

## **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE AND PLANNING STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY ON MONDAY 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2021 AT 2PM**

**PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:** Councillor Eddie Ryan

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councillors: Daniel Butler, Bridie Collins, James Collins, Liam Galvin, Stephen Keary, Sasa Novak Uí Chonchúir, Jerry O'Dea, John O'Donoghue, Olivia O'Sullivan, Jerome Scanlan, Fergus Kilcoyne.

**SECTORAL INTERESTS/ PPN NOMINEES:** Dr. C. Cahill and Eoin Ryan (Business/Commercial), Aidan Gleeson (Agriculture/Farming), Declan Hehir (PPN), Brian Thompson (PPN), Keith Enright (PPN)

### **OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

Vincent Murray, Economic Development, Pat Fitzgerald, Rory Corbett, Trade & Investment; Karen Burke, Forward Planning; Brid Burke, Economic Development, Mark McDonnell

**Others:** Dee Ryan, Limerick Chamber of Commerce; Shay Riordan, West Limerick Resources; Eileen O'Keeffe and John Hassett, Ballyhoura Development Company.

### **Item 1**

#### **Adoption of Minutes from Economic Development, Enterprise & Planning SPC Meetings of 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2021**

The draft minutes were adopted on the proposal of Keith Enright, seconded by Cllr. J. Collins and unanimously agreed.

### **Item 2**

To consider Notice of Motion referred from Metropolitan Meeting of the Council held on 19th April, 2021, submitted by Cllr. F. Kilcoyne;

*I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick, that in order to encourage development to start and once full planning permission is granted, that Limerick City and County Council give a reduction/refund in their development levies of 10% to the developer, provided the development commences within the first two and half years.*

P. Fitzgerald read out reply to Notice of Motion and stated that the current statutory Development Contribution Scheme does not provide for such reductions/refunds. Following a lengthy discussion on the matter, it was unanimously agreed to have the wording amended to apply to housing developments only and to defer the Notice of Motion to a further meeting of the SPC, where a new Development Contribution Scheme will be discussed.

Cllr. Kilcoyne is to be invited to attend meeting for discussion of this item.

### **Item 3**

#### **Job Creation and Business Supports in Limerick**

##### **Limerick Chamber of Commerce**

D. Ryan, CEO, Limerick Chamber of Commerce gave a presentation on the background, activities and focuses of the Chamber. Limerick Chamber of Commerce was established in 1805 and currently has 420 members, which supports approx. 50,000 jobs.

It supports the economic and social development of Limerick through working with other stakeholders and businesses, with a proactive approach to policy development, and lobbying to impact decisions that benefit the region.

Specialising in SME, Retail and Hospitality and Corporate, Limerick Chamber has three separate business strands so they can better serve their members. They run a wide variety of training courses, through Limerick Chamber Skillnets, in upskilling existing employees, training unemployed people and matching them with companies who require such skills.

The Policy Department is led by Dr. Catriona Cahill, Chief Economist who is responsible for policy. Ms Ryan referred to a policy report prepared regarding future development of Limerick and how it compares to other regions in the country. She also highlighted the report commissioned by Copenhagen Economics, where a number of recommendations were made to make Shannon and other regional airports more successful. She stated it was important to update National Aviation Policy to align with the goals of Ireland 2040 to balance regional growth.

Members welcomed the Chamber's contribution to the economic business life of the region. They expressed concern over lack of connectivity at Shannon Airport and suggested everything should be done to support Shannon Airport, as it is an important link to attract Foreign Direct Investment and Tourism into the Mid-West region. The Chamber and the members agreed that a strong city drives a strong region.

### **Ballyhoura Development**

Eileen O'Keeffe and John Hassett, Ballyhoura Development, gave a comprehensive presentation on supports provided for enterprise and job creation. Ballyhoura Development is a community-led Local Development Company, and a registered charity, which works with communities, families, individuals and businesses in the Ballyhoura region of East Limerick and North Cork.

The company has successfully managed, coordinated and implemented a wide range of National and European projects and programmes since its establishment in 1989, and currently delivers over 30 programmes, focussing on three key aims: community development, economic development and environmental development. The supports provided include support with business idea generation, mentoring, training, LEADER / SICAP grant aid, Women's Rural Entrepreneurial Network and Back to Work Enterprise Allowance. The LEADER Programme which expired in 2020 was replaced by a transitional programme, which allows for 75% funding and 50% for private projects. The applications received under the LEADER Programme were quite varied, which included proposals in the food/craft sector to film sector etc.

Members welcomed the presentation and Ballyhoura's role in economic development in their area. They queried the level of supports provided, they highlighted the stringent conditions attached to applying for funding and questioned the success rate of clients.

J. Hassett pointed out that the rules were set nationally and with 75% funding available, terms and conditions were necessary, but that training was provided in governance, which assisted with the

application process. A recent survey showed that 70% of successful applicants were still in employment after receiving financial support and a number had been referred back to the Department of Social Protection for further assistance. He also pointed out that sufficient supports were not provided nationally for people starting their own business.

The recent SPC Report on SME supports by J. Moran was highlighted, which may be of particular interest to staff in both Ballyhoura Development and West Limerick Resources. Copy of report available on PPN Website.

### **West Limerick Development**

Shay Riordan, CEO, West Limerick Resources(WLR) gave a presentation on supports provided by WLR, ranging from LEADER Grant Aid, Enterprise Training, Social Enterprise Support, Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme, Rural Employment and Youth Employment Services and Work Placement Schemes.

He also highlighted the following strategic sectoral initiatives, which support the tourism industry:

- Investment in Limerick Greenway and supporting businesses and communities in the area
- Promotion of Tourism on Shannon Estuary Way – targeting existing tourism providers
- Promotion / development of micro and small food businesses

Members thanked S. Riordan for the presentation and acknowledged the work of WLR in supporting businesses and communities in West Limerick. They welcomed the major investment in the Limerick Greenway between Abbeyfeale, Newcastlewest and Rathkeale, which is a fantastic amenity in the area and queried if there were plans to extend the route. S. Riordan stated that there were plans to extend the Greenway from Limerick City onto Tralee, which will be developed in various phases. They are currently working on promoting the existing route and encouraging local businesses to provide ancillary services / facilities along the route, which will benefit the local community.

Formal launch of Limerick Greenway to take place on 1<sup>st</sup> July and further details to be confirmed.

### **Item 4**

#### **Any Other Business**

- B. Thompson queried the rezoning of lands on Old Cratloe Road, near the route of the proposed Coonagh to Knockalisheen Road, which were earmarked to be rezoned for enterprise and employment under the draft Development Plan. V. Murray pointed out that at a special meeting of the Council, an amendment was made to the draft plan to allow for the lands to remain designated for housing. The proposed amendments will be on public display from 26<sup>th</sup> June for 10 weeks, at which stage any individual or organisation can make submissions.
- D. Hehir queried the appointment of the Taskforce to support SMEs and was informed by the Chairman that following a recommendation to full Council on 8<sup>th</sup> April that Councillors B. Collins, S. Kiely and F. Kilcoyne had been elected, and 2 business / 1 education representative had been selected by Innovate Limerick . He pointed out that the business representatives could be increased from 2 to 3, so PPN had an opportunity to make a recommendation for a nominee in that category. P. Fitzgerald advised that

recommendations coming from the SPC to full Council on any subject matter are considered at full Council before arriving at a final decision.

- P. Fitzgerald confirmed that the reorganisation of Service Directorates in Limerick City and County Council would not have any impact on the running of the Strategic Policy Committees and that all matters that fall under the economic sphere will be brought to this forum, even if they fall under another Directorate.
- A schedule of meetings from September 2021-June 2022 were being drawn up, and when agreed, will be circulated to members.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Councillor Eddie Ryan,**  
**Chairperson**