

**Minutes of Meeting of Galway City Planning Strategic Policy Committee held on 29th May 2023
via MS Teams & Council Chamber**

- Presiding:** Cllr. Peter Keane, Galway City Council
Cllr. Frank Fahy, Galway City Council
- Present:** Cllr. Níall McNelis, Galway City Council
Mr. Brendan Mulligan (Galway City Community Network)
Mr. Derrick Hambleton (Galway City Community Network)
Ms. Patricia Philbin, Director of Services
Mr. Liam Blake, A/Senior Planner
Mr. John O'Donnell, Assistant Planner
Ms. Laurena Mitchell, Senior Executive Officer
Dr. Jim Higgins, Heritage Officer
Ms. Simone Watson, A/Administrative Officer
Ms. Marcella Kilgarriff, Assistant Staff Officer
- Present Online:** Cllr. Níall McNelis, Galway City Council
Cllr. Alan Curran, Galway City Council
Cllr. Clodagh Higgins, Galway City Council
Cllr. Imelda Byrne, Galway City Council
Mr. Alan Kelly, Land Development Agency
Ms. Sinead O'Donoghue, Land Development Agency
- Apologies:** Cllr. Noel Larkin, Galway City Council
Cllr. M.J. Crowe, Galway City Council
Cllr. Clodagh Higgins, Galway City Council
Ms. Betsy Boland, Galway Chamber

Cllr. Peter Keane, Chairperson, welcomed members and officials to the meeting which was being held virtually via MS Teams & from the Council Chamber.

1. Minutes & Matters Arising

The minutes of meeting dated 27th February 2023 were proposed by Cllr. I. Byrne, seconded by Cllr. F. Fahy and agreed by all.

Ms. P. Philbin advised that the Conservation Architect role was sanctioned, not advertised and that this would be corrected in the minutes.

2. Sandy Road Draft Framework

Ms. S. O'Donoghue gave a presentation on the draft Sandy Road Framework. The presentation is to be circulated following the meeting.

Ms. O'Donoghue advised there will be a strategy in relation to the phasing and decanting of current tenants/businesses at Sandy Road. The timeline for the framework will depend on planning and other variables but it will likely be 2026/2027.

Allocation of housing will be majority affordable with the necessary social housing element. There may be an element of private housing if possible.

Ms. O'Donoghue advised that Galway Bay FM is the only private stakeholder and that the LDA are currently engaging with the owner. The percentages of each type of tenure will be more apparent once the final plans are prepared, but it may be as much as 80% affordable. The legislation sets out the requirements in relation to affordable housing and what percentage is allowed and how eligibility will be determined.

Mr. A. Kelly advised that land valuation will be carried out by Tailte Éireann. The valuation will be based on existing use, not market value. Various funding elements will be examined.

Cllr. P. Keane experienced internet connectivity issues so Cllr. F. Fahy took over as Chair of the meeting.

3. Population Statistics

Ms. P. Philbin advised that the final statistics have not yet been received from the CSO and requested that this item be deferred to the next SPC meeting. This was agreed.

As Mr. L. Blake had stepped out of the room, it was agreed to take Item 5 before Item 4.

4. Heritage Forum/Plan Update

Dr J. Higgins advised that the Heritage Forum met on Thursday 25th May 2023 and they plan to meet in 2-3 weekly intervals. The next meeting is planned for 9th June. The Heritage Plan will run from 2024-2029.

Dr Higgins advised that the Heritage Council has funded several Galway City Council projects including the Annual Heritage Conference which is due to take place on 10th June, the Heritage in Stone magazine and the cataloguing of historic graves in Galway City cemeteries. Galway City Council is required to provide 20% of the funding towards each project.

€100,000 funding has been secured under the Community Monument Fund for Menlo Castle which is required to be spent this year. Grants have also been given under the Built Heritage Investment Fund and the Historic Structures Fund.

5. Ardaun Local Area Plan

Mr. L. Blake read out an update from Irish Water. It was agreed that the capacity of the new pumping station at Merlin Park would be circulated after the meeting. Mr. Blake stated that the review of the Plan would have to start in 2023 as the Plan runs out in 2024. It is expected that a planning application will be lodged by Irish Water this week.

Cllr. F. Fahy advised that he and Cllr. Keane had attended a meeting with Irish Water in recent weeks and had raised the issue of the delays with Ardaun caused by Irish Water. Cllr. Fahy requested that this item be kept on the SPC agenda for discussion.

6. City Development Plan 2023-2029

Mr. L. Blake advised that the Plan is in the process of being published. The Ministerial Directions will be integrated into the Interim Plan and the final Plan is due to be published this summer.

Ms. P. Philbin advised that a meeting will have to be arranged with the OPR to discuss the process in relation to Material Contravention and to confirm the process for Elected Members following the Ministerial Direction. Mr. L. Blake noted that the traditional Material Contravention process relates to individual planning applications and a Development Plan rezoning request would be slightly different. Ms. Philbin stated that more information would be sought from the OPR in advance of the next SPC meeting.

7. Residential Zoned Land Tax

An update in relation to RZLT was circulated in advance of the meeting. Ms. L. Mitchell advised that the final map will be published on 1st December 2023 and the tax will become payable on 1st May 2024. Revenue will be responsible for collecting the tax. Sites will have to be re-valued every three years and it will be a self-evaluating process.

8. ePlanning Portal Update

Ms. S. Watson gave an update. A presentation was prepared which will be circulated after the meeting.

Ms. L. Mitchell advised that a demonstration of the new ePlanning portal can be arranged for the next meeting. In Local Authorities where the system has gone live approximately 70% of applications are coming in electronically. The portal is for new applications only but documents from older applications are being moved to iDocs, the new document management system. In the meantime, both iDocs and the older scanning system will be used for the old applications.

Mr. L. Blake confirmed that referrals sent electronically have the same status as hard copies.

9. AOB

Ms. P. Philbin advised of two temporary exemptions. The first relates to an exemption on the public consultation process in relation to Part 8 Planning applications. A notice will go up at the development site 8 weeks prior to development taking place. The normal Part 8 Consultant/Referral process will continue to be followed.

The second exemption relates to the waiver on Development Contribution fees for any works relating to residential developments which commenced between 25 April 2023 (the date of the Government Decision approving the measure) and 24 April 2024. Development must be fully completed not later than 31 December 2025'. The waiver also applies to "commencement notices" which were submitted to the local authority within the 28-day period prior to 25 April 2023 i.e. on or after 28 March 2023; or "7 day notices" were submitted to the local authority on or after 4 April 2023.

Cllr. F. Fahy thanked all for attending and the meeting then concluded.