



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Minutes of the Planning, Environment, Agriculture & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on Monday the 29th May 2023 at 11am in the Council Chamber.

I LÁTHAIR:

Baill:

Cllr. Shane Curley, Chairperson
Cllr. Shelly Herterich Quinn
Cllr. Michael Connolly
Cllr. Donagh Mark Killillea
Mr. Mark Green
Mr. Stephen Canavan
Aodán MacDonncha, Uasal

Oifigigh:

Mr. Michael Owens, Director of Services
Ms. Valerie Loughnane, Senior Planner, Planning
Mr. Brendan Dunne, Senior Executive Planner
Ms. Gina O'Shaughnessy, Assistant Staff Officer, Planning
Ms. Eileen Keaveney, Administrative Officer, Planning
Ms. Ann Dolan, Senior Executive Scientist, Environment

Apologies: Cllr. Michael Maher, Mr. Daithi Ó'Cualáin, Cllr. P.J. Murphy

Item No. 1 - Minutes of the meeting of the Planning, Environment, Agriculture & Emergency Services SPC dated 31st January 2023.

The minutes of the meeting dated 31st January 2023 were adopted on the proposal of Shelly Herterich-Quinn, seconded by Cllr Donagh Killillea

Matters arising: None.

Item No. 4 Local Area Plans – Tuam and Athenry

Mr. Brendan Dunne informed the members that the Athenry Local Area Plan is now on display from Thursday 25th of May 2023 until the 7th of July 2023. The Planning Authority has a 6-week period to prepare the Chief Executive Report on the submissions received on the Draft Athenry Local Area Plan and it will then be submitted to the Municipal District Members for their consideration. Mr. Dunne informed the Members that a workshop will be held in early September.

In relation to the Draft Tuam Local Area Plan he outlined that 62 submissions were received and that meetings were arranged for Tuesday 6th and Wednesday 7th of June 2023 for the Tuam Municipal District Members to facilitate deliberations on the Chief Executive Report.

In relation to the Draft Loughrea LAP & the Draft Gort LAP Mr. Dunne outlined that he envisaged the process beginning the 3rd or 4th Quarter of this year.

Cllr. Herterich-Quinn welcomed that the progress of the Draft Athenry LAP and thanked the Forward Planning Department for all their work in preparing the Draft LAP.

She outlined that Athenry was a town steeped in heritage and was passionate about ensuring that the town centre should be protected and encouraged the appropriate development and expansion of the town.

Cllr. Michael Connolly advised that farmers who are farming the lands should be removed from Phase 1 zoning going forward and that their land is for farming purposes and should not be zoned for potential development.

Cllr. Killillea asked Mr. Dunne to clarify if farmers farming in the town zoned in the Tuam area will be paying the residential land tax next year? He outlined it was very important to notify those that would be affected in the future by the Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) and make them fully aware of the land tax.

Mr. Dunne stated that the responsibility lies with the Local Authority to update the residential zoned land tax maps on an annual basis and that there are no dates for the annual review in 2024. Mr Dunne outlined that the Tuam LAP 2018-2024 is still live and therefore RZLT was applicable as a result and there were land parcels identified.

Mr. Dunne stated that the change in legislation in relation to possible exemptions was at a national level and that the issues raised were not just for Galway County Council but all 31 Local Authorities.

Cllr. Curley queried if the Local Authority were obliged after preparing the County Development Plan to have the LAPS drafted within a 12month timeframe?

Mr. Dunne outlined the importance of having a Local Area Plan in place, however, the RZLT process which the Forward Planning Section was obliged to carry out resulted in the delay in publishing the Loughrea and Gort LAP's. He envisaged the process would begin in the 3rd or 4th quarter of the year.

Item No. 2 – Zoning Matrix

Ms. Valerie Loughnane gave an overview of the Zoning Matrix. She outlined the purpose of the zoning matrix was to illustrate the acceptability or unacceptability in principle of various uses for each of the zoning objectives. The land use zoning matrix is intended to provide guidance to potential developers. It gives an indication that a proposal would be 'permitted in principle' from the matrix should in no way be taken to imply a granting of permission.

Ms. Loughnane noted the zoning matrix is evolving all the time and submissions can be made through the County Development Plan process or the Local Area Plan process.

Ms. Loughnane noted that one submission was received during the draft Tuam LAP in relation to the zoning matrix.

Cllr. Herterich-Quinn noted she wanted discussion about forming policy around Heritage towns and Athenry being a Medieval Town. She noted that Athenry town centre has now 3 betting offices in its town centre, which has caused great concern from local residents. It was considered that a discussion was merited over the zoning matrix and what could be moved inside or outside the Town Centre. She noted that Business and Enterprise as well as community and enterprise hubs would be more beneficial to the town centre.

Ms. Loughnane replied by outlining that we needed to be careful not to narrow or broaden any uses in particular but that it could be tweaked, and it should be looked at through the Draft Athenry LAP process. She noted that there was a policy objective in the Draft Athenry LAP ASP 4 which relates to Proliferation of Individual Uses. This policy objective is used to prohibit the proliferation of any individual use that does not contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Ms. Loughnane informed the members that Draft Athenry LAP is now open to submissions.

Cllr. Herterich-Quinn enquired who compiled the zoning matrix?

Ms. Loughnane responded by informing the members that it was introduced in the 2000's and that it was standard procedure that the Department would have given guidance on it at that time. She outlined that it was a democratic process and that it was referred to and examined during the County Development Plan process and that significant discussion was given to the zoning matrix at that time.

Cllr. Herterich-Quinn enquired why the Planning SPC as a group could not decide as a group what is input into the Zoning Matrix?

Mr. Owens outlined that ultimately it will be the Elected Members from the Athenry Municipal District that will decide on the Draft Athenry LAP. The Chief Executive Report on the submissions received on the Draft Athenry LAP will be with the members of Athenry MD for consideration.

He noted that the SPC could make a submission within the statutory framework and that it would be considered, however, the SPC could not take on a role that is not statutory.

Cllr. Connolly proposed that a submission would be made by the SPC and this was seconded by Cllr. Herterich-Quinn

Mr. Green queried if each Architecture Conservation Area (ACA) had its' own guidelines.

Ms. Loughnane noted that ACAs are identified in Development Plan/MASP/ Small Growth Towns and Small Growth Villages/Local Area Plans and that individual applications are referred to our Conservation Officer (ACO) for comment. Each settlement plan either those within the CDP and/or LAP has policy objectives relating to ACA to ensure that any development within the ACA is considered appropriately.

Mr. Green queried if each ACA was visited by the Architectural Conservation Officer (ACO) and would they have identified where the ACA starts and stops?

Ms Loughnane responded that the ACA were all determined by the ACO and imbedded into the relevant land use plan and any applications that are located within the ACA anywhere in the County is referred to the ACO for her comments and considerations.

Item No. 3 – Site Specific Flood Risk Assessments

Ms. Loughnane gave an overview of 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' which was issued to Local Authorities by the Department in the year 2009. She noted that the Local Authority is obliged to follow the Flood Risk Guidelines and that the Planning Authority is required to have regard to the Guidelines in carrying out their functions under the Planning Acts. These Guidelines recommend a staged approach to flood risk assessment which Ms. Loughnane went through with the members.

Ms. Loughnane noted that there was a lot more detail in 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' and that a link of the guidelines would be sent to the members for their information and if they wished it could be discussed in detail at a future date.

Cllr. Killillea outlined that the Tuam MD members were at present looking at submissions on the Draft Tuam LAP and outlined that it was difficult to ignore the substantial submissions with arguments and justification tests for zoning on Flood Zones.

Ms Loughnane reiterated that in the plan making process the Local Authority cannot take mitigation measures into account when zoning lands. Any flood relief schemes at any point could be breached, and therefore SSFRA (stage 3) cannot be taken into account when zoning land. The Climate Change modelling must also be taken into account in accordance with the guidelines when zoning lands as we can't zone lands that may be at risk of flooding in the future.

Mr. Stephen Canavan enquired if there were areas earmarked for rewetting?

Ms. Loughnane explained that it was the role of the OPW to set out rewetting areas and that the Planning Authority had received applications from the OPW in relation to same.

Ms. Loughnane advised Mr. Canavan to subscribe to Galway County Councils map alerter service to receive a weekly notification email of any planning activity relating to a location of interest.

Item No. 5. Department Circulars & other information

- Circular Letter BC02-2023 - Summary of the implementation of certain aspects of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (Directive 2010/31/EU), consequential amendments to the Building Regulations and related matters.
- Circular Letter PL04/2023 - Re: Temporary Time-Limited Waiver in respect of Development Contributions
- A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision Making
- Project Marine Newsletter Issue No. 3 February 2023

Any other business

Cllr. Killillea enquired what the estimated savings in respect of the waiver in development contributions would be?

Mr. Owens outlined that the saving would vary in the different municipal areas and on the different combinations applied and informed the members that Irish Water charges would be separate to development contributions.

Cllr. Connolly queried when the waiver commenced.

Mr. Owens stated that it would apply to any development that has commenced on site between the 25th April 2023 and the 24th April 2024.

Cllr. Herterich-Quinn addressed the members and agreed to send an email regarding submitting an submission to the Athenry LAP to all members of the SPC before July in relation to same.

Cllr. Killillea queried whether there are specific dates set up for waste plastic depots as it was the time of year for plastics relating to silage. He also queried the idea of having a tyre amnesty.

Ms. Ann Dolan outlined that Galway County Council would not be able to fund a tyre amnesty and that a tyre amnesty day would have to be a National Initiative. In relation to the plastic removal, she noted that there was a company in operation that remove plastics from local marts and that she would circulate the dates they operate to members.

Cllr. Killillea proposed to have a look at having a tyre amnesty and suggested Mr. Stephen Canavan from the IFA to investigate making an application to the Department.

Mr. Owens informed the members that a joint SPC outlining the governance for MASP model is to take place later in the year and that the next SPC should coincide with that meeting.

Cllr. Killillea agreed and asked that there be two weeks' notice given for the next SPC meeting.

Meeting concluded.