



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

Stiúrthóireacht Forbartha Eacnamaíochta,
Comhairle Cathrach & Contae Luimnigh,
Cé na gCeannaithe,
Luimneach.

Economic Development,
Limerick City and County Council,
Merchant's Quay,
Limerick.

15th November, 2022

EIRCODE V94 EH90

To the Mayor and Each Member of Limerick City and County Council

t: +353 (0) 61 556 000
e: forwardplanning@limerick.ie

Chairperson's Report for the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee Meeting of 10th October, 2022

A Chomhairleoir, a chara,

A blended meeting of the above Strategic Policy Committee took place on 10th October, 2022. The following is a summary of the business transacted at the meeting.

Prior to the business proper of the meeting, it was unanimously agreed to hold a minute's silence in respect of the passing of Cllr. Jerry O'Dea (member of the SPC) and also for the community in Creeslough, Co. Donegal, following the devastating tragedy that took place on 7th October 2022.

Item 1

Adoption of Minutes from Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC Meeting of 20th June, 2022.

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

Item 2

Presentation on Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP)

V. Murray, A/DOS, Economic Dev & Enterprise stated that the making of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2021 was a statutory requirement under the Local Government Reform Act 2014. The purpose of the LECP was to set out over a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic and community development of the area, both by local authority directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

He stated that a LECP Advisory Steering Group had been set up, which included members of the LCDC and the Economic SPC and meetings are held at each stage of the Plan. He highlighted the six developmental stages of the Plan from preparation, public consultation to implementation and monitoring/evaluation. Stage 1 is currently underway with preparation of the Socio-Economic Analysis, including the 4 high level goals, which will go out to public consultation in January 2023. Once submissions are received and reviewed the draft plan will be prepared and following further consultation, it is hoped to have LECP Plan approved by Autumn 2023.

Members welcomed the presentation and acknowledged the volume of work involved in preparing the first LECP and expressed the importance of a Review of the LECP 2016-2022. They stated that it was a very important document and underpinned a lot of work carried out

 customerservices@limerick.ie

by the local authority and assisted in funding for many projects. They also suggested that the following be included in policies in the new Plan: plans to reduce car usage, working hubs and working from home and how they impact the environment.

Referring to HLG on Climate Action, which is not the remit of this SPC, members suggested the alignment of the SPC's with central government departments, which would be more beneficial in implementing policy. V. Murray stated that the SPCs were prescribed nationally by local government policy and can vary from time to time. Joint meetings with the Climate Action, Biodiversity & Environment SPC took place previously to discuss such matters and can be arranged where necessary.

Members queried the membership of the Steering Group and were advised that Cllr. E. Ryan & Cllr. B. Collins from this committee and Cllr. M. Collins as chair of LCDC were all members and it was hoped to also nominate a PPN representative from this committee.

Item 3

Nomination of Sectoral Interest to LECP Advisory Group

It was unanimously agreed that the PPN Plenary Forum would forward a nomination for Sectoral Interest on the LECP Advisory Group. This nomination would be one of the existing members of the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee and the PPN Plenary Forum would submit their nominee after their next meeting.

Item 4

Presentation on Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)

M. Woods, Senior Planner gave a presentation on the Residential Zoned Land Tax, which was announced in Budget 2022 and was part of the Finance Act, 2021. The purpose of this tax is to activate land for residential purposes, which is critical to increasing housing supply as part of the 'Housing for All' Strategy.

Highlights of the Residential Zoned Land Tax

- Tax is calculated at 3% of the market value of the land and is self-assessed
- It is operated through Revenue and will come into effect in February 2024
- Local authorities are required to undertake mapping to identify the lands in scope for tax in their functional areas, based on development plan and local area plan zonings
- All local authority lands / private lands are included and ownership is not taken into account
- Exclusions include: lands not zoned residential; lands on derelict sites register; lands required by social, community or governmental infrastructure; lands with historical / archaeological structures; and lands which are zoned for mixed use (unless they are considered vacant or idle).
- Provisions are provided for landowners to appeal decisions initially to the Local Authority and thereafter to An Bord Pleanála.
- The RZLT will replace the vacant site levy

M. Woods pointed out that it was a legal requirement to prepare a map to identify lands in scope by 1st November, 2022, which would go on public consultation until 1st January, 2023 and all submissions received would be placed online and be forwarded to Irish Water and Transport Infrastructure of Ireland. A further supplementary map, including any changes to zoning, would be prepared by 1st May 2023 including a further public consultation period and a final map would be prepared by 1st December 2023, which will be reviewed on an annual basis.

While members thanked Maria for the presentation, they vehemently opposed the introduction of this Residential Zoned Land Tax in the middle of a housing crisis. They expressed concern over the lack of development of zoned land in rural areas due to lack of resources /infrastructure and the hoarding of residential sites in suburban areas which is detrimental to housing supply.

Replying to members, M. Woods stated that

- all agricultural land which was zoned residential would be included in the map and that all permanently occupied buildings had to be mapped but will not be liable
- the cost to the Local Authority could not be identified until the final map was published
- the 3% tax will be collected through the Revenue Commissioners and the elected members queried if such monies would be ring-fenced for infrastructure projects in local authorities.
- the cost to the Local Authority could not be identified until the final map was published

Following further discussion, it was unanimously agreed that a Special Meeting of the full Council be requested in writing through the Mayor, to discuss this matter in full.

Item 5

Update on Shannon Estuary Task Force (SETF) – Consultation

Paraic Rattigan, Regional Manager Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan and Secretariat to the Shannon Estuary Economic Task Force gave a presentation on the newly formed Shannon Estuary Economic Task Force, which comprises of 11 different stakeholders appointed by the Tanaiste. The remit of the SETF is to consider the potential of the Shannon Estuary in terms of regional economic development across transport and logistics, manufacturing, renewable energy and tourism and develop a strategy to achieve this potential. The SEETF Group are at initial stages of preparing a report and associated action plan, with specific steps in areas of potential.

While members thanked P. Rattigan for the presentation, they expressed concern over the lack of connectivity with Shannon Foynes Port. Mr. Rattigan stated that while Shannon Foynes Port is regarded as an international port along with Dublin and Cork, it is the only port that is not connected via dual-carriageway / motorway and needs to be integrated with rail and motorway networks.

Item 6

Update on E-Planning

Dara McGuigan, Administrative Officer, Planning Development Section gave a presentation on the rollout of EPlanning portal to all local authorities, which will allow applicants/agents to submit planning applications in an electronic format. The project is led by the Local Government Management Agency in conjunction with all local authorities and plans to be rolled out by end of 2023. A pilot phase was completed with Tipperary and Galway County Council in May, 2022 with a very favourable outcome. Limerick City and County Council have been in engagement with the LGMA over the past 2 years and following proposed workshops with agents in November, it is hoped to commence the rollout of the system by December 2022. The benefits of EPlanning are it is a standardised process, only one copy of documents required, reduced printing and postage costs, payments can be made online and documents will be available for public inspection sooner.

Members thanked D. McGuigan for the presentation and stated that it will simplify the process for applying for planning permission in the future. Replying to queries, D. McGuigan stated:

- Planning applications will still be able to be submitted by post / in person
- Maps will be directly uploaded in pdf format so they should be of better quality/resolution
- Planning Regulations are being drafted to permit the electronic applications
- Eplanning will enhance the speed at which planning applications will go through the system, but the 8 week period for planning decisions will still remain
- Security – the online system is hosted by the LGMA and they have a data agreement with each local authority
- Cost - each local authority will make an annual contribution and some additional equipment may be required

Item 7

Correspondence

C. Larkin referred to letter of reply from the office of the Minister for Housing and Local Government regarding a request to amend building regulations to include the installation of chimney stacks in all new houses. Letter of reply was circulated to all members.

Item 8

Any Other Business

C. Larkin read item proposed by Trish Forde-Brennan and seconded by Declan Hehir PPN regarding the arrival of a large number of Ukranian refugees to Bruff village and the challenges it presents.

D. Hehir stated that while there was a complete welcome for the Ukranian Refugees to Bruff, who are currently housed in the former boarding school, which is now a private commercial enterprise, he called on the local authority to provide proper community, social and transport infrastructure to cater for the sudden increase in population to the town.

V. Murray stated that these are emergency measures and the former boarding school was suitable for remodelling quickly to meet the needs of the refugees from Ukraine. He also pointed out that the government have a team in place supporting all refugees in the country and Limerick City and County Council have an Inhouse team assigned to work with Ukranian refugees and will continue to work with the relevant authorities and look at getting longer term arrangements in place.

Cllr. O'Sullivan informed members that she had attended a recent meeting of the Ukranian Response Forum in Limerick with Darragh O'Brien, Minister for Housing & Local Government. Representatives from all relevant agencies were in attendance, who highlighted the range of resources/services that were required, particularly rural transport services to the Minister. She stated that there are 50,000 Ukranians in Ireland and 10,000 are currently employed in the workforce and alot of work is being carried out to help them integrate into the community. Members also highlighted the presence of Ukranian refugees in Kilfinane, Galbally and shortly in Cappamore and requested that proper transport facilities be put in place in rural villages.

B. Thompsom on behalf of PPN queried the sale of Toll Cottages at Verdant Place and suggested that it be used for social housing. V. Murray stated that the site had gone out for Expression of Interest and any proposals received will be presented to Council for consideration.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: *Bridie Collins*
**Councillor Bridie Collins,
Chairperson**