. Donohue queried if we would bring the initiative county wide e.g. Xmas & Easter shop display windows would give a good boost to towns.

Cllr. Kearney highlighted that he knew that resources were tight but queried could it be brought to every Municipal Area and not to tie it down to a particular town.

C. Mc Connell stated that cleaner communities was a very successful scheme and a huge amount of entries were received in the year it was held but that resources meant it couldn't be rolled out in 2017. But it will be kept in mind how to expand the initiative. GCC work very closely with the Tidy Towns committees to give them support.

Cllr. Cuddy informed the meeting that due to the delay in providing skips to areas at Easter time some areas never got cleaned up.

C. Mc Connell stated she was not aware of this issue and would bring the matter to Corporate Services.

Community Facilities Scheme.

C. Mc Connell said that this Scheme was discussed at the last SPC Meeting. There was a small amount of funding for this scheme with a maximum grant of €1000 per project after the closing date a list of successful projects apply to LCDC and then to the Municipal Districts for final approval at the September meeting.

Cllr. Cuddy asked what was covered and C. Mc Connell stated capital projects such as the purchase of chairs for a Community Centre or a replacement door. Repairs and upgrading of equipment are regarded as infrastructure.

Cllr. Cunniffe queried if the gum removal machines would be included under this project. C. Mc Connell informed him that these machines were very expensive and the scheme did not cover the rental of machines.

Rural Housing Guidelines Waste Water Treatment Plants

C. Mc Connell informed the meeting that following the special meeting held on 29th May 2017, documents arrived from the Department on the 31st May stating that the existing guide lines will remain in place and Local Authority's should wait until the Department finalise their revised guidance on the European Court of Justice ruling with regard to the free movement of capital and people. The Department have set up a working group with Local Authority's to advise them on this matter. Six Local Authorities are involved including Galway County Council and the next meeting is scheduled for 13th June 2017.

Regarding Waste Water Treatment Plans and multi-use developments going forward single treatment plants for multiple house not good policy. We are in the process of developing our policies on these and the Forward Planning Unit are working on this. The Job of the SPC is look at the issues as they arise and develop policies having regard to Department Guidelines.

Cllr. Cuddy said he has a personal interest in this matter and it was going on for a long time with Councillors been left in the dark. He said the elected members were not aware of the European Court Ruling when they were preparing the current County Development Plan and pointed out that ministerial guidelines were not law. He said it depends on how it is interpreted and he was aware of people having been refused planning permission despite the fact that they have lived in an area for 18 years.

C. Mc Connell stated that Galway County Council as a Planning Authority have a very flexible policy and try to facilitate genuine applicants. The new guidelines from the department may raise the issue of whether an applicant has a functional need to live in an area. Preparations for the new County Development Plan will get underway in 2019 and the new guidelines will apply at this stage. C. Mc Connell stated that in general our single planning applications 85% of these were granted.

Cllr. Welby queried these figures stating that a lot of applications were refused and withdrawn. This resulted in repeat applications putting pressure on the planning system.

C. Mc Connell stated that we don't want to see repeat applications and it is the job of the agent to do a good job. However they were not sending in the required information leading to requests for further information. While we do not have ecologists working in the Council, we have the level of expertise to know what should be in the reports. She stated that there was a small number of bad agents but it was partly but not exclusively our role to educate them. They should know what is required to submit a planning application. C. Mc Connell stated we will take on board these matters and present a report at the July Council Meeting.

Cllr. D. Connolly raised his concerns regarding staffing issues especially in contrast to other local authorities. e.g. Mayo which is a smaller county with fewer application but a significant higher number of staff and budgets.

In relation to Rural Housing he stated there was a number of lazy agents, there was regulations for banks but none for agents. He was concerned with rural housing policy and waste water as he felt it would restrict development in these areas. He queried how we would get the message across that we want to encourage development and felt it may be the role of the Housing SPC.

Cllr. Cunniffe raised his concerns about waste water schemes and queried if Irish Water has an input into these plans. Also in relation to Water Schemes where do they stand with Irish Water for instance if a customer is not paying his bill they have tried to interact with Irish water but got no response.

C. Mc Connell said she could not speak for Irish Water. Irish Water will not take over any schemes that are not going to be connected to a Municipal Scheme.

Cllr. Cuddy stated that anytime he contacted Irish Water by e mail he got a fast response.

G. Mc Carthy questioned if this was policy that Irish Water would not take over these schemes or was it a National issue.

C. Mc Connell stated that and Board Planula have taken a very clear line on this matter and in general have not facilitated such applications. They have granted application for multiple houses and a single waste water treatment plant. She stated we would look at a SPC working group on this matter if there was enough of interest in this matter. We would look at the legal and conditional issues to protect the residents, to protect the Local Authority and if possible try and get the Department involved in this matter.

A.O.B.

V. Loughnane gave an update on the Local Area Plans and stated that the Barna and Gaeltacht Local Area Plans were in progress and would be on public display in September.

Cllr. Cuddy queried if Claregalway would be included in the Gaeltacht Plans and he was informed it would be.

Cllr. Cuddy thanked C. Mc Connell and her staff for their input into today's meeting stating that they were trying to do their best with limited resources.

C. Mc Connell thanked Mr. Cuddy for chairing the SPC Meetings and running them so well. A new chair would be appointed at the next meeting.

The chairperson thanked the Members for their contribution and closed the Meeting.

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday 11th September at 10.00 in G01.