

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE AND PLANNING STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 20TH JUNE, 2022 at 2PM IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE AND ONLINE.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor Eddie Ryan

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors: Daniel Butler, John Egan, Stephen Keary, Michael Murphy, John O'Donoghue, Olivia O'Sullivan, Martin Ryan, Jerome Scanlan, Catherine Slattery, Sasa Novak Uí Chonchúir

SECTORAL INTEREST NOMINEES:

Sean Golden and Diarmuid O'Shea Business/Commercial

PPN NOMINEES: Madeleine Lyes and Brian Thompson

OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Vincent Murray, Economic Development; Cecilia Larkin, Rory Corbett, Brid Burke, Trade & Investment; Maria Woods, Karen Burke, Forward Planning; Nuala O'Connell, Planning, Environment & Place Making; Alan Dooley, Digital Services.

Item 1

Adoption of Minutes from Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC Meeting of 23rd February, 2022.

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

B. Thompson referred to item in minutes regarding placement of chimneys in new houses and asked for minutes to be amended to include his opinion on the matter where he was not in approval of notice of motion and clarified that chimneys are not excluded from new houses as set out in the Building Regulations.

Item 2

Update on Development Plan and Local Area Plan Programme

K. Burke Senior Executive Planner, informed members that the first ever Limerick Development Plan covering the period 2022-2028 was adopted by the elected members at a special meeting on Friday, 17th June, 2022, subject to 6 further modifications. These included the zoning of lands at Ballysimon for a data centre, additional lands for enterprise and employment in Ballykeefe and Dooradoyle, additional lands for mixed use at two locations on Pa Healy Road and an additional residential zoning at Greenpark, which are identified at risk of flooding on the OPW maps.

The Council must notify the Office of the Planning Regulator(OPR) of any deviations within 5 days of the adoption of the Plan, who subsequently may notify the Minister of any non-compliance with their recommendations, who has 6 weeks to issue a direction on the Development Plan.

Six Local Area Plans (LAPS) have been incorporated into the Development Plan and ten LAPS will require review to ensure that they are in line with the Development Plan. A LAP is only mandatory if the population is greater than 5,000 e.g. Newcastlewest.

Referring to the 6 modifications to the Dev. Plan, V. Murray, A/DOS stated that the Council work in conjunction with the OPW who undertook CFRAMS, a Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Mgmt programme, who identify lands which could be at risk of flooding.

Item 3

Update on Town Centre First Plan Initiative

M. Woods, Senior Planner gave a presentation to members on the Town Centre First Plan. The Town Centre First Guidelines were published in February 2022 and the policy can be applied to a wide range of towns with varying population size, but highlights towns with a population of over 400. The policy aims to create town centres that functions as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreation hub for the local community.

Phase 1 includes the allocation of €100,000 for a town and Abbeyfeale has been assigned as the pilot town in Limerick.

The Town Centre First Plan will be very similar to the objectives of the Local Area Plan and consultation will be streamlined to avoid any duplication. Public consultation will commence at the end of the Summer period.

The Town Centre First initiative will also include the employment of a Town Regeneration Officer within the local authority and the establishment of local Town Teams.

While members welcomed the Initiative, they queried the availability of funding for the project and were informed that Urban Regeneration & Development Fund (URDF), Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) and Town and Village Renewal Scheme would be the main sources of funding for the scheme, but that every effort would be made to exhaust other sources including EU funding. Members suggested that a list of projects should be prioritised and documentation prepared in advance of applying for funding.

B. Thompson requested that the Council would make contact with members of the Abbeyfeale Community Council to update them on the Town Centre First Plan as early as possible.

Following queries regarding the appointment of the Town Regeneration Officer, V. Murray stated that a further update will be given to members once further information was received from the Department regarding the role.

Item 4

Planning & Development (Street Furniture Fees) Regulations 2022 – Section 254 Licences

R. Corbett, AO, Trade & Investment informed members that the street furniture licence fee for tables and chairs (€125 per table) has been waived for the remainder of the current year. However, business owners who wish to cater for outdoor dining on public roads require a licence under S.254 of the Regulations and have Employers and Public Liability Insurance.

While members welcomed the waiving of the fees for 2021/22, they queried the charge for future years and was informed that the fees charged were set out in the P&D Regs and such decisions were made by the Department on an annual basis.

Members were also notified that plans were submitted on applying for the licence and the process was straightforward and turned around very quickly.

Replying to members, C. Larkin stated that there were 2 types of facilities in the city:

- Parklet: tables and chairs provided by the local authority – Catherine Street
- BuildOuts: tables and chairs provided by business owners, which require a S254 Licence

She also pointed out that the opaque glass in pergolas will be replaced with clear glass to make them more user friendly.

Members welcomed the initiative and stated that they animated the streets and made them more user friendly, but also expressed concern over the availability of sufficient space for pedestrians and vulnerable users and requested that strict enforcement of restrictions should be applied and queried if there was a plan in place.

N. O'Connell, Senior Planner, stated that the Licensing Officer currently works closely with all business owners and that enforcement provisions are in place and can be taken when required.

Item 5

Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan – New Regional Aid Map for Ireland

Paraic Rattigan, Regional Manager Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan gave a presentation on the New Regional Aid Map for Ireland 2022-2027. Under the new agreed terms, regions covering 35.9% of Ireland's population will be allowed to receive Regional Aid from the State (a reduction of 15% from the period 2014-2021). The Regional Aid Map was decided by the European Commission, subject to strict criteria laid down in the Regional Aid Guidelines.

Under Regional Aid, businesses in economically disadvantaged areas can receive a form of state aid funded by the government to encourage investment and job creation. Over the last eight years, €160m has been granted in Regional Aid by the Government, which only forms 7.4% of Ireland's total State Aid.

Members thanked P. Rattigan for the presentation and expressed concern over the inequity of allocation between the Midwest and other regions. They also stated that rural Limerick required an additional stimulus to attract enterprise, employment and tourism to towns and villages in County Limerick.

P. Rattigan stated that it was not a good outcome for the Mid-West as it had a greater reduction compared to the other regions. He stated that the European Commission looked at the mid-west region as a whole, which had a higher GDP than other areas and that areas can only be included if they meet the Commissions strict criteria.

Members queried the metrics used and pointed out that the use of GDP as an indicator can over-estimate the actual wealth of a region. They referred to other indicators, which may be more appropriate and would liaise directly with P. Rattigan regarding same.

P. Rattigan pointed out that Foreign Direct Investment would not be affected in the mid-west region and that the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, worked with

stakeholders including Enterprise Ireland, the IDA and Fáilte Ireland in supporting their clients in attracting potential investments.

The new map will remain in place until 2027 and will be reviewed in 2023, once the findings of the Census 2022 are made available.

V. Murray informed members that the Chief Executives from Limerick, Clare and Tipperary have raised this matter at national level and have been informed that the situation could get worse post 2023 and to exhaust all other sources of funding where possible.

Members agreed that the presentation be circulated to full Council.

Item 7

Any Other Business

The Chairman congratulated Cllr. O'Sullivan on being elected as Cathaoirleach of the Metropolitan District and wished her all the best in the role.

He also congratulated P. Fitzgerald SEO, on his retirement after 42 years of service with the local authority. He stated that he was a gentleman and a pleasure to have worked with over the years.

He commended V. Murray, M. Woods and K. Burke on the adoption of the Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Forward Planning staff on all their hard work in preparing the Plan.

On behalf of the management and staff, V. Murray thanked Cllr. E. Ryan for his role in chairing the meetings of the SPC over the last 3 years and looked forward to working with him as an ordinary member for the remainder of the term. The new Chairperson will be elected at the July Council meeting.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____

**Councillor Eddie Ryan,
Chairperson**