



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 Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April at 09.30 am in Room G01**

**I LÁTHAIR:**

**Baill:**

Cllr. Mary Hoade, Chairperson  
Cllr. Shelly Herterich Quinn via Teams  
Cllr. Michael Connolly  
Cllr. Daithi Ó'Cualáin  
Mr. Mark Green  
Mr. Stephen Canavan

**Oifigigh:**

Mr. Liam Hanrahan, Director of Services, Planning  
Ms. Valerie Loughnane, Senior Planner, Planning  
Ms. Eileen Keaveney, Administrative Officer, Planning  
Ms. Gina O'Shaughnessy, Assistant Staff Officer, Planning

**Apologies:**

Aodán Mac Donncha  
Cllr. Donagh Mark Killillea  
Cllr. Michael Maher

**Item No. 1 - Minutes of the meeting of the Planning, Environment, Agriculture & Emergency  
Services SPC dated 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023.**

The minutes of the meeting dated 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023 were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Daithi Ó'Cualáin and seconded by Mr. Mark Green

**Matters arising:**

Mr. Mark Green noted there were minor typing errors which needed to be rectified in the minutes of the meeting of the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

Ms. Keaveney stated the minor typing errors would be amended.

## **Item No. 2. County Development Plan 2022-2028 update**

Ms. Valerie Loughnane noted the County Development Plan was adopted since June 2022.

Mr. Hanrahan outlined that County Development Plans are to move to 10 year plans with the introduction of the Planning Bill.

Mr. Hanrahan noted that to date it is unknown if it will be the existing plan changing into a 10 year plan with a review process or will the existing plan expire and then start with a 10 year plan.

Cllr. Hoade noted the members have huge concerns with the introduction of 10 year Development Plans. She noted that they were informed there would be robust communication after the 5 years and welcomed that robust communication.

Mr. Green queried the relationship between the Corporate Plan and the County Development Plan?

Mr. Hanrahan outlined that the Corporate Plan set out Galway County Councils organisational structure and the objectives that Galway County Council intend in carrying out in the period of the Corporate Plan with one of those objectives being the adoption of a County Development Plan.

He noted that the Corporate Plan does not set out any legislation or policy around the County Development Plan.

## **Item No. 3. Local Area Plans update**

Ms. Loughnane noted the Forward Planning Section commenced the Local Area Plans after the adoption of the County Development Plan.

She noted the adoption of the:

Ballinasloe Plan 2022 – 2028.

Tuam Plan 2023 – 2029

She noted that the Athenry Plan was adopted subject to a draft ministerial direction which went on public display. The Forward Planning Section prepared a report and are now awaiting correspondence from the Minister.

She noted the material alterations for the Loughrea Local Area Plan are currently on public display until the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 and that it was envisaged to have the Chief Executive report to the members in the coming months.

She noted the Forward Planning Team will have an update on the Gort LAP for the next meeting of the SPC.

Cllr Mary Hoade wanted it noted the gratitude the members had for the Forward Planning Team for the level of interaction with the members prior to and during the Tuam LAP process.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn wanted also to thank the staff and how they worked with the elected members on the Athenry Local Area Plan.

Mr Mark Green queried would the structure of the LAP's change with the changes which will be implemented with the County Development Plan?

Ms. Loughnane noted there would be changes to the naming of LAPs. The legislation was unclear but outlined that they maybe called Urban Plans.

#### **Item No. 4. Residential Zoned Land Tax report**

Ms. Loughnane outlined that with respect to the RZLT regarding inclusion and exclusion of lands was open for submission up until the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 and Landowners seeking land use zonings remain open for submissions up until the end of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024.

She noted it was initially anticipated that the land tax would have come into effect in February 2024 but that was extended to 2025.

Mr. Canavan wanted it noted that the IFA have serious issues with the RZLT process. He noted that the IFA were dealing with the issue nationally but wanted it put on record that the IFA are opposed to the manner in which the tax is being introduced.

Cllr. Connolly wanted it noted that there are serious issues with Irish Water stating there is no capacity in treatment plants for housing developments. He queried how is the LA going to move forward with the housing crisis with the issues with Irish Water.

Mark Green reiterated the Irish Water issue and noted it was a huge issue facing Local Authorities.

#### **Item No. 5. New online pre-planning system**

Ms. Loughnane informed the members that a new online pre-planning web based system had been launched in the month of February.

She noted it had replaced the old preplanning system and is web based which means It updates continually, any new mappings that come on board it updates it automatically once the data bases are there.

Ms. Loughnane noted that she was working with Ms. Eileen Keaveney and the team in linking the new system with the referral system and the prescribed bodies so that it is all linked.

Cllr. Hoade queried the merit in having another training day for agents? Ms. Loughnane envisaged that a workshop for the agents will be held near the end of the year.

#### **Item No. 6. Temporary waiver of Development Contributions report.**

Mr. Hanrahan noted in relation to development contributions:

There had been 846 applications, 308 approved with 507 awaiting documentation and 158 applications received in the month of April.

Mr. Hanrahan informed the members that the Minister had issued an extension of the temporary waiver of development contributions. He stated that Ms. Keaveney would circulate the circular to all the members in due course.

Ms. Loughnane noted that it was a resource issue for the Planning Department.

Cllr. Hoade wanted to express the members gratitude to all staff members who made this scheme possible.

### **Item No. 7. Any other business**

Cllr. Hoade noted that she received an email from Brendan Mulligan in relation to a commitment made at the last SPC Meeting that another joint SPC meeting would be held.

Mr. Hanrahan noted the last joint SPC Meeting was a very specific meeting on the request of the Regional Assembly on the Governance Structures for the MASP. He outlined that he was awaiting a response from the Regional Assembly on when the next meeting is to be held and how to progress the Governance of the MASP. He stated that the Regional Assembly need to take the lead on this project.

Mr. Green expressed it would be a good idea to organise a joint meeting now that everyone had the draft and reviewed same.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn queried if there was a report with enforcement numbers. She outlined a case in Athenry where a developer had built a housing estate and had left a large amount of landfill on site for a prolonged period of time. She queried if Galway County Council could put pressure on the developers to clear up the landfill or build the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase.

Mr. Hanrahan outlined that the Planning Enforcement figures are provided in the managements report. He noted that if the developer has planning permission on site, they have so for five years. He noted that if the developer had not completed the estate inside that time frame, then there maybe an enforcement issue.

Cllr. Hoade noted that if it was a specific case would Cllr. Herterich Quinn take it up with the Director off line.

Mr. Hanrahan agreed that the issue had to be looked at but that it will need to be looked at by case by case basis.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn suggested it be looked at from a policy perspective by the SPC members.

Cllr. Hoade stated that unfortunately that was National Legislation and couldn't be looked at by a local SPC.

Ms. Loughnane noted there was nothing from a policy perspective that the SPC could put in place.

Mr. Green noted that he too would be interested in the Enforcement figures and requested a copy of the managements report. He also requested an up date on the Regional Waste Management Plan.

Mr. Hanrahan noted he would request an update for the next Managements Report and that a copy of that would be forwarded to all members of the Planning SPC.

Mr. Hanrahan outlined various statistics since the beginning of the term of office:

9327 planning applications made,

7079 granted

81% grant rate

Mr. Hanrahan noted that as of last month Galway County Council were at 82% of applications online.

Cllr. Ó'Cuailín queried if there was a way he could receive the applications granted by Municipal District.

Mr. Hanrahan stated that Ms. Martina Creaven was working with the IT Department in getting GIS reports generated by Municipal District.

Ms. Loughnane stated she would forward a map to Cllr. O'Cuailain which was part of the County Developmnet Plan research which outlines the trend of applications granted in Connemara MD.

Mr. Hanrahan stated that the next meeting of the SPC will be scheduled for after the local elections.

**Meeting Concluded.**