



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 Friday 15th December 2023 at 09.30 am on teams.**

I LÁTHAIR:

Baill:

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

Oifigigh:

Mr. Liam Hanrahan, Director of Services, Planning
Mr. Brendan Dunne, Acting Senior Executive Planner, Planning
Ms. Saoirse Kennedy, Senior Executive Planner, Planning
Mr. Alan O'Connell, Acting Senior Planner, Planning
Mr. Mark Molloy, Assistant Environmental Awareness Officer, Environment
Mr. Mike Melody, Senior Executive Engineer, Environment
Ms. Hilda Robinson, Executive Scientist, Environment
Ms. Eileen Keaveney, Administrative Officer, Planning
Ms. Gina O'Shaughnessy, Assistant Staff Officer, Planning
Mr. Kevin Swift, Regional Waste Coordinator, Connacht Ulster region.

Apologies: Aodán Mac Donncha

Item No. 1 - Minutes of the meeting of the Planning, Environment, Agriculture & Emergency Services SPC dated 29th May 2023.

The minutes of the meeting dated 29th May 2023 were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Donagh Mark Killillea and seconded by Cllr. Daithi Ó'Cualáin.

Matters arising: None.

Item No. 2 Draft National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy – update by Mr Kevin Swift Regional Waste Coordinator, Connaught Ulster Region

Mr. Kevin Swift gave an overview of the Draft National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy by way of a slideshow. He noted that the Draft Plan was prepared by the Regional Waste Management Planning Offices, and that there are three regions for the purposes of Waste Management Planning in Ireland. He outlined the major change which would include one single National Plan from three Regional Plans.

Mr. Swift concluded by noting that an updated document had been produced which reflects the outcome of the public consultation and that he would circulate this to the members of the SPC. The document gives an indication of what people were interested in, in terms of the public consultation and what they are going to do in the final version of the plan to take account of those concerns.

He noted that the Plan would be made by the Chief Executive by the end of quarter one of 2024 and outlined that they were still welcoming any feedback from the SPC members.

Cllr. Donagh Killillea informed the members that he has been involved in the waste industry for 18 years with The City Bin Company in both Galway and Dublin. He noted the biggest issue facing waste management would be the lack of infrastructure in the Northwest Region.

He noted the lack of facilities in relation to waste energy type of incinerators.

He questioned if the IWMA had given any kind of detailed input into this process.

Mr. Swift noted that there are two choices in the absence of more infrastructure, the need to reduce the amount of waste that we produce and outlined that is what the new plan is about. He noted the roll out of the brown bin to all households under the new bio waste regulations is a very important move. He noted that they had managed over the years to reduce the waste going to landfill.

Mr. Swift noted there are 3 active landfills from a high of over 100 landfills. He noted the move towards the recovery of waste through thermal facilities and that Ireland is now processing 1 million tonnes annually. He noted that the IWMA on behalf of the waste sector made a detailed submission to the preparation of the plan and that they had consulted with them all the way through the process.

Mr. Swift noted that there was a lot of information in the plan about the Civic Amenity Site Network. He outlined to the members that the Civic Amenity Sites are a significant financial strain on the Local Government Sector so it's important to ensure that they are not duplicating the services that the private sector is providing.

He noted that if anyone wanted to know about the waste services that exist in their area, they can log onto the National Platform mywaste.ie which will show the waste services in their immediate locality and who is providing the waste services.

Cllr. Donagh Killillea noted his Civic Amenity site in Oranmore the City Bin Company is probably the biggest Civic Amenity Site in the county and noted they process all white goods and a full range of services on site but noted recently they had to stop taking paint and oil because the facility is an EPA licensed site.

Cllr. Donagh Killillea wanted to note an issue regarding paint and oils which are classed as hazardous and outlined it is very difficult to deal with the EPA in relation to having those type of services on site. He stated the need to have some sort of statutory change in relation to what the sites can handle in a controlled way in relation to having some hazardous facility.

Mr. Swift noted Cllr. Donagh Killillea comments and outlined there were very specific actions in the plan in relation to the management of household hazardous waste but would be happy to talk to Cllr. Killillea offline at some point if he wished.

Item No. 3 – Planning Bill 2023

Mr. Liam Hanrahan outlined to the members that there is currently a New Planning Bill in the pipeline and noted that the review process has been ongoing for nearly two years which will lead to significant changes to both how a Local Authority interacts in terms of planning applications but also in terms of how the public will interact with the Planning System.

He noted that in the coming months everyone will be provided with training on the Planning Bill.

Mr. Hanrahan noted some of the changes that will be implemented would be that County Development Plans will go to a 10-year period with a 5-year review.

He also outlined that within the Development Plans the Local Area Plans will also have a section on Urban Development Zones. These Urban Development Zones will be aimed at larger urban areas that will have their own mini-Local Area Plans sitting within a Local Area Plan.

An Bord Pleanála will be renamed and reconstituted as the Planning Commission, and it will be headed up by a Head Commissioner and a Board of Commissioners that will be appointed and that will also bring in statutory timeframes for how they deal with planning permissions.

Cllr. Mary Hoade noted it will prove difficult to the elected members if they have to produce a 10-year plan because things can change immensely within a 10-year period. She noted the elected members will have to see what exactly is in the details but that it would prove a huge concern for the elected members.

Cllr. Michael Connolly queried if there were provisions within the lifetime of the plan to facilitate changes if needed.

Mr Liam Hanrahan informed Cllr. Michael Connolly that there is under the proposed legislation the 10-year plan will have a 5-year review and the Local Area Plans will also have a review process.

Item No. 4 – Local Area Plans Update

Mr. Dunne gave an update on the status of the Local Area Plans.

He outlined that Ballinasloe LAP and Tuam LAP are fully adopted.

He outlined in relation to the Athenry LAP that the Chief Executives report issued to the members in the month of November and that it is expected the item will be on the agenda for the 9th January 2024 for the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District to deliberate.

He noted the Loughrea LAP is currently on display until the 15th January 2024 and noted that a public drop-in session was held in the Loughrea Spa Hotel on Tuesday the 5th December 2023 and that in excess of 200 people attended the event. He also noted that a public webinar was held on the 14th of December 2023.

The members were informed that the Draft Gort LAP is expected to go on display in quarter one or quarter two of 2024.

Item No. 5 - OPR Webinar – Planning Enforcement

Ms. Saoirse Kennedy gave a brief update on the Planning Enforcement Section.

Ms. Kennedy informed the elected members that currently there were 1200 open files with only 2 enforcement officers and one Senior Executive Planner. Of the 1200 files, seven hundred of those were active and that five hundred files were awaiting initial investigation.

Ms. Kennedy outlined to the members Galway County Councils procedure for dealing with complaints and the changes made to the procedure in recent times which included the following:

- No inspection prior to issue of Warning Letter. Historically an inspection was conducted prior to issue of Warning Letter now implemented a policy of issuing Warning Letter prior to initial site inspection.
- The Act does not require Planning Enforcement to conduct an inspection prior to issue of a Warning Letter.
- The Warning Letter is now based on the detail in the complaint received and a desk-based investigation to include the site history, aerial imagery, land registry/CRO details and CDP requirements.

Mark Green queried does the Enforcement Section also look after Protected Structures and buildings in terms of ensuring they are kept secure.

Ms. Kennedy replied that yes if there are Protected Structures out there that have unauthorised development then the Enforcement section would liaise with the Conservation Officer and would, if necessary, issue a warning letter.

Mr. Hanrahan noted that it would depend, if someone made a complaint about unauthorized development at a protected structure then engagement would be made through the Enforcement Team but if somebody needed advice, they wouldn't necessarily need to go through the Enforcement Team. They could seek that advice from the Conservation Officer or Heritage Officer.

Cllr. Donagh Killilea queried if there were any plans to enhance the Enforcement Team given the volume of work.

Mr. Hanrahan replied by noting that the budget agreed for 2024 would entail the recruitment of several posts that would be assigned to Planning Enforcement. He outlined he hoped that there would be an Enforcement Officer for each Municipal District.

Item No. 6 – Department Circulars 2023

- NRUP 01/23 Certain Amendments to Section 28 Ministerial Planning Guidelines related to Build-to-Rent Housing Developments
- NRUP 02/23 Residential Zoned Land Tax: Publication of a Final Map
- EUIPR 01/2023 Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2023
- PL06/23 Planning & Development (Amendment) Regs 2023
- PL 07/23 Planning & Development (Street Furniture Fees) Regs 2023
- PL 08/23 Temporary Time-Limited Waiver in respect of Development Contributions - Operational Guidance for Local Authorities
- PL 09/23 Planning & Development (Exempted Development)(No. 4) Regs 2023
- PGO 01/23 Land Development Agency Act 2021 – Part 9 Planning Condition – Delivery of Affordable Housing on Relevant Public Land and Part 7 Disposal of Relevant Public Land & First Refusal of LDA

Mr. Hanrahan noted that the circulars would be implemented and if any of the members had any questions to contact Eileen Keaveney or himself.

Item No. 7 - Any other business

Mr. Hanrahan noted that the Regional Assembly had requested a joint SPC meeting with the City Council regarding NWRA document to discuss it on the 23rd January 2024.

Meeting concluded.