

Minutes of Meeting of Planning Strategic Policy Committee held on 12th October 2022 via MS Teams & in Council Chamber

- Presiding:** Cllr. Peter Keane
- Present:** Cllr. M.J. Crowe
Mr. Brendan Mulligan (Galway City Community Network)
Mr. Derrick Hambleton (Galway City Community Network)
- 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. Simone Watson, Senior Staff Officer
Ms. Marcella Kilgarriff, Assistant Staff Officer
- Present Online:** Cllr. Owen Hanley
Cllr. Niall McNelis
Cllr. Imelda Byrne
Cllr. Clodagh Higgins
Cllr. Frank Fahy
Mr. Peter Staunton, Executive Planner
Ms. Maura Harrington, Executive Planner
- Apologies:** Ms. Betsy Boland (Galway Chamber)
Dr. Jim Higgins, Heritage Officer

Cllr. Peter Keane, Chairperson, welcomed members and officials to the meeting which was being held virtually via MS Teams & from the Council Chamber. Apologies were noted for Ms. B. Boland and Dr J. Higgins. It was agreed to defer Item 4 – Draft Heritage Plan Update as Dr Higgins was not available to make his presentation.

Cllr. F. Fahy requested that the SPC look at the bridge on the Dyke Road, which is a protected structure. The bridge has been hit by vehicles from both sides and is in bad condition.

1. Minutes & Matters Arising

The minutes of meeting dated 14th June 2022 were proposed by Cllr. F. Fahy and seconded by Cllr. M. Crowe.

Mr. B. Mulligan stated that it was not noted in the minutes that Cllr. P. Keane had suggested a date in September for the joint SPC meeting with the County Council.

Mr. Mulligan requested clarity on the recruitment of additional staff, a proposed date for the joint SPC, why the planned meeting of the SPC did not take place in September and why items proposed by members for inclusion are not on the agenda.

Ms. P. Philbin advised that the NWRA have advanced their model for the MASP, a researcher has been tendered and secured. The Chair of the City Council Planning SPC and the County Council Planning SPC are liaising to seek a suitable date.

Ms. Philbin stated that a number of additional administrative staff have been recruited and a number of technical staff will be recruited.

A meeting of the Planning SPC did not take place in September as a date could not be secured which would allow the majority of members to attend.

Cllr. F. Fahy noted that Terryland Castle is referred to as Tirellan Castle in the minutes and that this is incorrect.

It was agreed to circulate a list of the technical staff being recruited to members.

2. Update on Draft City Development Plan

Ms. H. Coleman gave an update on the Draft City Development Plan 2023-2029. She advised that the 99 week period is almost at an end. Elected Members met in July to discuss the 280 submissions received from the public consultation. The 183 Material Alterations went on display for a 4 week period in September and Appropriate Assessments and Environmental Assessments have been carried out. The Planning Department are currently reviewing the 108 submissions in relation to the Material Alterations and the Chief Executive's report is being prepared. It is hoped that this report will be issued to Elected Members by the end of October. Meetings have been provisionally scheduled for the end of November. It is hoped that the Plan will be adopted at the December Council meeting and will come into effect in January 2023. An interim document must be produced after adoption for the Office of the Planning Regulator and the Galway City Council website.

It was clarified that the SPC has no statutory input into the Development Plan process and external members were afforded the opportunity to make submissions during the public consultation period.

Cllr. P. Keane suggested that, although the SPC have no formal input into the Chief Executive report, the next meeting of the Planning SPC take place on a date between 31st October and 21st November to facilitate a discussion on the report.

Mr. B. Mulligan made the following statement and asked that it be recorded in the minutes;

"At the 5th meeting of the Planning SPC in September 2020, I described it as being dysfunctional. This is its 13th meeting. The Planning SPC is a sham in that it is not what it is purported to be. Its purpose is, and I quote from the act, "to consider matters connected with the formulation, development, monitoring and review of policy which relate to the functions of the local authority and to advise the authority on those matters." [Section 48 (1) of the Local Government Act of 2001, as amended]. There has been hardly any engagement at the 13 meetings of the Planning SPC to date on policy. I am calling it out for what it is – a sham."

Ms. P. Philbin stated that the statutory process in relation to the Development Plan has been followed.

3. Large Scale Housing Developments

Mr. L. Blake gave a presentation on Large Scale Residential Development.

It was confirmed that the 10% requirement for social/affordable housing will still apply under the LRD process.

Regarding staff, Mr. Blake and Ms. C. Phelan advised that significant resources were needed for the SHD process and that LRD applications should not require significantly more in terms of staff.

Ms. Philbin advised that the requests for the 7 technical staff that are to be recruited have been forwarded to the Department for sanction.

4. Draft Heritage Plan Update

This item was deferred as Dr J. Higgins sent his apologies.

5. Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities July 2022

Ms. H. Coleman gave a presentation on the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities. She advised that the draft guidelines were used for the Draft Galway City Development Plan but these new guidelines would not be utilised until the next Development Plan.

It was agreed to circulate the presentations given to the members following the meeting.

6. Residential Zoned Land Tax – Guidelines for Planning Authorities June 2022

Ms. C. Phelan gave a presentation on the Residential Zoned Land Tax.

Ms. Phelan advised that pre-consultation between Irish Water and the Planning Department has taken place since the last SPC meeting in relation to Ardaun. In the Draft Development Plan it is specified that the lands are not serviced. Irish Water are at design phase for the extension at the Dublin Road, which has been named the Ardaun Extension and is specifically to service Ardaun Phase 1.

The initial map required for the Residential Zoned Land Tax will be supplemental, which will then be reviewed.

Ms. Phelan acknowledged that the tax will be 3%, which is down from the 7% charged under the Vacant Site Levy. The maps will show an overall hectarage, not individual sites.

7. Agenda for Next Meeting

Mr. B. Mulligan requested that the following be added to the agenda of the next SPC meeting;

- Update on Short Term Letting
- Update on LDA Dyke Road & Sandy Road
- Update on Vacant Site Levy
- Work Programme 2023
- Preliminary Population Results – Census 2022.

Cllr. M. Crowe referenced the minutes of the last meeting on 14th June where he mentioned the appearance of ESB substations throughout the city. He requested an update on what can be done about these substations at the next meeting.

Cllr. N. McNelis requested an update on the flood defence process.

Dr J. Higgins will give an update in relation to the Draft Heritage Plan and the Heritage Forum at the next meeting.

Mr. D. Hambleton asked for an update on how the new legislation in relation to solar panels might affect protected structures.

8. AOB

Mr. B. Mulligan offered his congratulations to Mr. Emmett Humphreys, Senior Executive Architect, on the success of the Architecture on the Edge Festival.

Cllr. P. Keane thanked all for attending and advised that a date for the next meeting would be circulated as soon as possible. He suggested that the Joint SPC with the County Council could take place on the same date, if feasible. The meeting then concluded.