

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE AND PLANNING STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2022 at 2PM IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE AND ONLINE

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor Bridie Collins

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

SECTORAL INTERESTS/ PPN NOMINEES: Diarmuid O'Shea, Michael Joyce, Declan Hehir, Brian Thompson,

OTHERS: Jerry Hallissey, SFP; Mark Tiernan, Tiernan Properties; Francis Fitzpatrick, Limerick Leader;

OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Vincent Murray, Economic Development; Cecilia Larkin, Rory Corbett, Trade & Investment; Maria Woods, Karen Burke, Forward Planning; Mike Cantwell, Innovate; Bernie Moloney, LEO; Alan Dooley, Digital Strategy; Nula Gallagher, Planning Environment & Place-Making; Olive Downes, Environment & Place-Making; Seamus Hanrahan, Place-Making and Public Realm; Paraic Rattigan, MW Regional Enterprise;

APOLOGIES: Councillor E. O'Donovan,

Item 1

Adoption of Minutes from Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC Meeting of 10 October 2022.

The draft minutes were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Olivia O'Sullivan, seconded by Cllr. Jerome Scanlan and unanimously agreed

Eddie Ryan referred to an item in the minutes regarding the nomination of Sectoral Interest on the LECP Advisory Group. Cllr. Ryan proposed that he would resign from the LECP task force and was advised by the chair that protocol required Cllr. Ryan to have his resignation ratified by party leaders in writing.

Item 2

To consider Notice of Motion referred from Metropolitan District Meeting of the Council held on 24 October 2022, submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan

"I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that Limerick Council engage with businesses and residents on Nicholas Street to implement revitalisation plans for the Medieval Quarter".

In the absence of Cllr E. O'Donovan, this item was deferred to the next meeting of the SPC.

Item 3:

Presentation on Shannon Foynes Port – Jerry Hallissey, Head of Business Development

Mr Hallissey explained that Foynes Port is situated in one of the deepest estuaries in the world and as such represents a great opportunity for the region in terms of becoming a global hub for the renewable energy sector. He outlined the Port's future objectives for the medium to long term, and demonstrated future port demand and associated capacity requirements, such as port infrastructure and intermodal hinterland connectivity infrastructure. Mr Hallissey outlined the opportunity to create a "Global Trans-Shipment Hub" at Foynes and the establishment of the "Shannon Estuary Customs Free Port" status to support this. The potential of the cruise ship industry was also discussed and the associated infrastructure required.

Members thanked Mr Hallissey for his presentation. In response to queries, Mr Hallissey said;

- The Free Port Status is not an immediate priority for Shannon Foynes Port Company (SFPC), discussions with Minister Patrick O'Donovan have taken place to see how this could be achieved in conjunction with the Department of Finance. Mr Hallissey explained that Free Port Status would form part of a de-risking exercise for developers in the future.
- In relation to challenges to delivering on their objectives, Mr Hallissey said there is some uncertainty about the timelines because MARA (Maritime Area Regulatory Authority), which will take charge of overall facilitation of offshore renewable projects, is only due to be established in Q1 2023. Another challenge be grid connectivity, which is currently limited through MoneyPoint and Tarbert Island.
- In response to a query about land ownership, Mr Hallissey said; He is not entirely sure of the ownership of the particular lands in question and stated that the area of special protection near these lands would be looked at in line with any planning application.
- Within the next 5 years, Mr Hallissey expects that construction of the deep-water terminal will be well underway.
- Mr Hallissey said storage of wind energy is a challenge; however, battery technology and the conversion of electricity into hydrogen are possible solutions here. Mr Hallissey said that SFPC has the capability to allow for assembly and wet storage of turbines in the estuary, and stated that Foynes Port is second only to Rotterdam, as the largest, deepest water port in Europe.
- SFPC has a competitive advantage in terms of its water depth and its strategic plan and roadmap to achieve its potential. He confirmed that the Free Port status would facilitate container movements across the globe and that infrastructure, both road and rail, would benefit a connection between Foynes Port and Dublin port.
- Mr Hallissey said a public consultation process would take place as part of the planning process once an application is lodged.

Item 4

Presentation on Arthurs Quay Area Framework by Olive Downes, Senior Executive Engineer Place-Making & Public Realm

The presentation gave an update on the Arthur's Quay Area Framework and World Class Waterfront URDF Project. The Framework Plan will set out the guidelines for a comprehensive, plan-led and place-based approach to the redevelopment of the area and lead to the transformation of the city centre. Funding for the Framework Plan will come from the World Class Waterfront Urban Regeneration Development Fund Programme. The Council is working with landowners in the area on the framework, including The University of Limerick, Arthur's Quay Shopping Centre, Penney's and the owner of the Debenhams building. The Council is currently seeking tenders for a multi-disciplinary team to prepare a Framework Plan for the area. In advance of full development, the

council is considering some meanwhile uses of some of the area, specifically Honan's Quay/ rear of UL and Kings Island Green.

Members thanked Ms Downes for her presentation. Responding to queries, Nula Gallagher, Director of Services for Planning Environment & Place-Making said;

- There would be a number of rounds of consultations which will take place within the 9 month planning period of this project
- She agreed that scale is an important aspect to this project but also the principal of the approach is important and that we need to give consideration to people living in the city centre and what can attract people into the city
- Acknowledging that car parking was import in the city centre, given flooding constraints in the Arthurs Quay area, this would not be the appropriate location for a carpark
- Olive Downes said the council were expecting a multi-disciplinary team to win the bid to prepare the Framework Plan

Cllr Stephen Keary commented that Limerick has no heartbeat, pulse or town centre and queried the status and funding of a previously proposed pedestrian bridge in Arthurs Quay area. Vincent Murray, Economic Development and Enterprise Director of Service, said there was a lot of public objection to that particular bridge proposal, however alternative pedestrian bridges are being considered as part of the LSMATS.

Cllr Bridie Collins asked to be dis-associated from Cllr Keary's remarks about the heartbeat of the city centre.

Item 5

Presentation on Wayfinding Signage Programme by Olive Downes, Senior Executive Engineer Place-Making & Public Realm

Fáilte Ireland have made available funding of €468,750 through the Destination Towns Scheme to implement a new signage strategy for Limerick. The presentation gave an overview of plans for decluttering of existing signage and the rollout of a new signage in key areas of the city.

The members welcomed the proposals and were complementary of the colour and design scheme being considered for the new signage.

Responding to queries Ms Downes said:

- A mobile application with QR codes is also being looked at as part of the signage
- In relation to the size of the signage, the gateway signs would be 4 meters high, but this could be reviewed to ensure it is sufficient.
- In relation to county signs, this stage of the project is only looking at city centre signage, which is a condition of the Failte Ireland funding.
- A workshop for councillors will take place in January which will be followed by public consultations

Nula Gallagher, Director of Services for Planning Environment & Place-Making, commented:

- The scale and clarity of information on road signs will be looked at again
- Funding from Failte Ireland is for the city only but they may look at other villages and towns at a later stage and any opportunity for signage in county towns will be taken up.

Item 6

Nomination of Sectoral Interest to LECP Advisory Group

The Limerick PPN have nominated Brian Thompson as their representative on the LECP Advisory Group.

It was noted that Mr Thompsons' nomination to the LECP Advisory Group was communicated to a member of council staff in time for the October 10th SPC meeting, however the notice was not brought to the attention of the members at that time.

Item 7

Any Other Business

Cllr. Stephen Keary asked if there had been a response from the Minister to his motion to extend by 3 months the period for making a submission to the Residential Zoned Land Tax. Vincent Murray, Director of Service Economic Development and Enterprise, confirmed that the notice went to the Minister but no response has been received to date.