

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE AND PLANNING STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MERCHANT'S QUAY, LIMERICK, ON MONDAY 9TH DECEMBER, 2019, at 2PM.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor Eddie Ryan

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors: Daniel Butler, Bridie Collins, James Collins, John Egan, Liam Galvin, Stephen Keary, Emmett O'Brien, Jerry O'Dea, Olivia O'Sullivan, Martin Ryan, Jerome Scanlan, Catherine Slattery.

SECTORAL INTERESTS: Dr. Catriona Cahill, Eoin Ryan, Michael Joyce.

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Councillors Sarah Kiely, Kieran O'Hanlon.

OFFICIALS PRESENT:

V. Murray, Economic Development; M. Cantwell, Innovate; K. Burke, Forward Planning; D.O'Donohue, Planning; B Burke, Economic Development.

APOLOGIES: Cllr. Richard O'Donoghue, P. Fitzgerald.

Item 1

Adoption of Minutes from Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC Meeting of 16th October, 2019

The draft minutes were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Keary, seconded by Cllr. O'Dea and unanimously agreed.

Item 2

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

While members thanked Dr. Cahill for a very comprehensive presentation, 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 omission of financial support for Shannon Airport from the Regional Airports Programme was a national policy decision not an EU one. She suggested that all stakeholders in the region should collaborate to try to get government 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.

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.

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 also highlighted that the road network in the County was outdated and did not help in attracting business to the region.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

On the proposal of Cllr. Ryan, seconded by Cllr. O’Dea, it was unanimously agreed that the following Notice of Motion be submitted to the next Council Meeting
“That all parties be given the opportunity to support the work in assisting to have Shannon Airport included in the funding programme that it is entitled to under EU legislation”.

Item 3

Update on Innovate Limerick

M. Cantwell, SEO Innovate Limerick, informed members that Limerick City and County Council established Innovate Limerick in 2014, as a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), to help drive innovation and act as the delivery mechanism for the projects outlined in the Limerick 2030 Plan and the Limerick Regeneration Implementation Plan. 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 former Andersen Factory, 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, 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

On the proposal of Cllr. Galvin, seconded by Cllr. Keary, it was unanimously agreed to suspend Standing Orders in order to allow the completion of the meeting.

Item 4

Any Other Business

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. Karen outlined responses as per the Director's Report. She also outlined that the Minister has an opportunity to call in the RSES in the event of them not complying with the national policy.

Next Meeting: Monday, 10th February, 2020.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____

**Councillor Eddie Ryan,
Chairperson**