

Minutes of Meeting of Planning Strategic Policy Committee held on 16th February 2021 via Zoom in Galway City Council, City Hall, College Road Galway.

Presiding: Cllr Peter Keane

Present: Cllr Frank Fahy
Cllr Owen Hanley
Cllr Niall McNeilis
Cllr Clodagh Higgins
Cllr Noel Larkin
Cllr Imelda Byrne
Marian Spelman (Irish Congress of Trade Unions)

Apologies: Ms Patricia Staunton (Business Sector)
Cllr Mike Crowe

In Attendance: Ms Ruth McNally, Director of Services
Ms Caroline Phelan, Senior Planner
Ms Helen Coleman, Senior Executive Planner
Mr Liam Blake, Senior Executive Planner
Ms Michele Beirne, Executive Planner
Ms Maura Harrington, Executive Planner
Ms Kate Moloney, Assistant Planner
Mr Gary McMahon, Senior Executive Officer
Ms Emma Silke, Administrative Officer
Ms Norann Keane, Senior Staff Officer
Ms Joan Higgins, Staff Officer
Ms Caroline Crawford, Assistant Staff Officer

Cllr. P. Keane, Chairperson, welcomed members and officials to the meeting which was being held in the City Council Chamber where the Chair and senior officials were present and the balance of members joined virtually.

1. Minutes & Matters Arising

The minutes of the last meeting held on 3rd November 2020, were proposed by Cllr F. Fahy and seconded by Cllr C. Higgins.

2. Review of City Development Plan – Strategic Issues Papers.

Ms. H. Coleman, Senior Executive Planner, gave a presentation on the process and various stages involved in the statutory review of the City Development Plan, a copy of which was circulated to all members.

Ms. M. Beirne, Executive Planner, circulated a further presentation on the statutory environmental assessments required and which will identify the key strategic environmental issues to be considered as part of the review process.

Ms. K. Moloney, Assistant Planner circulated a presentation on the stakeholder engagement carried out to date as part of the commencement of the review process, following the publication of the Strategic Issues Papers and also updated members on the new online portal and number of consultation workshops held to date.

Cllr P. Keane, Chair, thanked all members of the Forward Planning Team especially for the creative manner in which they had engaged with the community in challenging times and asserted that the review of the City Development Plan is the single most important statutory function that councillors exercise in any given term.

Following a general discussion clarifications were sought on the following:

- How compliance with monitoring of environmental aspects of the plan are monitored
- Details of any single issues dominating the consultation process to date
- Details of any specific engagement with TY students

Responses were given by officials as follows:

- Ongoing monitoring of the environmental measures contained within the plan will take place with a number of different bodies involved in the process, given the increasing complexity in this area
- A large number of similar submissions were received at the early stages of the process with regards to light rail but apart from this, the remainder of submissions were of a broader nature
- The validity or importance of submissions, particularly single focussed ones, is not determined or measured by volume received
- Comhairle na nÓg had engaged on behalf of young people in Galway City with regards to inputting into the consultation process which included writing to all primary and secondary schools to encourage their participation

3. A.O.B.

- Cllr. O. Hanley referred to the reference in the 2019 statutory Local Government Audit Report to the repayment of special development contributions to planning applicants in certain circumstances and sought confirmation on the amount of any such refunds made. The Director confirmed that no such repayments had been made as no evidence that any such refunds due had been identified.
- Cllr. P. Keane suggested reconvening the SPC in late May to allow councillors consider the Chief Executive's report on the Strategic Issues Paper which is provisionally scheduled for the May monthly meeting.