



25th August, 2023

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

**Chairperson's Report for the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning
Strategic Policy Committee Meeting of 10th July, 2023**

A Chomhairleoir, a chara,

A blended meeting of the above Strategic Policy Committee took place on 10th July, 2023. The following is a summary of the business transacted at the meeting.

Item 1

Adoption of Minutes from Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC Meeting of 10 July 2023.

There was one change to the draft minutes. Brian Thompson, PPN, asked that the following be amended:

Brian Thompson, PPN asked for his contribution on Taking in Charge to be recorded in the minutes; Mr Thompson recommended that a transfer agreement be signed between a consultant and the developer to transfer liability from the developer to the consultant. Ms Nuala O'Connell, Planning Environment & Place Making, confirmed that Mr Thompson's contribution had been received and that an update on the taking in charge process would be circulated soon.

Mr Thompson made the point that the draft proposals have the liability imposed on the Consultant and not with the Developer as it would be unlikely that the RIAI and Engineers Ireland would allow its members to sign such an undertaking and for individual consultants to do so. It was acknowledged as a good point at the meeting and an undertaking was given by officials to review the proposals with the LCCC Legal Advisors and return to the committee on this matter.

The draft minutes were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Eddie Ryan, seconded by Cllr. Stephen Keary.

Matters arising from the minutes:

Brian Thompson asked if review of the taking in charge process has been done. Response was that this is in hand and LCCC currently getting legal advice. There will be additional workshops in August/September. Mr Thompson responded that he looks forward to getting the review by next meeting.

The Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC Meeting now sits with the Planning, Environment & Place-Making Directorate.

Keith Enright and Diarmuid O'Shea have resigned from the Committee. Replacements will be nominated at the next meeting.

Item 2

Update on Planning Circulars, Development Contribution Waiver by Dara McGuigan, Administrative Officer, Planning.

Mr McGuigan gave a presentation to members on Circular Letter PL-04-2023. Main points from the presentation included:

- Waiver applies to all residential developments for one year – from 25th April 2023 to 24th April 2024.
- Applies to all residential developments that commence on site between the above dates and is completed no later than 31st December 2025. Will also apply to residential developments where Commencement Notice was submitted to the Local Authority on or after 28th March 2028 and to residential developments for which a 7 Day Notice was submitted to the Local Authority on or after 4th April 2023.
- Developer/promotor will not pay DC to LA but will have to submit Commencement Notice to LA. LA will draw down the levy from the DHLGH on a monthly basis, verify that development has commenced on site and that the project has completed within the timeframes. Developers/promotors have to pay Uisce Eireann water and waste water connection charges.
- Additional guidance has been sought from DHLGH and they are developing detailed guidance on scheme operation for LAs.

Members thanked Mr McGuigan for his presentation and raised the following queries:

- The Circular states the waiver is for residential properties, is there any waiver for developments such as extensions? Mr McGuigan responded that there is no clarity around extensions.
- The scheme began in April, has there been monitoring of applications since then. Mr McGuigan responded that applications monitored on a monthly basis and have been for the last 2 years. Over the last 3 months there has been 140 to 150 per month.
- If commencement notice came in in early March is it not eligible for waiver? The cut-off date as per the Circular is 28th March so it would be exempt.
- In the instance where the developer/promotor submitted the Commence Notice early, can this notice be cancelled and resubmitted? Mr McGuigan responded that there would be cases where Commencement Notices are resubmitted.
- It was queried that if there was no contribution being collected will the LA be reimbursed? The LA will be invoicing the DHLGH on a monthly basis to collect the contribution.
- Is the waiver subject to tax? No guidance regarding tax in Circular but there may be in the additional guidance from DHLGH. Not a tax issue. Unknown what the uptake in the waiver will be as it will take developers time to mobilise before submitting a Commencement Notice to LA. It may be September before those figures emerge.
- Does waiver cover Group Water Scheme? Response, these schemes are not specified in the Circular. Response – this is not covered in Circular.

Cllr Keary proposed the following on the Group Water Scheme:

I will move at the next meeting that, Limerick City and County Council, call on Mr. Darragh O'Brien, T.D., Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to introduce support measures for persons building houses whereby there are charges to group water schemes and for private wells in line with his support measures for waiving section 48 development contributions and the refunding of Uisce Eireann water and waste water connection charges. This is in the interest of fairness for those persons where Uisce Eireann connections are not available.

The above was seconded by Cllr Ryan.

The Motion was brought before the July meeting of the Council.

Item 3:

Presentation from Ronan O'Brien, Executive, Construction Industry Federation (CIF).

Mr O'Brien gave an overview of the challenges facing developers that affect the viability of constructing multi-unit private residential units in Limerick and outlined how the Local Authorities can aid with the viability of development by:

- Reducing charges & levies. Studies have shown that up to 45% of the cost of a house are in the forms of charges, levies and taxes. These costs used to be in the region of 20-25%.
- Streamlining planning and taking in charge processes.
- Ensuring the availability of serviced and zoned land.
- Providing the infrastructure to service sites.
- Collaborating with approved housing bodies and local builders to facilitate development on lands that have planning.

Full presentation will be circulated to members.

Members thanked Mr O'Brien for his presentation and discussion followed:

- No mention of refurbishments in presentation and building on brownfield sites instead of greenfield sites. Response – grants are targeted at homeowners and not developers and there is little incentive to be gained for developers. The Living Over the Shop Scheme can be a difficult process to accommodate all parties.
- Some discussion regarding high density numbers and if developers favour higher density developments e.g. 28 per hectare. Response – density is relevant to area and what is being sought. It was noted that there will be Government Guidelines in the not too distant future. The Dept. of Housing, Local Government & Heritage is looking at how more housing can be built on smaller sites and there was consultation in March 2023.
- Cllr Butler asked how loss of Development Levies will be filled, if the increased densities will affect open spaces. Response was that the Government will reimburse LCCC for Development Levies loss and that there is a strategy for playground throughout Limerick.
- Cllr Keary stated that the public transport infrastructure is not in Limerick to facilitate the higher density developments and most houses now have 2/3 cars. There needs to be better land use and better planning going forward.

There will be a taking in charge briefing at the next meeting.

Item 4:

Presentation on Climate Action by Kieran Reeves, Climate Action Coordinator, Environment & Climate Change

Mr Reeves gave a briefing on the LCCC Climate Action Plan which outlined:

- Context
- Requirements of the Plan
- Work done to date
- Timeline for the plan
- Next steps

Members thanked Mr Reeves for his presentation and there was discussion as follows:

The understanding of the Chair, Cllr Collins, is that LCCC is responsible for their own Climate Action Plan – Scope 1, 2 & 3 is what LCCC does itself other than communities.

Yes, Scope 1 & 2 is for emissions. Cllr Collins said that County Hall is very energy inefficient and would it be worth having a presentation from Dr Kirrane, UCC, Head of Sustainability and Climate Action at UCC to SPC/Full Council on what UCC did? Cllr Collins has a keen interest in this area as she completed the AILG UCC Level 7 Course on Climate Action & Environment Protection.

Cllr Ryan asked what kind of projects will be funded under the Community Climate Action Fund of €811,000. Mr Reeves responded that it will be up to the communities and there is still guidance coming forward on that matter.

Cllr Keary asked if there will be assistance provided to local communities when putting together funding applications. Response – yes, there will be a guide launch in September. Darren Barry, Community Climate Action Officer, will work with communities.

Item 5

Presentation on Micro Audit Grant from Mike Cantwell, LEO.

Mr Cantwell gave members an overview of the [Green for Micro Programme & Energy Efficiency Grant](#). The Energy Efficiency Grant supports the investment in technologies and equipment identified in a Green for Micro Report, GreenStart Report or a SEAI Energy Audit with 50% of eligible costs up to maximum of €5,000.00. Eligible businesses will be assigned a Green for Micro Consultant for 3 days to help make them more efficient.

The following are eligible for the Energy Grant:

- Small enterprises (employing between 1 - 50).
- Who have undertaken a Green for Micro, GreenStart or recent audit by SEAI registered energy auditor and who are not currently clients of Enterprise Ireland/IDA.
- Who are established, registered and operate within the area of the Local Enterprise Office.
- Where turnover is in excess of €30,000.00 annually and business is trading in excess of this month.

There was a query to clarify that while not all businesses are eligible for the grant, retail is eligible.

For full details of the scheme including eligible and ineligible costs, ineligible businesses and how to apply go to [Green for Micro Programme & Energy Efficiency Grant - Local Enterprise Office - Limerick](#)

Full details of scheme will be circulated to members.

Item 6

Any Other Business

Cllr Stephen Keary raised an issue about a motion he put forward to discuss “Tier 4 Developments” at recent council meeting. The motion was not discussed because the meeting had to be abandoned. Maria Woods, Senior Planner, said this issue could be discussed as the scheduled workshop did not go ahead. Mr Murray advised that he is happy for Maria Woods, Senior Planner, to set up Working Groups on this issue going forward.

No other business was raised.

Cllr. B. Collins, Chairperson