

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE AND PLANNING STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MERCHANTS QUAY, LIMERICK ON MONDAY 11TH FEBRUARY, 2019, at 2 PM.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor Vivienne Crowley

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors: James Collins, Liam Galvin, Noel Gleeson, Daniel Butler, Seamus Browne, Eleanora Hogan, Stephen Keary, Joe Leddin, Seighin O’Ceallaigh, John Loftus, Eddie Ryan, John Sheahan, Kevin Sheahan.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors: Malachy McCreesh, Elena Secas.

SECTORAL INTERESTS: Mr. John Walsh.

OFFICIALS PRESENT:

P. Fitzgerald, Economic Development, E. Ryan, LEO, L. Ryan, Marketing/Communications, M. Woods, Forward Planning, S. Duclot, Planning, K. Burke, Forward Planning, L. Bolger, Forward Planning, B Burke, Economic Development.

APOLOGIES:

Dr. P. Daly, DoS Economic Development

Item 1.

Adoption of minutes from Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC meeting of 3rd December, 2018.

The draft minutes were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Eleanora Hogan, seconded by Cllr. Joe Leddin and unanimously agreed.

Members expressed concern that the Foynes Air Show had been cancelled for 2019, due to the unavailability of a principal sponsor. Members were highly critical of the lack of support for the event from Fáilte Ireland. The festival is a huge community and civic event for Limerick and draws up to 20,000 visitors to the town of Foynes to attend the event.

Limerick City and County Council was urged to support the event in any way it could. It was confirmed that the Council has committed financial support to the event but without the support of a principal sponsor the event would not go ahead this year. The meeting agreed that the Council (members and the executive) should meet with the organisers of the event as a matter of urgency to determine if the 2019 event could be saved.

It was further suggested that the issue would be discussed further at the Cultural SPC, which was to be held on 12th February, 2019.

Item 2

Presentation of Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region

Ms. Maria Woods, Senior Planner, Forward Planning gave a comprehensive presentation on the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region.

The purpose of the RSES is to support the implementation of Project Ireland 2040, National Development Plan 2018-2027 and the National Planning Framework. It will influence and guide Limerick's Development Plan and Local Area Plans over the next 12 years and will influence decisions on Government investment.

She stated that the main part of the plan is the 220 regional policy objectives, which need to be implemented.

She highlighted the following key enablers to transform the Region:

- Enhanced infrastructure from North to South and East coast to West connecting to the Atlantic Economic Corridor (new Limerick-Cork Motorway, Limerick Northern Distributor Road, Foynes Access Road, Investment in Shannon Airport etc).
- Making the most of our natural maritime assets – Cork and Waterford Harbours and the Shannon Estuary
- Delivering ambitious growth targets for our Metropolitan Cities
- Harnessing our Environment and Heritage
- Create an inclusive and Learning Region
- Revitalising Rural Areas
- Establishing the Southern Region as Ireland's International Gateway at Cork and Shannon Airports and our Sea Ports
- Taking the right steps in sustainable travel, energy and bio-economy to lead on Climate Action

Draft Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans have been prepared to guide the strategic population and economic growth for

- (i) Cork Metropolitan Area
- (ii) Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area
- (iii) Waterford Metropolitan Area

The Draft RSES is a consultation document and is written with the purpose of generating comment on its proposals and Ms. Woods invited observations from the members.

Members thanked Maria for her presentation and described the draft RSES as seriously limiting Limerick's ambition over the next 12 years and downgrading the city's position at a national level. It was felt that there is an over emphasis of Cork in terms of balanced regional growth and ambitions for Limerick are limited with projected population growth of approximately 50,000, which will be shared with Shannon, where plans for Limerick 2030 included population growth of Limerick by 100,000.

This will severely limit investment in housing, health, education and transport, energy, broadband and tourism.

Members expressed concern that the strategy fails to acknowledge the Limerick Docklands proposals for a Technology Park and also the new Technology Park proposed to be developed in conjunction with Limerick Institute of Technology in the northside of Limerick City.

The lack of an adequate public transport infrastructure in Limerick was also highlighted and substantial investment was required for upgrade of same. The road network between Limerick and Kerry needs to be upgraded to facilitate improved connection times for movement of goods between Shannon Foynes Port and Shannon Airport.

Members queried why Newcastlewest was the only Limerick town identified in the strategy and they highlighted that a lot of rural towns and villages in Limerick had numerous boarded up premises and asked if there was any regeneration programme that would provide state assistance to develop these towns, along with private investment. They also raised the issue regarding quality of life in rural areas with regard to commuting time, lack of services and that farming was at an all-time low, with most farmers now having a second employment. Rural communities need support to be sustainable, vibrant and continue to contribute to the economic development of the region.

It was suggested that urban and rural development needed to be divided into two separate sections as the development of both were not always compatible.

It was also agreed that the Council's submission to the draft RSES should include a prohibition on incineration in the City and County of Limerick.

A Special Meeting of the Council will be held on 25th February to discuss the draft RSES and prepare an agreed submission to the Southern Regional Assembly. (deadline for receipt of submissions is Friday 8th March).

Adoption of the RSES is a reserved function, which requires approval of the members of the Southern Regional Assembly. The RSES for the Southern Region will replace the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Mid-West. The three members on the Assembly, nominated by Limerick City and County Council are Cllrs. J. Leddin, N. Gleeson and J. Sheahan. They stated that they will have to work with other colleagues on the Assembly to ensure that there is a rebalancing of the report to ensure genuine balanced regional development and particularly in relation to rural development.

Members also expressed concern that the Foynes Port Company was not mentioned in the strategy.

It was unanimously agreed that a draft submission would be prepared by Forward Planning, on behalf of the elected members, in advance of the special meeting on 25th February.

Item 3

Presentation on Limerick City and County Council's Proposed Climate Adaptation Action Plan

With the consent of the members, consideration of this item was deferred to the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 8th April, 2019.

Item 4

Any Other Business

Nil.

Signed: _____
Councillor Vivienne Crowley
Chairperson