

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE AND PLANNING STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY ON WEDNESDAY, 8th FEBRUARY, 2021 at 2PM.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor Eddie Ryan

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

SECTORAL INTERESTS/ PPN NOMINEES: Dr. C. Cahill, Eoin Ryan, Aidan Gleeson, Declan Hehir, Madeleine Lyes, Brian Thompson.

OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Vincent Murray, Economic Development, Cecilia Larkin, Rory Corbett, Trade & Investment; Stephane Duclot, Veronica Ronan, Planning & Env. Services; Karen Burke, Forward Planning; Mike Cantwell, LEO/Innovate, Ciara Farrell LEO; Gordon Daly, Community Development; Paraic Rattigan, MW Regional Enterprise; Sonja Reidy, Water Services; Brid Burke, Economic Development.

Others: Alejandra Alvarez.

Apologies: Pat Fitzgerald

Item 1

Adoption of Minutes from Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC Meetings of 14th December 2020

The draft minutes were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. J. Scanlan, seconded by Cllr. C. Slattery and unanimously agreed.

Item 2

To consider Notice of Motion referred from Metropolitan District Meeting, held on 16th November, 2020, submitted by Cllr. C. Sheehan;

I will move at the next Metropolitan Meeting of the Council that the Council develop a policy for the taking in charge of estates to ensure that all estates are taken in charge within a defined period of 7 years post completion.

Stephane Duclot, Senior Planner gave a brief presentation on Taking in Charge of housing estates. He stated that a request for taking in charge can be made by the developer or by the majority of residents in the housing estate to the Local Authority, but in many cases requests are not received for a number of years after the estate has been completed. He stated that in Limerick, there is currently 100 housing estates waiting to be taken in charge and 80 housing estates have been taken in charge over the last 5 years.

The cost of maintaining estates once taken in charge was centrally funded.

Members expressed concern over the delay in taking in charge of housing estates, the insufficient value of Bonds and the use of Development Fund monies in completing estates and requested a review of the Taking in Charge process.

Following further discussion, it was agreed to defer this Notice of Motion to the next meeting.

Item 3

Presentation on National Water Resources Plan (NWRP) Draft Framework – Consultation 2

Sonja Reidy, SEO, Water Services gave a comprehensive presentation on the National Water Resources Plan (NWRP) Draft Framework. She stated that Irish Water were developing its first NWRP that will outline the move towards a sustainable, secure and reliable drinking water supply for everyone over the next 25 years, whilst safeguarding the environment.

Phase 1 includes the Draft Framework Plan, which is currently under public consultation and submissions can be made up to 1st March, 2021 and Phase 2 comprises of four Regional Water Resource Plans.

She invited members to express any considerations they may have on the Draft Plan.

While members thanked Sonja for the presentation, they expressed concern over the lack of water and sewerage facilities in towns and villages in Limerick, which hindered development in the area. They were also of the opinion that Irish Water did not engage with the Roads and Planning Department in relation to future planning of the area and that the Draft NWRP did not align with other Regional Plans.

Sonja informed members that she would also be making a presentation to the Climate Action, Bio-diversity and Environment SPC meeting on 9th February and following this meeting she will prepare a draft submission to Irish Water on the NWRP, including members views, and will make a presentation on same at next SPC meeting, scheduled for 15th February, 2021.

Item 4

Update on Derelict Sites in Limerick

Gordon Daly, Director of Service, Community Development Directorate gave a presentation on the up-to-date position regarding derelict sites in Limerick. He stated that the Local Authority were working with owners of derelict sites to remove them from dereliction. Where no progress ensues a Notice of Intention to place the property on the Derelict Sites Register is issued. Levies are charged at 7% of the market value of the property and compulsory acquisition takes place where necessary. Owners can apply for compensation, within 1 year from the date the property was acquired, at 1% of market value of property.

Key stats for 2019/2020 included:

- 1602 Inspections,
- 590 Statutory Notices issued
- 227 Properties on Derelict Sites Register
- 116 Properties put forward for Compulsory Acquisition
- 43 Properties Compulsory Acquired
- Derelict Site Levies owing 31/12/2019 - €511,947
- Income received from Levies in 2020 - €26,535

He referred to a number of high profile sites, that had derelict site proceedings issues against them, which included the Horizon Mall Site in Castletroy, 43-46 Cecil Street, Fuller's Folly, Newcastlewest and the Market House in Kilfinane. In addition, a number of properties in towns and villages throughout Limerick have been acquired, which will allow the towns and villages to be renewed and much needed affordable housing provided.

Referring to four unfinished housing estates in Co. Limerick, he pointed out that 33 individual CPO's had been served on owners of unfinished houses in Ballywilliam, Rathkeale, all of which have been appealed to An Bord Pleanála.

€2.5m has been secured under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) as part of a pilot project to tackle dereliction in Rathkeale, Abbeyfeale, Bruff, Askeaton and Ardagh.

Members thanked Gordon for the comprehensive presentation and complemented the staff on the excellent work carried out to tackle dereliction in Limerick.

Replying to members, Gordon stated that they liaised intensively with the community to identify ownership, but in some cases the only option was to erect a Notice on the property and he agreed to relay members concerns regarding same, to the team working on the ground.

He stated direct funding was not available for owners of derelict properties, but they were referred to the Housing Department to avail of various schemes.

He also assured members that in 2021, efforts would be increased in improving the collection of levies due on Derelict Sites.

He assured Members that their views will be taken into account when deciding proposed use of properties/sites that have been acquired.

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

Item 5

Limerick Food Strategy Update

Mike Cantwell gave a presentation on Limerick Food Strategy, which is being reviewed by Muiris Kennedy, retired Senior Executive, Bord Bia. He stated that the new strategy will provide a roadmap for the next 3 years and he outlined some of the key milestones since 2017: Pigtown Festival, Limerick Food Producers Group, Limerick Agricultural Show "Food Village" and attendance at London Fine Food Fair and Festivals and Trade Show.

Key recommendations for the review include:

- Appoint dedicated Food Executive to manage and implement Food Strategy
- Provide food incubation infrastructure to help small food business and start-ups
- New food R&D unit at Bruree to act as catalyst for development of food cluster in surrounding area
- LEO representation on national Foodwise implementation committee
- 3 year allocation €150k ring-fenced for Operational Programme – funded by LCCC
- Investigate other sources of potential revenue
- EU PGI Protected Graphic Indication for "Limerick Ham" to highlight Limerick's food tradition
- Social media campaign to tackle low consumer awareness about local food
- Introduce Limerick Food Awards to highlight the achievements of local producers.

Members thanked Mike for the presentation and stated that it was a very important strategy for Limerick and the region and welcomed the realistic targets set out. They pointed out that in order for small-scale producers to scale up they needed more industrial style kitchens and encouraged the promotion of local suppliers and their produce and welcomed the growth of the online element.

M. Cantwell informed members that Trading Online Vouchers are available through LEO to any food producer/supplier who requires to update their website.

Cllr. O'Dea asked if contact could be made with the Manager of Limerick Market regarding installing an industrial style kitchen, which could be used by food producers.

Item 6

Update on proposed Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028

Deferred to next meeting on 15th February 2021.

Item 7

Any Other Business

Nil

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____

**Councillor Eddie Ryan,
Chairperson**