

**Minutes of Meeting of Galway City Planning Strategic Policy Committee held on 5<sup>th</sup> September  
2023 via MS Teams & Council Chamber**

- Presiding:** Cllr. Peter Keane, Galway City Council
- Present:** Cllr. Níall McNelis, Galway City Council  
Mr. Derrick Hambleton (Galway City Community Network)  
Cllr. Frank Fahy, Galway City Council  
Mr. Uinsinn Finn, A/ Director of Services  
Mr. Eoghan Lynch, Senior Planner  
Mr. Liam Blake, Senior Executive Planner  
Ms. Laurena Mitchell, Senior Executive Officer  
Ms. Katie Fahy, Senior Staff Officer  
Mr. Peter Staunton, Executive Planner  
Mr. John O'Donnell, Assistant Planner  
Ms. Marcella Kilgarriff, Staff Officer  
Ms. Sandra Higgins, A/Assistant Staff Officer
- Present Online:** Cllr. Alan Curran, Galway City Council  
Cllr. Clodagh Higgins, Galway City Council  
Cllr. Noel Larkin, Galway City Council  
Mr. Brendan Mulligan (Galway City Community Network)
- Apologies:** Cllr. Imelda Byrne, Galway City Council  
Mr. Jim Higgins, Heritage Officer  
Ms Helen Coleman, Senior Executive Planner

**Minutes & Matters Arising**

**1. Minutes of Meeting 29<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

Cllr F. Fahy proposed minutes of previous meeting and Derrick Hambleton seconded them. Mr L. Blake and Mr. E Lynch joined the meeting in chamber at 8.44am.

Mr E Lynch gave an update on the Executive Architectural Conservation Officer recruitment and advised the final date for applications is 12<sup>th</sup> September.

Derrick Hambleton requested an update on Irish water and the Ardaun LAP. Mr. E Lynch advised that a further update on the capacity of the Merlin Park new pumping station will be included on agenda for the next meeting. It was also agreed to re-circulate an email issued previously re capacity of Merlin Pk. Pumping station.

The members were advised the Population Statistics are on the agenda.

Cllr F. Fahy asked for an update on the progress and spend on Menlo Castle. B. Mulligan asked for an update on the draft report on Galway MASP and he was advised the CE intends to meet with the group over coming weeks.

The members requested and it was agreed that all presentations and reports will be issued in advance of the meeting going forward.

## **2. ePlanning Portal Update**

Ms. L. Mitchell, Senior Executive Officer, gave an update on ePlanning. She outlined the process for making an application and uploading documents maps etc onto the portal. The presentation was circulated during the meeting to all members. Cllr F. Fahy queried the procedures if an applicant/agent wishes to withdraw an application after it has been submitted online. Mr L Blake confirmed that an applicant/agent can still withdraw an application within the timeframes by writing to/sending an email to the Planning Dept. B. Mulligan asked can documents be attached to an online submission and Ms L. Mitchell confirmed this. Mr E. Lynch advised that it is the ambition to move the Planning dept. to a paperless environment.

## **3. Heritage Forum/Plan Update**

Mr E. Lynch advised a meeting was planned of the heritage Forum for late September and that the current members of the Heritage Forum would be circulated to the members after this meeting concluded.

## **4. Residential Zoned Land Tax**

Mr J. O'Donnell gave a presentation on RZLT regarding the timeframes, appeals to An Bord Pleanala and key dates in relation to the preparation of the final maps etc. The presentation was circulated to all members during the meeting.

Following a query from Cllr Fahy regarding if there is a facility to dezone lands under the RZLT process, Mr. E Lynch advised all land zoning remains in place as per the current Development Plan and it would not be advisable to re-zone land given the current housing crisis. Mr. U Finn highlighted that the purpose of the RZLT is to stimulate land for residential building.

***As there was an issue with the screens and a request for the Pop. Stats to be circulated by email it was agreed to take item 6 before item 5.***

## **5. Population Statistics**

Mr. J. O'Donnell gave a presentation on the Population Statistics, and this was circulated to all members.

Mr. B. Mulligan asked about the implications of GCC not reaching their targets. Cllr N. McNeilis asked how we could delve into the stats more. Cllr N Larkin said it was encouraging to see the growth in population and advised more action needed to grow the city.

Mr. E Lynch advised that the statistics were not an absolute but more a direction by which GCC can look for support in developing infrastructure for the city.

He also advised that the plan was to adopt an approach to good urbanism by way of more gentle density given that diversity of tenures is changing and that difficult decisions would need to be made, with a focus on growth of key factors like growing the population, employment, better transport links. He also advised of future challenges for GCC in relation to higher density and diversity of tenure to adopt the growing population. D Hambleton

highlighted the need to build the infrastructure and stated that if the City is to expand, it will have to be towards Oranmore/Ardaun area, therefore the Ardaun LAP is critical to the future growth.

Mr. B Mulligan again questioned why we have only reached 21% of our targets and urged more key actions be taken, and D. Hambleton seconded this.

Mr. U. Finn added that the population statistics have been very positive over the years with a growth of c1000 people per year. He also advised that Galway is a great City for young people and that the availability of Third Level education was a big driver of this. He also acknowledged the constraints on infrastructure would have an impact on the targets.

Cllr N. McNeilis agreed with Mr. U. Finn that Galway was a wonderful city for young people and wanted to reiterate the housing crisis and the difficulty in availability of rented property.

Cllr F. Fahy wanted it noted about the high levels of tourists visiting Galway throughout the year and the impact this too has on the housing supply.

#### **6. Temporary Time- Limited waiver in respect of Development Contributions**

Ms. K Fahy gave a presentation on the Limited waiver on Development Contributions, and this was circulated to all members by email during the meeting. Mr. E. Lynch added that the aim of the waiver was to boost housing supply in both private and social housing.

#### **7. Ardaun LAP**

Mr. P. Staunton gave a presentation on the Ardaun LAP and this was also circulated to all members during the meeting. Cllr P. Keane queried the expiration of the current Ardaun LAP and P Staunton advised July 2024. P Staunton advised that under the new Planning & Development Bill, there may be changes introduced regarding the LAP process. It was requested and agreed to circulate the P&D Bill to the members.

The issue in relation to the Merlin Pk storage capacity was discussed and U Finn advised the members that the Planning Application has been appealed to An Bord Pleanala. D Hambleton emphasised the appeals by An Taisce are not to halt development but for An Bord Plenaala to source answers re capacity and for more scope and flexibility with the development.

Cllr. P Keane proposed to invite Uisce Eireann to a joint SPC with County to provide an update re Ardaun, seconded by F Fahy and agreed. It was agreed it should be Item 1 on the agenda.

#### **8. A.O.B**

Cllr P Keane, U Finn, DOS of County and Chair of County SPC will meet in advance of joint meeting and agree agenda.

B. Mulligan asked if members could have an input on the Galway Metropolitan Transport Strategy.

U. Finn advised it is led out by the NTA in line with the current Climate Action Plan and will ask the NTA for an update prior to the next meeting and if possible, to include it on next agenda.

Cllr. P. Keane thanked all for attending and the meeting concluded.