

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE AND PLANNING STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL, DOORADOYLE, LIMERICK ON MONDAY 12th of FEBRUARY 2018 at 2 PM.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor Vivienne Crowley

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors: Noel Gleeson, Daniel Butler, Seamus Browne, Seighin O’Ceallaigh, John Loftus,

SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

Brian Thompson, John Walsh

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Liam Galvin, John Sheahan

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director of Economic Development (Dr. Pat Daly), Senior Executive Officer (Pat Fitzgerald), Head of LEO (Eamon Ryan), A/Senior Planner (Maria Woods), A/Senior Planner (Stephane Duclot), Senior Executive Officer (Brian Kennedy), Research and Planning Executive (Melissa Buckley), Patricia O’Sullivan (Limerick Food Strategy Manager).

Item 1.

Adoption of minutes from Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC meeting of the 4th December 2017.

The draft minutes were adopted on the proposal of Cllr Daniel Butler, seconded by Cllr Noel Gleeson subject to the inclusion of the following;

‘that it was Brian Thompson’s understanding that another meeting of the SPC was to be held to consider the Council’s response to the National Planning Framework Draft Report.

Item 2

Recommendation from SPC considered by full Council at its meeting on 22nd January 2018

“That Limerick City and County Council support Limerick Food Companies and Producers by ensuring that all local produce be featured prominently in any food festival/event that the Council supports either by way of financial contribution or by the making of facilities available to event organisers.”

The meeting was advised that recommendation from the SPC was adopted by full Council at its January Meeting. All relevant Departments have been advised of the policy statement and will factor same into any discussions/agreements with organisers of food related events.

Item 3

To consider adjourned Notice of Motion referred from full Council meeting on the 22nd of January 2018:

Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor V. Crowley:

“That this Local Authority will no longer approve planning on sites where there is a live infestation of Japanese knotweed.”

Many committee members spoke of the destructive nature of the Japanese knotweed and other species and laid out their concerns in relation to their impact on the built environment, ecology and the environment generally. A number of Councillors felt that the way to tackle the issue was to restrict planning approval for the development on sites and lands affected by knotweed. However, there was a general consensus that this approach, if applied would be too restrictive and would be a serious impediment to the development of sites for housing etc. particularly in rural locations. A more cautionary planning approach was recommended.

The meeting was briefed on the approach that the Planning Dept. uses when dealing with infected sites. Two staff member have been specifically trained in species identification. Planning applications cannot proceed to completion without a treatment programme of treatment from a suitable expert being submitted by the applicant. Once submitted the programme is incorporated into a planning condition attaching to the permission.

Member were generally in favour of this approach as it dealt with instances of infestation on a case by case basis. The Council undertook to monitor the effectiveness of the process and will review if necessary.

Item 4

Update on the Midwest Action Plan for Jobs – Presentation by Dr. Orlaith Borthwick.

Key issues covered in the presentation were:

- Context and Vision of the MWAPJ (23,000 jobs by 2020)
- Governance and Structure
- Regional Unemployment
- Regional Employment Growth (17,900 jobs in 2 years)
- Regional Enterprise Development Fund and Successful Projects
- APJ Priority Projects

The members thanked Orlaith for the presentation. It was highlighted that 75% of the jobs target for the Mid West has been achieved in the last two years. A proposition for a regional brand is currently being developed. Members highlighted that it is very positive to see an agency that supports collaboration and to target people coming home, and to consider companies looking to expand in light of Brexit and new models of working. It was stated that there are concerns regarding jobs in rural areas with a lack of job opportunities. The issue of Shannon Airport was discussed and it was agreed to invite a representative of the Shannon Group to a future meeting. Branding of the region, hub working and attraction of talent back to the Mid West are priorities for the APJ for 2018

Item 5

Update on Limerick for IT Initiative – Presentation by Dr. Janice O’Connell

Key issues covered in the presentation included:

- IT Talent Acquisition

- Develop IT business Ecosystem
- New Business Spin out/in
- Promote Mid West as Technology Capital
- Fund Applications

The members thanked Janice for the presentation. It was highlighted that there are 30,000 homemakers in the Mid West and the need to get them back into the workforce. She stated that there is a shortage of women in IT. Education supports and childcare facilities were needed to encourage greater participation in STEM related programmes.

Members raised issues such as addressing employment opportunities in rural areas, apprenticeships, social enterprise, broadband penetration, housing options for new workers, quality of life experiences, commuting times, the role of the education and training sectors. All these issues impact on the attractiveness of the region for investment

It was agreed to brief the SPC periodically on the issues.

6. AOB

The meeting was informed that Limerick City and County Council won the award for Best Local Authority Innovation for Attracting Inward Investment for *Limerick 2030: Economic & Spatial Plan for Limerick* at the All Ireland Community & Council Awards

Limerick also won a number of international awards in the Financial Times FDI European Cities awards including the overall prize for the Best Micro European City of the Future for 2018/2019.

This concluded the business of the meeting

Signed: _____
Councillor Vivienne Crowley
Chairperson