

Minutes of Meeting of Planning Strategic Policy Committee held on 8th October via Zoom in Galway City Council, City Hall, College Road Galway.

Presiding: Cllr. Peter Keane
Present: Cllr. Frank Fahy
Cllr. Owen Hanley
Cllr. Niall McNelis
Cllr. Imelda Byrne
Cllr. Mike Crowe
Mr. Derek Hambleton (Galway City Community Network)
Mr. Brendan Mulligan (Galway City Community Network)

Apologies: Ms. Marian Spelman (Irish Congress of Trade Unions)
Cllr. Noel Larkin
Ms. Emma Silke
Mr. Jim Higgins

In Attendance: Mr. Uinsinn Finn, A/Director of Services
Ms. Caroline Phelan, Senior Planner
Ms. Helen Coleman, Senior Executive Planner
Mr. Liam Blake, Senior Executive Planner
Ms. Maura Harrington, Executive Planner
Ms. Kate Moloney, Assistant Planner
Ms. Ann Marie Cusack, Executive Architect
Ms. Norann Keane, Senior Staff Officer
Ms. Marcella Kilgarriff, Assistant Staff Officer

Cllr. Peter Keane, Chairperson, welcomed members and officials to the meeting which was being held virtually via Zoom. Cllr. Peter Keane, Mr. Uinsinn Finn and Ms. Caroline Phelan attended from the Boardroom in City Hall.

1. Minutes & Matters Arising

It was noted that the GCCN were not in attendance at the meeting which took place in February 2021 as they were not sent the invite link to the meeting. Members had been willing to attend but did not have the opportunity.

The minutes of the last meeting held on 16th February 2021, were proposed by Cllr. O. Hanley, seconded by Cllr. I. Byrne and agreed by all.

2. Draft Development Plan Update

Ms. H. Coleman, Senior Executive Planner, gave an update on the Draft Development Plan. She advised that the submission of the draft plan to the Councillors has been moved to 15th November. This will not affect public consultation, which will take place between February and April 2022, or the period for consideration by Elected Members. The Development Plan is still on target to be in effect for January 2023. The requirement for a Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA) came from National Planning Policy and will assist Local Authorities to form a national profile which will guide investment in housing and related infrastructure.

Following queries on analytical tools or growth models, Ms. C. Phelan advised analysis is done on a national level. KPMG have made a study bespoke to Galway City which will be before Council in November. Modelling can be revised at any stage and reviewed every couple of years, not predicated on census.

3. Submissions on Galway County Council Development Plan

A discussion took place on the MASP and it was agreed that collaboration between the City Council and the County Council is necessary.

Proposal by Mr. D Hambleton for a joint meeting between Galway City Council and Galway County Council SPC's, which was seconded by Mr. B Mulligan.

It was noted that the Development Plan is a reserved function of the elected members of each local authority and we have to appreciate that each local authority is an independent authority.

There has been a joint meeting between the executive of the city and county and a further meeting scheduled for January 2022, with an agreement to meet each quarter.

4. Short Term Letting

A discussion took place on the challenges posed by the existing legislation with regard to enforcement of Short Term Letting (STL). Determination of proof is difficult and the Legal bar is very high to reach "beyond reasonable doubt". It was agreed that the Planning and Development Regulations may not be the most effective way of dealing with the problem of Short Term Lettings.

There are two Enforcement Officers for the whole city. Additional resources have not materialised. Statutory timelines apply to investigating.

It was noted that there may be changes to legislation with regards to STL under the "Housing for All" Strategy and new resources may not be forthcoming if changes materialise. It was agreed to carry this item over to the next meeting for the committee to give further consideration on the matter.

5. New Legislation

The Affordable Housing Act was discussed. There was also a discussion on the changes in the Planning legislation relating to Part V and the reduction from 9 to 4 of exempted developments and the extension to all proposed land – not just land zoned for housing.

Mr. U Finn asked if there were any questions on the other legislation circulated in advance of the meeting and no further questions were raised.

6. Heritage Plan

Agreed to defer to next meeting.

7. Castles Project

Ms. Ann Marie Cusack gave an update on the project.

Consolidation/Repair of three castles:

Tirellan – Complete

Merlin – 3 weeks work remaining and scaffolding has come down

Menlo – Ivy cutting and Fence

€30,000 received in 2020 and €100,000 in 2021 from Community Monuments Fund. A film has also been produced to share with the public.

Cllr. Frank Fahy commended the Heritage Officer and team on the works and suggested funding for castles should be considered in the budget.

8. Agenda for next Meeting

Cllr. P Keane, Chair recommended that another meeting be held within the next 4-5 weeks, with two meetings to take place between now and Christmas.

Suggested agenda items for the next meetings:

- Headford Rd & Murrough LAP's
- Urban Density & Building Heights Study
- Heritage Plan
- Joint SPC meeting with City and County
- Short Term Letting

Mr. U. Finn suggested and it was agreed that Short Term Lettings and the Heritage Plan will be put on the agenda for the next SPC meeting. The other proposed agenda items can be considered for the 4th SPC meeting which will be held in December.

9. AOB

Mr. D. Hambleton queried the National Development Plan and any comments on the N6 ring road?

Mr. U. Finn responded that the NDP and the Capital Plan announced has indicated the date of delivery for the N6 GCRR is 2028 and a decision from An Bord Pleanala is awaited.

Cllr. O Hanley asked about a Vacant Homes Officer and Mr. U Finn advised that the position comes under the remit of the Housing Section.