

**Minutes of Meeting of Galway City Planning Strategic Policy Committee held on 18th
December 2023 via MS Teams & Council Chamber**

- Presiding:** Cllr. Michael Crowe, Galway City Council
- Present:** Cllr. Níall McNelis, Galway City Council
Mr. Uinsinn Finn, A/ Director of Services
Mr. Eoghan Lynch, Senior Planner
Mr. James Russell, Senior Planner
Ms Helen Coleman, Senior Executive Planner
Mr. Derrick Hambleton (Galway City Community Network)
Mr. Brendan Mulligan (Galway City Community Network)
Ms. June Joyce, Assistant Staff Officer
Ms. Sandra Higgins, Clerical Officer
- Present Online:** Mr. Peter Staunton, Executive Planner
Cllr. Clodagh Higgins, Galway City Council
Cllr. Frank Fahy, Galway City Council
Cllr Imelda Byrne, Galway City Council
- Apologies:** Mr. Jim Higgins, Heritage Officer
Mr. Liam Blake, Senior Executive Planner
Cllr. Alan Curran, Galway City Council
Cllr Peter Keane, Galway City Council
Ms. Simone Watson, A/Administrative Officer

Minutes & Matters Arising

1. Minutes of Meeting 5th September 2023

Cllr. F Fahy proposed the minutes and Cllr. C Higgins seconded them.

2. Greater Galway Charter

Mr E. Lynch gave a talk on the Greater Galway Charter following on from an email he sent to members on the 11th of December. He highlighted the plan for the Charter and that it is a 50-year vision- with a focus on urbanism such as compact growth, affordable housing, and climate resilience and applies them in a Galway Context.

He advised the NPF seeks is 50% growth by 2040. The Charter open for endorsement and it's not a statutory document and sits apart from the formal policy or governing structures.

Mr D. Hambleton asked for more community engagement with the Charter going forward and questioned the level of community input thus far. He agreed the principle was good, but more

community engagement needed. Cllr I. Byrne agreed with Mr D. Hambleton about engagement and asked about the stages and implementation of the plan. B Mulligan also endorsed Mr D. Hambleton's comments, and he was disappointed that SDG's (Sustainable Development Goals) didn't feature in the document.

Mr E. Lynch responded advising there were workshops in October 2022 and that they will focus on more community engagement at the next stages. Mr D Hambleton noted the high cost for the attending the conference (€145).

Cllr N. McNelis agreed with the need for community engagement especially with the younger population and groups, e.g., Youth Reach.

3. Ardaun LAP

Ms H Coleman gave an update on the Ardaun LAP and under the Transport Assessment for Ardaun and how it will relate to adjoining areas. The next stage is to tender for the Urban Design Plan. The Transport objectives should be incorporated into the Plan.

The National Planning Framework review should be on display Q1/Q2 2024. The current LAP will lapse in July 2024, but zoning still exists under the current plan. Ms H Coleman advised still awaiting the GMATS report and this will give more direction on Ardaun LAP.

Cllr M Crowe and Mr B Mulligan questioned why Irish Water have no planning application in yet and feel the application couldn't be processed or granted given the lack of services at the site.

Ms H Coleman advised they are a separate private body, and she cannot say when the application will be lodged. She agreed there is an issue with services, but she stated there are robust principles in place and under the current LAP and Urban Design plan the first phase of 500 homes could be delivered.

Ms H Coleman advised there is URDF funding in place and that the next stage is to collaborate with the county council and decide the best position for the new access junction to the site.

4. Heritage Planning Update

Mr E Lynch advised the last meeting of 15th December was robust and hoped to have a draft of the plan for SPC members by end March 2024.

Mr N McNelis requested timelines for the implementation of the plan and highlighted the weighbridge waiting 6 years for development.

Mr D Hambleton expressed his disappointment that Eglington Canal, one of the prime waterways still was without lock gates, given that GCC have planning in place since 2015 for same. Waterways Ireland have access to funding, and Mr D Hambleton thinks if GCC don't have sufficient funds they should go higher and should have a medium- and long-term plan in place.

Mr E Lynch advised the plan was a GCC document, and it takes a shared stewardship approach. There are 75 actions in it, and they all have different elements. It sets out the goals, objectives, and plans over a 5-year period. He advised there will be several events which young people can get involved and have their say. He plans to have a workshop end of February/March 2024.

5. New Planning Department Structure

Mr E Lynch gave a brief presentation regarding the planning dept. structure. He advised both him and James Russell have recently joined the organisation as Senior Planners with James overseeing Development Management and Eoghan overseeing Forward Planning, Heritage and Conservation. Mr N McNelis asked about the staffing levels within the planning department and if they had enough staff to deliver on their objectives.

Mr E Lynch advised that the OPR carried out a review, and the results of this set out a plan for staffing, it has grown by nearly 50% but the availability of Executive technicians and Executive planners make recruitment difficult. Interviews for a Conservation Officer is due to take place in January 2024. Mr U Finn advised there was funding in place for additional staff.

6. A.O.B

Mr B Mulligan asked for an update on the MASP governance report and Mr U Finn advised the NWRA will be available to present at the next joint SPC meeting, which is proposed for 23rd January 2024. Mr B Mulligan also asked could the 4 SPC meeting dates for 2024 be agreed and he advised he wasn't notified of the change in dates for the November meeting and he found it disrespectful. Mr U. Finn apologised for same.

It was requested that the Population Statistics and Local Transport Plan for for Ardaun be on the agenda for the next SPC.

Cllr. M Crowe thanked all attendees and the meeting concluded.