

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE AND PLANNING STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 11TH OCTOBER, 2021 at 2PM IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE, LIMERICK AND ONLINE.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor Eddie Ryan

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

SECTORAL INTERESTS/ PPN NOMINEES: Michael Joyce, Declan Hehir, Madeleine Lyes, Brian Thompson,

OTHERS:

Cllrs. Sharon Benson, John Costelloe, Francis Foley, Sean Hartigan, Fergus Kilcoyne, Joe Leddin, Elena Secas, Brigid Teefy, Elisa O'Donovan.

Will Corcoran, Ray O'Connor IDA; Jerry Moloney, Catherine Hogan, Enterprise Ireland, James O'Dowd.

OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Vincent Murray, Economic Development; Pat Fitzgerald, Cecilia Larkin, Rory Corbett, Brid Burke, Trade & Investment; Nuala Gallagher, Nuala O'Connell, Planning, Environment & Placemaking, Maria Woods, Karen Burke, Noreen O'Connell, Loretta Hanley, Forward Planning; Mike Cantwell, Ciara Farrell, LEO/Innovate; Alan Dooley, Terence Connolly, Digital Services; Paraic Rattigan, MW Regional Enterprise; Maria Madigan, Finance.

Item 1

Adoption of Minutes from Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC Meeting of 21st June, 2021

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

Item 2

To consider Notice of Motion referred from Metropolitan Meeting of the Council held on 21st June, 2021, submitted by Cllr. S. Hartigan;

"I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that Limerick Metropolitan District Council requires that Limerick City and County Council make the inclusion of swift bird nesting boxes on suitable sites, a planning condition as part of the planning application process".

Cllr. Hartigan stated that swifts are a migrating bird from Africa and its numbers have declined by 80% in recent years due to the lack of suitable nesting sites in certain buildings.

Tom O'Neill, Heritage Officer, stated that he plans to hold a Swift survey with Bird Watch Ireland in the next year to inform the Planning Department of the requirements to encourage nesting sites.

On the Proposal of Cllr. Hartigan, seconded by Cllr. Novak Uí Chonchúir, it was unanimously agreed to make the inclusion of swift bird nesting boxes on suitable sites, a planning condition as part of the planning application process.

Item 3

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”.

Following lengthy discussion on this Notice of Motion, it was agreed to defer the Notice of Motion to a future meeting and have wording of Motion amended to apply to housing developments only, as outlined in minutes of meeting of 21st June, 2021.

Item 4

Presentation on Draft Planning Development Contribution Scheme

Noreen O’Connell, Executive Planner, gave a comprehensive presentation on the Draft Development Contribution Scheme. The making of a contribution scheme is a reserved function and S48 of the Planning & Development Act empowers Local Authorities to require payment of a development contribution as a condition of planning permission.

The new scheme from 2022-2026, with funding requests of approx. €99m, include Public Realm works countywide, provision and maintenance of burial grounds, upgrade of playgrounds and maintenance of community centres, provision of greenways, walkways and flood protection infrastructure.

The following timeline was outlined for the review of the development contribution scheme:

- Two workshops held with elected members on 28th September and 7th October at which a number of issues were discussed and recommendations had been made.
- Draft Scheme to go on display 16th October, 2021 for 6 weeks
- Chief Executive’s Report to issue to Elected Members on 13th December, 2021
- Briefing meeting with Elected Members early January 2022 on submissions to the Draft Scheme
- Scheme to be made at Council Meeting in January 2022

Members thanked Noreen for the comprehensive presentation and welcomed the list of projects being funded under the development contribution scheme.

A lengthy debate ensued and members expressed concern at the proposed increase of 25% in development levies, which could impact on first time buyers as developers pass on the charges, particularly in the current economic climate and the lack of available housing. They also expressed concern over the introduction of levies in Regeneration areas, where no levies existed under the current scheme, and the comparison of levies between commercial developments in rural and urban areas and the lack of services available for development in rural areas.

Cllr Galvin proposed that the Mayor should call a special meeting of the full Council to make the decision on the issue of the placing of the scheme on public display. This proposal did not receive any support. The decision to place the draft scheme on public display is an executive function.

A proposal to support the Executive to place the Scheme (as presented) on public display was agreed by the SPC, with one member opposing it. Members were informed that following public display, the Chief Executive would prepare a report on the submissions received, for the members to consider. M. Woods confirmed that another workshop for

elected members would be convened in advance of Council Meeting in January. The members will make or amend the proposed scheme at the January 2022 Council Meeting.

Item 5

Job Creation and Business Supports in Limerick

- **Industrial Development Authority (IDA)**

Will Corcoran, Regional Manager, MW, IDA and Ray O'Connor, Regional Manager SW, gave a presentation on IDA's Driving Recovery and Sustainable Growth Strategy 2021-2024, which was launched at a time of unprecedented uncertainty and accelerating change. Global Foreign Direct Investment has declined sharply and is expected to remain challenged through 2021. The IDA's ambition is to capitalise on opportunities to provide Multi-National Companies with solutions to challenges they face in this difficult global environment.

Over the period 2021-2024, the IDA hope to win 400 regional investments, (76 in the Mid-West) to support job creation and economic activity. The IDA are focused on securing investments from new and existing clients in the following sectors: Technology, Consumer & Business Services, International Financial Services, Biopharmaceuticals & Food, Medical Technologies and Engineering. In the mid-west, the IDA support 143 Companies, with direct/indirect employment totalling 43,504. Companies in Limerick include: Analog Devices, Dell Technology, WP Engine, General Motors, Uber, Northern Trust, ACI, Transact Campus, Regeneron, Johnson & Johnson, Cook Medical and Stryker, along with 40 indigenous companies benefitting indirectly.

Mr. Corcoran referred to the Advanced Manufacturing Facility (AMF) at the National Technology Park, which is nearing completion. It will house smart manufacturing technologies and be an opportunity for existing clients to embrace new technologies and will act as a catalyst for economic growth.

The delivery of the Strategy will require extensive collaboration with local / national stakeholders including the provision of proper development infrastructure, housing, schools, healthcare and place making ensuring Limerick is a good place to live/work and attract employees to the region.

- **Enterprise Ireland (EI)**

Jerry Moloney Regional Director MW, Enterprise Ireland, supported by Catherine Hogan, Sen. Regional Development Executive, gave a presentation on business supports provided by Enterprise Ireland. EI are responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises in world markets and work with entrepreneurs, established business owners and Irish multinational companies. The range of services provided is extensive, from funding to making introductions in key international markets.

Mr. Moloney referred to the following EI supported projects/initiatives in Limerick:

- Digital Collaboration Centre in Engine – to be completed by Q3 2022
- LEDP Centre – in excess of €1m invested for SME's – (currently over 1,000 jobs)
- Regional Technology Cluster Fund
- BNest Social Initiative – UL
- Community Enterprise Centres funded by EI
- Research and Innovation at 3rd level and business

EI has 593 clients in Limerick, with 9,774 people employed and provide a wide range of services to these companies.

While members welcomed the presentations from both the IDA and Enterprise Ireland, they expressed concern over staff shortages, particularly in the hospitality area and the low take-up of apprenticeships. They also highlighted the lack of services available to companies wishing to locate in rural towns.

Mr. Corcoran pointed out that the shortage of staff was a global issue, particularly in the technology and manufacturing sectors and that the IDA were working closely with the Academic Institutes and Regional Skills Forum to provide a suite of programmes for companies.

Mr. Moloney informed members that a lot of work was being done at transition year level to persuade students and parents to pursue the apprenticeship route rather than academic and that plans were being put in place to build a new campus for that purpose.

Replying to members, Mr. Moloney stated that plans did not materialise for projects at the landbank in Askeaton over the last 2-3 years and that they will continue to promote private and publically owned lands to companies who wish to locate in the region.

Item 6

Adoption of Limerick City and County Council's Draft Diaspora Strategy – GLOBAL LIMERICK 2021–2025

Tim O'Connor, Chairperson of the Global Limerick Advisory Group gave a verbal presentation on Limerick City and County Council's Draft Diaspora Strategy – GLOBAL LIMERICK 2021-2025.

The strategy, which is the culmination of a number of years work is very much based on a mutual relationship between Limerick and its Diaspora and holds huge potential.

Once the strategy is adopted, an action plan will be prepared to implement the objectives of the strategy and will focus on a number of key locations both internationally and locally. They will work closely with Central Government Agencies and Government of Ireland Embassies and Consulates around the world, to ensure maximum synergy with their activities.

He referred to the Year of the Invitation 2023 and The Ryder Cup 2027, which will be tremendous opportunities to engage with the Diaspora.

Members endorsed the draft strategy, stating that it was an excellent initiative, which will highlight the goodwill that exists for Limerick and promote tourism and economic activity in Limerick. They also complemented staff in the Economic Development and Enterprise Directorate who had worked on the preparation of the draft strategy.

Item 7

Update on Draft Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028

Item to be deferred to next meeting.

Item 8

Discussion on S254 Licences Fees (Tables & Chairs) for 2022

Members welcomed the large amount of outdoor dining facilities available in Limerick during the pandemic, which had been funded under the Outdoor Seating & Accessories for Tourism and

Hospitality Business Scheme, run by Failte Ireland and the Local Authorities. They also expressed concern that the licence fees for outdoor furniture on public areas, which had been waived for 2021, were very prohibitive going forward. Concern was also expressed over the lack of regulation regarding the placement of furniture on public footpaths and obstructions caused to the elderly and vulnerable users.

Pat Fitzgerald, SEO, stated that the fees are set at a national level and that the Planning Development Section were in discussion with the Department regarding fees for 2022 and will notify members of any update on same.

Nuala O'Connell, Senior Planner stated that all comments regarding regulations will be taken into consideration and a guidance leaflet would be prepared and circulated to all businesses involved in the Scheme.

Item 9

Any Other Business

Nil

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
Councillor Eddie Ryan,
Chairperson