



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

**Minutes of the Economic Development, Enterprise & Planning Strategic Policy Committee
Meeting held on Wednesday 4th December, 2024 at 10am – Room G01**

I LÁTHAIR:

Baill:

Cllr. Donagh Killilea, Chairperson
Cllr. Mary Hoade
Cllr. Gerry King
Cllr. Tom Welby
Cllr. Declan Geraghty
Deborah Reynolds, Trade Union
Helen McElmeel, Business/Commercial

Oifigigh:

Mr. Liam Hanrahan, Director of Services
Ms. Valerie Loughnane, Senior Planner, Planning
Mr. Brian Corcoran, A/Senior Executive Planner, Planning
Caroline McDonagh, Head of Enterprise, Local Enterprise Office
Ronan Conway, A/Senior Executive Engineer, Urban & Rural Regeneration Office
Eileen Keaveney, Administrative Officer, Planning
Sinéad Burns, Assistant Staff Officer, Planning

Apologies:

Cllr. David Collins
Paul Carey, Development/Construction
Lyn Donnelly, Community/Voluntary

Item No. 1 – Introductions

All present introduced themselves.

Item No. 2 – Standing Orders

The Standing Orders had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr. Welby proposed and Cllr. King seconded the Standing Orders.

Item No. 3 – Planning & Development Act 2024 briefing

Mr. Hanrahan explained that the new Planning Bill would be enacted on a phased basis. There is a change to An Bord Pleanála, now to be called The Planning Commission/An Coimisiún Pleanála. There will be a change to the timeframe of the County Development Plan from a 6 to a 10 year period. There will also be a change to Local Area Plans (replaced with Urban Area Plans) and policy, enforcement etc. The Act will be rolled out over a period of 18 months to 2 years. Any policy changes will be brought to the SPC to be approved and thereafter brought to the Plenary Council.

Ms. Loughnane added that the 2024 Planning Act will replace the 2000 Act. There is draft revision of the National Planning Framework, closing dates for submissions was the 12th September, 2024. The revised NPF Plan may be finalized in the first quarter of 2025. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) will have to be reviewed thereafter. The Planning Act will change the Development Plan process and timelines will be changed. A Ministerial Order may extend CDPs. If not, June 2026 may be the start the process for reviewing the County Development Plan.

Ms. Loughnane said that there may be regional enforcement applied and this has yet to be teased out e.g one Local Authority may be asked to deal with quarries. She said that the timelines are provisional.

Mr. Hanrahan said that there will be SPC member training and PPN training.

Item No. 4 – Joint Retail Strategy Process

Mr. Corcoran gave a presentation on the strategy. He said that Joint Retail Strategy is a policy objective of the County Development Plan. The intention is to provide a strategy for retail provision in Baile Chláir; Bearna, Oranmore and also Galway City. It will provide a national and regional overview of current economic trends relating to retail sectors. Consultants KPMG FA have been appointed. Work is underway on gathering data and there has been engagement with the consultants and Galway City Council.

Item No. 5 – Local Economic & Community Plan 2024-2030

Mr. Ciaran Coyne explained that the purpose of the Galway County Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), established under the Local Government Reform Act 2014, is to set a framework, objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of Galway County. The LECP acts as the primary mechanism at the local level to bring forward relevant actions arising from national and regional strategies and policies that have a local remit. Maria Hall (Consultant, Hub Planning) gave a presentation on the Draft Framework Plan. The overview of the plan will be brought to the Plenary Council.

Cllr. Hoade proposed for the plan to go on the Plenary Agenda and Cllr. Geraghty seconded.

Item No. 6 – Local Enterprise Office update

Ms. McDonagh gave a presentation about the LEO. They are the front door through which all information on state supports for small and micro-businesses can be accessed and signposted to other supports and bodies. The budget for financial assistance and support is €1.8 million per annum. Various grants are available i.e Feasibility Grant, Priming Grant, Business Expansion Grant, grow digital voucher, digital for business advice, green for business advice, energy efficiency grant, new market explorer grant and a range of training programmes.

Item No. 7 – Urban Regeneration Office update

Mr. Conway circulated a list of the projects under the Regeneration Team and their current status. Mr. Conway also circulated 'Shopfront Design Guide' to encourage good practice in the renovation of existing shopfronts and the creation of new shopfronts, particularly those situated in architecturally sensitive areas. The guide was endorsed by the members.

Item No. 8 – SPC Work Programme 2025

The work programme for 2025 is to be circulated after the meeting.

Item No. 9 – Schedule of Meetings 2025

- Wednesday 5th March – 11am
- Wednesday 4th June – 11am
- Wednesday 24th September – 11am
- Wednesday 3rd December – 11am

Mr. Hanrahan said that there may be a request for one of those to be a Joint SPC with Galway City Council.

All presentations / documents are to be circulated after the meeting.

Item No. 10 – Any other business

None.

The meeting concluded.

Signed: 

Date: 5 March 2025 .