

Minutes of Meeting of Planning Strategic Policy Committee held on 1st March 2022 via Zoom

Presiding:	Cllr. Peter Keane
Present:	Cllr. Owen Hanley
	Cllr. Niall McNelis
	Cllr. Imelda Byrne
	Cllr. Mike Crowe
	Cllr. Clodagh Higgins
	Cllr. Noel Larkin
	Mr. Derrick Hambleton (Galway City Community Network)
	Mr. Brendan Mulligan (Galway City Community Network)
Apologies:	Cllr. Frank Fahy
In Attendance:	Ms. Patricia Philbin, Director of Services
	Ms. Caroline Phelan, Senior Planner
	Mr. Liam Blake, Senior Executive Planner
	Ms. Helen Coleman, Senior Executive Planner
	Ms. Emma Silke, Administrative Officer
	Ms. Maura Harrington, Executive Planner
	Ms. Kate Moloney, A/Executive Planner
	Ms. Marcella Kilgarriff, Assistant Staff Officer

Cllr. Peter Keane, Chairperson, welcomed members and officials to the meeting which was being held virtually via Zoom. Cllr. Peter Keane, Ms. Patricia Philbin and Ms. Emma Silke attended from the Council Chamber.

1. Minutes & Matters Arising

Mr. B Mulligan raised a matter of accuracy regarding the reference made by Mr. D. Hambleton to the wastewater treatment plant and asked that it be noted Mr. Hambleton stated at the meeting on 10th December 2021 that the treatment plant was a matter of priority since 2006. He also asked that Cllr. N. McNelis' statement that the treatment plant is a critical piece of infrastructure be noted in the minutes. This was agreed.

Ms. P. Philbin advised that a meeting took place with the Galway County Council executive. Their Planning SPC has not yet had its first meeting of 2022 so no date has been agreed for a joint meeting, however, Ms. Philbin agreed to revert with potential dates once agreed. She advised that it may be useful to invite Irish Water to that meeting.

No recruitment has taken place in relation to Short Term Letting. There are several vacancies throughout the organisation and the Planning Department are continuing to pursue additional resources.

Ms. C. Phelan advised that the creation of a Heritage Forum has been deferred until such a time as new guidelines are issued by the Heritage Council. If no new regulations are issued by June 2022, Galway City Council will move ahead with the Forum using the old guidelines. Mr. B. Mulligan suggested that expressions of interest be requested in advance of June to avoid delays in setting up the Forum.

Mr. B. Mulligan asked that the dates of future SPC meetings have regard for the stages of the City Development Plan and Cllr. P. Keane agreed that this could be looked at to see if the dates could be brought forward to have regard to the Development Plan process.

The minutes of the meeting, held on 10th December 2021, were proposed by Cllr. N. Larkin, seconded by Cllr. I. Byrne.

2. Draft Galway City Development Plan

Ms. H. Coleman gave a presentation outlining the critical elements and policy contexts of the Draft City Development Plan 2023-2029. It was agreed that the presentation would be circulated to all members following the meeting.

Ms. H. Coleman responded to queries and advised that while there are performance indicators, the City Development Plan is primarily a policy framework and is not in place to set targets. Ms. Coleman advised that the Plan is underpinned by the need for action on climate change. She advised that she would follow up with the Environment Section to find out the details of resources and timescales for the Energy Masterplan and the Green Spaces Strategy as these are not within the Planning remit.

The 15 minute concept has been developed in other cities. The concept reflects the ambition that all daily needs i.e. bus stop, local shop, can be accessed within a 15 minute walk. The Core strategy monitoring framework is a new requirement and all Local Authorities will be required to adhere to national guidelines once agreed. The 2 year interim report will outline progress made with the Plan. The HNDA will facilitate monitoring and gathering of relevant information.

Ms. C. Phelan reiterated that the concept of targets is not typically associated with the Development Plan, it is a document to facilitate the creation of robust policy that is fit for purpose. The 15 minute city concept will link in with the retail strategy and aligns with climate action.

In relation to the harbour, Ms. Phelan advised that an appeal has been with An Bord Pleanála since 2014. As soon as a decision is made on this, GCC will be in a better place to see what might be possible for the future.

Ms. Phelan advised that the 20-30% residential element of Bonham Quay is part of the larger Ceannt Quarter development, where it is envisaged there will be significant residential development. The Ceannt Station planning application is currently under appeal to An Bord Pleanála.

3. Headford Road Local Area Plan

Ms. C. Phelan advised that the current low density development in the Headford Road area creates poor public realm areas and makes the environment hostile for pedestrians and cyclists. A framework LAP has been created for this area. GCC are looking at the redevelopment of the Dyke Road area, in conjunction with the LDA. Applications were made for URDF funding but this was unsuccessful.

A second stream of funding was secured through the URDF for the railway bridge. It is not likely that the LAP will commence before the Development Plan comes into effect in January 2023. The submissions made on the Draft Plan by the public will assist with the development of the LAP and it will be a high priority for 2023.

Ms. P. Philbin advised that the LDA are also involved with the development of the Sandy Road site. The design team is being appointed for the Dyke Road site and they are not expected to be on site until 2025/2026.

Ms. Phelan advised that a framework plan has been prepared and that work has been happening in the background in relation to the Headford Road area. The LAP will be a priority after that City Development Plan has been finalised. If the Dyke Road is not done in advance, it will be included in the LAP.

4. Murrough Local Area Plan

Ms. C. Phelan stated that the amenity qualities of the Murrough area are huge assets, such as Ballyloughane Beach. The idea would be to keep the semi-natural characteristics of the area but allowing a quantum of development for it to become a destination location. No LAP has been prepared. The GMIT acquisition of lands in the area is a huge bonus and it is proposed that the land be used for amenity purposes. The last engagement between the Planning Section and GMIT was in relation to access, which is a key issue. GMIT has commissioned studies and engaged with URDF. Land has been retained for recreation and amenity purposes outside of any LAP.

Mr. D. Hambleton noted that the Murrough LAP has been on at least 2 previous City Development Plans.

Cllr. O. Hanley asked what kind of development specifically would be anticipated for recreation and amenity. With 2/3 already earmarked, residential development would be quite limited. Cllr. Hanley queried if there was any potential to restore Murrough Pier.

Ms. C. Phelan advised that there is an allowance for uses in G Zone. There is an objective for amenity, with the promenade and public access key. The possibility of aqua sports could be investigated. A commitment to a timeframe could not be given at this point however but Galway City Council will recommence talks with GMIT.

Ms. Phelan confirmed that Murrough House is a protected structure.

5. Agenda for Next Meeting

Cllr. O. Hanley asked for an update on Development Contribution Levies and for examples from other Local Authorities if possible.

Mr. B. Mulligan requested that the Planning aspects of the Housing Delivery Action Plan be discussed, along with the Vacant Sites Register, Sandy Road and Dyke Road regeneration and the implementation of the Public Realm Strategy.

Cllr. P. Keane advised that these topics would be taken into consideration. The next meeting will hopefully take place in person. A meeting will be organised with the County Council, NWRA and Irish Water and the dates for the next SPC meetings will be rearranged where possible to coincide with the stages of the Draft Development Plan.

6. AOB

Mr. B. Mulligan asked for a work programme for the Planning SPC to be provided. He noted that there was no work programme for 2021 or 2020.

Cllr. O. Hanley asked how the Council links in with regional authorities regarding funding.

Ms. P. Philbin advised that Galway City Council do engage with the NWRA regarding access to European funding. No additional funding source has been advertised outside of the URDF. The NWRA will be invited to the meeting with the County Council and can provide details of any upcoming funding streams.

Ms. Philbin advised that the Planning Section would revert with a work programme for 2022.

Cllr. Keane also thanked all for attending and advised that meeting dates will be issued as soon as possible. The meeting then concluded.