



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

Forbairt Gheilleagrach,
Ceanncheathrú Chorpáraideach,
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8th January 2020

To the Mayor and Each Member of Limerick City and County Council

**Chairperson's Report for the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning
Strategic Policy Committee Meeting of 9th December 2019**

A Chomhairleoir, a chara,

The second meeting of the above SPC took place on 9th December 2019. Three Sectoral representatives attended the meeting. The representatives from the PPN have still to be nominated to the committee.

Item 1 – Presentation on Report of Assessment of Aviation Policy as a Driver of the Economic Development in the West and Mid-West of Ireland by Chamber of Commerce

Dr. Catriona Cahill, Chief Economist, Limerick Chamber of Commerce informed members that Limerick Chamber commissioned Copenhagen Economics to complete an independent assessment on aviation policy as an economic driver for the Mid-West and West of Ireland. The report was published in October 2019 and the key findings were:

- National Aviation Policy (NAP) does not support goals of Project Ireland 2040
- Dublin Airport's dominant position is not common in Europe
- Airports outside of the Capital offer untapped potential
- Uneven playing field – Shannon and Cork Airports exclusion from the Regional Airports Programme is a national decision and not an EU one
- EU State Aid rules allow for aid to be given to airlines to develop routes from all airports (state and private) of less than 3 million passengers
- NAP does not support enterprise policy

Members thanked Dr. Cahill for a very comprehensive presentation. However, they expressed concern over the lack of funding available to Shannon Airport and that National Aviation Policy was in direct contradiction with Project Ireland 2040 - balanced regional growth. Replying to members, Dr. Cahill stated that the lack of financial support for Shannon Airport was a government policy decision not an EU one. She suggested that all stakeholders in the region should collaborate to try to

get national policy changed. She also outlined that the Consultants looked at airports and policy in other European countries and found that in Denmark, Netherlands and Austria, where policy changes had been made to give support to smaller airports that more balanced regional growth followed.

Dr. Cahill informed members that they had met with the Minister for Transport Tourism and Sport, and the Taoiseach, with recommendations for the future of Shannon Airport and they were awaiting a formal response in early January 2020.

Members suggested that Shannon and Cork Airports should form an alliance to compete with Dublin and give a better service, rather than competing with each other.

Members also highlighted that the road network in the Limerick was outdated and did not help in attracting business to the region. They requested that the LNDP be progressed as quickly as possible.

Item 2 – Update on Innovate Limerick

M. Cantwell, Innovate Limerick, informed members that Limerick City and County Council established Innovate Limerick in 2014 as a private company to help drive innovation and act as the delivery mechanism for the projects outlined in the Limerick 2030 Plan and the Limerick Regeneration Implementation Plans. It is a public private partnership company comprising key partners including LEDP, LIT, UL, EI, IDA Ireland, Limerick Chamber of Commerce and Limerick Regeneration.

He updated members on developments at Engine, Cecil Street; Troy Studios; the N21 Enterprise Park, Rathkeale; and Kantoher Enterprise Centre.

He outlined the success of Troy Studios, which was set up in the former Dell Factory in Castletroy to cater for film and tv productions. He said that there are currently 450 people employed on sets in Troy Studios and that the Film Industry are seeking another facility in Limerick to cater for smaller productions, which would establish Limerick as a reputation for film service. He stated that as it is a new industry that they are reliant on attracting outside skills. He also stated that they are currently establishing a Mid-West Film Education and Training group to develop a supply of skilled people locally to work for future productions.

Members congratulated him on the success of Troy Studios and stated that it was a great vote of confidence having a film studio in Limerick.

He outlined Innovate's plans for 2020:

- Establish Engine Abbeyfeale Hub
- Develop Kilmallock Business Park
- Create Mid-West E Hub Network with central booking system
- Build extension to Engine to accommodate Digital Collaboration Centre (DCC)
- Acquire former Social Welfare Office and Theatre Royal to facilitate expansion and the establishment of the DCC
- Recruit Digital Collaboration Manager
- Make the Mid-West a more attractive location for Film Production

Item 3 – A.O.B.

- RSES Update

K. Burke, A/Sen. Exec. Planner informed members that at a meeting of the Southern Assembly on 29th November, 2019, the members accepted the Director's Report on the Material Alterations to the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region and approved the RSES to be made on 31st January, 2020, subject to 3 amendments.

Elected Members raised queries in relation to the ban on incineration and rural housing need as addressed in RSES. Ms Burke outlined responses as per the Director's Report.

She also outlined that the Minister may issue a direction to the Regional Authority in the event of the RSES not complying with the national policy.

- Next Meeting: Monday, 10th February, 2020.

Recommendation:

"That Limerick City & County Council support the inclusion of Shannon Airport to funding programmes to which it is entitled under EU legislation". Proposed by Cllr. Ryan, seconded by Cllr. O'Dea, and agreed.

Mise le meas

Cllr. Eddie Ryan
Chairperson
Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning

