

Draft Minutes of Galway City Council Economic, Community and Cultural Development SPC Meeting held via Zoom on 19th February 2021 at 3.00pm

Presiding: Cllr. Neil McNelis.

Present:

Councillors: Cllr Donal Lyons, Cllr Eddie Hoare, Cllr Declan McDonnell, Cllr John Connolly, Cllr Clodagh Higgins, Cllr Noel Larkin, Cllr Michael Crowe,

Sectoral

Representatives: Mr Dominick Whelan, Mr Dave Hickey. Ms Fiona Neary

In Attendance: Mr Brian Barrett, A/Director of Services, Galway City Council
Mr Conor Kelly A/Senior Executive Officer Galway City Council
Mr Gary McMahon, A/Senior Executive Officer Galway City Council
Ms Caitriona Morgan, Administrative Officer Galway City Council
James Harrold, Arts Officer Galway City Council
Ruairi Lehmann, Tourism Officer Galway City Council
Thomas Melly, Staff Officer Galway City Council
Theresa Donahue, Staff Officer Galway City Council
Breda Glynn, Clerical Officer Galway City Council.

Apologies: Ms Geri Slevin,

1. Confirmation of the minutes of the Economic Community and Culture Development SPC meeting held on 11th December 2020.

Proposed: Cllr Donal Lyons
Seconded: Cllr Noel Larkin
And agreed by the members.

2. Matters Arising

Cllr Neil McNeillis welcomed Ms Fiona Neary to the committee and thanked outgoing member Ms Maeve Mulrennan for her contribution.

Cllr Donal Lyons requested an update on expressions of interest for Salthill Tourist Office. It was advised by Mr Ruairi Lehmann that the process was completed as per guidelines and after review of the applications received, none deemed suitable to advance any further. The next step is to issue a new call for new expressions of interest based on the findings from the recent process.

It was requested by Mr D Whelan to allow the minutes of the meeting to reflect the amount of time spent discussing a topic. His request was noted.

3. SPC Work Programme for 2021 (3.05pm-3.15pm)

Mr Brian Barrett gave outline of the Economic Community & Cultural Development SPC Work programme for 2021 Members raised queries on various aspects of this programme and their timelines of discussion by the committee. Mr Barrett advised that items will be notified to members in the agendas set out for meetings and associated documentation will be issued in line with standing orders of the SPC scheme.

4. Everybody Matters – Cultural Strategy Updates (3.15pm-3.35pm)

Mr Brian Barrett provided an update to the committee on Everybody Matters - The Cultural Sustainability Strategy Framework for Galway 2016-2025. It emerged from a recognition by Galway City Council of the role of culture in Galway, the connection between culture and local sustainable development and the potential growth of the cultural and wider creative industry sectors.

This Cultural Sustainability Strategy Framework forms one part of a broad strategic approach that puts culture at the centre of local development. The strategy reflects the policies set out in the City and County Development Plans, Corporate Plans and Economic Sustainability Strategies, and contributes to Local Economic and Community Plans, the emerging Tourism Sustainability Strategy and Branding Policy.

The strategy contains seven strategic aims which Mr Barrett outlined to the group. The report was welcomed by the committee and questions arising were answered by Mr Barrett.

Ms Fiona Neary queried how the strategy aligns with the new City Council Arts Strategy, the Next Wave and Mr Barrett advised the Next Wave strategy is one delivery element of this overarching cultural strategy.

Cllr McNeilis questioned what will be needed in terms of the cultural sectors health and wellbeing post covid. Mr Barrett advised that the implementation of the recommendations of the national taskforce will be key in the recovery of this sector and a number of programmes are proposed to deliver on these recommendations. Cllr Eddie Hoare queried what steps GCC are taking to support artists to allow them to return to the arts post covid. Mr Barrett advised of a number of national funding initiatives, including the City Arts Programme, Creative Ireland Programme and Town Hall Theatre programme and also funding programmes being run by the Tourism Officer Ruairi Lehmann will all incorporate activity local representatives of the arts

sector. Also it is understood from indications nationally that supporting initiatives will continue in 2021.

5. Covid 19 Community Response Forum Update – Keeping Well. (3.35pm-3.50pm)

Ms Caitriona Morgan provided update from the COVID-19 Community Response Forum, co-ordinated by Galway City Council which is continuing to meet fortnightly to lead the co-ordination of COVID-19 community supports and resilience and to ensure that there is a co-ordinated community response with the voluntary and statutory agencies.

The Galway City Community Call Helpline continues to operate with over 1000 calls responded to to-date. Ms Morgan also outlined to the group the new Keep Well Initiative which has been launched and the main themes incorporated under this resilience campaign. The Community Response forum are also highlight supports that will needed post covid and Ms Morgan expanded on a number of initiatives being run locally and nationally including Living Well, Lets Get Connected and programmes with Libraries.

Ms Morgan also advised on the different funding schemes ongoing such as Community Enhancement programme, Community Mental Health Fund and the second round of the Covid 19 Emergency funds which support the services needed in the community during this time.

Cllr McNeilis thanked Ms Morgan for her update and congratulated her and the community groups on the work done and impact it has for the people of the city who need it.

Cllr John Connolly echoed these sentiments and asked how the impact is being measured.

Ms Morgan advised of the reporting structures in place and the ongoing monitoring of same to plan for responses.

Mr Gary McMahon advised of the on the ground feedback received from voluntary groups on the impact of the programmes. Mr Brian Barrett advised the group that issues raised locally care fed back to the Department and have collectively influenced quick responses from central government.

Mr Dave Hickey remarked of this positive initiative of Galway City Council and that the impact on the ground is evident and it should be promoted as a positive aspect of GCC work.

6. Presentation by Western Regional Drug Taskforce – Planet Youth for Galway City (3.50pm – 4.15pm)

Mr Gary McMahon introduced to the group Mr Emmet Major from Western Regional Drug Taskforce. Galway City Council have partnered on and funded the public health initiative Planet Youth which was presented to the group. Mr Major gave a progress update on the initiative to date. He advised of separate projects running in the West of Ireland, which are being based on the Icelandic model. The partners of the initiative have funded €11,000 per annum. The programme is run every 2 years aimed at 15/16 year olds being surveyed. Individualised school reports can be generated on issues facing the youth e.g. bullying/physical activity levels. This information gathered in the surveys is transferred to project partners in Reykjavik, where it is analysed and the reports are prepared. This enables the Galway team to generate county or school reports. The aim is to provide for community based supports for prevention of issues affecting youth groups.

This is the first initiative of this kind in Ireland and aims to be not a reactive initiative but a preventative one.

Cllr Neil McNeilis thanked Mr Major for the update and queried how the scheme operates with community or government agencies. Mr Major advised that project is engaging with all the relevant stakeholders in the city and county. He made reference for a campaign to develop a voucher system for young people to access relevant recreational activities which was very successful in the original Icelandic model and would be something that should be replicated in Ireland. Mr D Whelan welcomed the report and was glad to see the Planet Youth project discussed at this SPC.

7. Update on Atlantic Economic Corridor initiatives (4.15pm – 4.40pm)

Mr Conor Kelly gave update on the AEC initiatives. The presentation began with Mr Kelly outlining the concept of what the AEC aims to achieve through its objectives. The group was briefed on the AEC Enterprise Hubs Strategy, and the opportunities for Galway. The REDF Funding of €9.7m for innovation space in Galway and the projects to benefit was also discussed. Mr Kelly also advised the meeting of the Hub Outreach Scheme being facilitated by Galway City Council on behalf of the AEC/WDC. The presentation was welcomed by Mr Dave Hickey and it was requested to place on the agenda again in the future as it's an area that has many opportunities. Cllr John Connolly queried the effects of remote working on the effectiveness of local government and Cllr Clodagh Higgins had queries in regard to the some of the survey results presented and Mr Kelly will advise the group further on this. It was agreed to follow up on remote working at a future meeting of SPC.

8. Update on Restart Grants and Business Supports (4.40-4.55pm)

Mr Conor Kelly and Mr Ruairi Lehmann updated the meeting on the Restart Grant Scheme and the Covid 19 Business Supports that are in place.

Mr Ruairi Lehmann advised the meeting that a document which has collated the various funding from agencies available to businesses will be distributed to members after the meeting. He advised in the past number of weeks new schemes have been announced for businesses not covered under the Restart Grants Scheme.

The presentation was welcomed by members with Cllr McNeilis requesting that members forward details of assistance and progress to all relevant groups they engage with. Cllr Declan McDonnell queried the areas of city which are experiencing difficulty with insufficient broadband and Mr. C Kelly will follow up on this query with the City Broadband Officer. Mr Dominic Whelan queried the availability of grants to social enterprises who have a retail front. Mr Brian Barrett advised this particular grant only applies to a qualifying business/organisation operating from a rateable premises.

9. AOB (4.55 – 5pm)

Mr Brian Barrett advised the committee of the that the first consultation phase for developing the City Development Plan 2023-2029 is currently in operation. The preparation and adoption of the new City Development plan will be ongoing over the next 2 years and involves 3 separate consultation stages, of which the current one is the first, to enable the maximum citizen participation. There is an online facility to engage with the process which he advise the meeting of and encouraged them and their respective host organisations to make submissions through group on an issues paper which has been prepared by Galway City Council.

Cllr Neil McNeilis acknowledged the retirement of Mr Padraic Breathnach from Galway Arts Centre and as a committee wanted to wish him well on his future.

The meeting concluded.