

**Minutes of Meeting of Galway City Planning Strategic Policy Committee held on 8th November
2022 via MS Teams & Connacht Hotel**

- Presiding:** Cllr. Peter Keane, Galway City Council
- Present:** Cllr. Frank Fahy
Cllr. Mike Crowe
Mr. Brendan Mulligan (Galway City Community Network)
Mr. Phelim O’Neill, LDA
- Ms. Patricia Philbin, Director of Services
Ms. Caroline Phelan, Senior Planner
Ms. Helen Coleman, Senior Executive Planner
Mr. Jim Higgins, Heritage Officer
Ms. Simone Watson, Senior Staff Officer
Ms. Marcella Kilgarriff, Assistant Staff Officer
- Present Online:** Cllr. Owen Hanley, Galway City Council
Cllr. Clodagh Higgins, Galway City Council
Ms. Betsy Boland, Galway Chamber
Mr. Uinsinn Finn, Senior Engineer
Ms. Laurena Mitchell, Senior Executive Officer
Mr. Liam Blake, Senior Executive Planner
Mr. Ronan O’Reilly, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. Emmett Humphreys, Senior Executive Architect
Ms. Maura Harrington, Executive Planner
Ms. Kate Moloney, A/Executive Planner
- Apologies:** Cllr. Noel Larkin, Galway City Council
Cllr. Imelda Byrne, Galway City Council
Mr. Derrick Hambleton (Galway City Community Network)
Ms. Marian Spelman, ICTU

Cllr. Peter Keane, Chairperson, welcomed members and officials to the meeting which was being held virtually via MS Teams & from the Connacht Hotel.

1. Minutes & Matters Arising

Cllr. F. Fahy thanked all involved in expediting the works that he requested on the bridge at the Dyke Road during the last meeting on 12th October. He advised that the works have now been completed to a very high standard.

In relation to the minutes from the meeting of 12th October, Mr. B. Mulligan advised that external members of the SPC had not been afforded any greater opportunity than the general public to engage with the Draft City Development Plan and he asked that the reference to this be edited or removed from the minutes. This was agreed.

The minutes of meeting dated 12th October 2022 were proposed by Cllr. F. Fahy, seconded by Mr. B. Mulligan and agreed by all.

2. Update on Dyke Road and Sandy Road Regeneration Sites

Mr. Phelim O'Neill from the LDA gave an update on the Dyke Road and Sandy Road regeneration sites. He advised that the LDA have been working with Galway City Council on the redevelopment of the sites. The redevelopment will take place on a phased basis. Regarding the Dyke Road site, Mr. O'Neill stated that the intention would be for the Black Box Theatre to remain operational and that works will take place around it until a review takes place on a possible replacement, be it at the Dyke Road site or at an alternative location.

The location of the Dyke Road site and its interaction with the Headford Road will be an important consideration. The process of procuring a full design team has commenced. It is estimated that the framework plan will begin in Q1 2023 and should take 15 months approximately. Public consultation will take place.

It is envisaged that the site could cater for 170 – 200 homes, likely higher density apartments with a focus on affordable key worker accommodation.

Ms. P. Philbin advised that Mr. B. Barrett will be leading a cultural review which will examine the requirements for a venue to replace the Black Box. The new venue may be facilitated at the Dyke Road but alternative locations will also be considered.

In relation to the Sandy Road site, Mr. O'Neill stated that the framework plan should go out to public consultation in Q1 2023. Stakeholders include Galway City Council, Galway County Council and the ESB, as well as other private land owners. Ms. Philbin advised that unions have been notified and engagement will take place with outdoor staff who work from the Sandy Road Depot currently. Social enterprises currently located in the Sandy Road premises will be looked to accommodate on the redeveloped site.

3. Flood Defences Update

Mr. R. O'Reilly gave a presentation on the plan for flood defences in Galway City. Mr. O'Reilly confirmed that engagement has taken place with the Active Travel team in Galway City Council. It is too early at this stage to comment on phasing and completion. Displacement of water is a risk and is being considered as part of the plans.

Opportunities for walkways and cycleways as well as the potential to extend the prom were noted.

4. Galway City Development Plan – Update on CE Report on Material Alterations

Ms. H. Coleman advised that 108 submissions were received on the Material Alterations. The submissions were listed and summarised and responses given by the Chief Executive. This report was issued to Elected Members and the members of the Planning SPC.

Mr. B. Mulligan outlined the GCCN position on the Chief Executive's report which was circulated to members after the meeting.

"Given the limited time available since receipt of the report, GCCN has not had an opportunity to convene an Environmental Linkage Group meeting to comprehensively consider the Chief Executive's Report.

GCCN supports the following specific submissions and respectfully requests that Councillors ensure consistency with the recommendations in these submissions in making the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029.

- 1. GLWC-C5-1 Environmental Protection Agency*
- 2. GLWC-C5-41 Irish Water*

3. *GLWC-C5-77 The Office of the Planning Regulator*
4. *GLWC-C5-81 An Taisce – Galway Planning Committee*
5. *GLWC-C5-85 Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage – Dev. Appl. Unit*
6. *GLWC-C5-86 Friends of Merlin Woods*
7. *GLWC-C5-105 National Transport Authority”*

GCCN Representatives on the Planning SPC received an electronic copy of the Chief Executive’s Report by email on the afternoon of the 2nd November 2022.

5. Draft Heritage Plan Update

Mr. J. Higgins updated members on the Draft Heritage Plan. He advised that a number of people have indicated interest in being on the Heritage Plan Forum and that it may be in order to have the first meeting at the end of November. Cllr. P. Keane requested that a list of members be provided to the Council to be endorsed at the December Council meeting.

6. ESB Utility Boxes

Mr. L. Blake explained the regulations around ESB/telecommunications boxes. Mr. Blake advised that the box opposite the Hardiman Hotel is a gas installation which is covered by separate legislation.

Ms. C. Phelan advised that sanction has been given for a Conservation Architect which could be an opportunity to advance plans for the Architectural Conservation Areas, including ESB boxes.

7. Preliminary Census Results 2022

Mr. B. Mulligan gave a presentation in relation to the population growth in Galway City based on the preliminary results of the Census 2022, highlighting concerns regarding the slowing growth rate compared to other counties, including County Galway. He cautioned that it will be difficult to reach NPF targets for 2026, 2031 or 2040 at the current rate.

Ms. C. Phelan advised that there appears to be a disparity between results presented by Mr. Mulligan compared to those sent by the LGMA. Ms. Phelan noted the high youth population in the city and family formation trends. She stated that the results would need more analysis. It was agreed to circulate the LGMA figures to members after the meeting.

8. Short Term Letting Update

Ms. C. Phelan advised that figures in relation to Short Term Letting have been returned to the Department. 20 providers are being pursued at the moment. Short Term Letting providers can be prosecuted. There has been an increase in applications for Short Term Letting, but the Planning Department would usually recommend refusal due to the current housing situation.

9. Vacant Site Levy

Ms. C. Phelan advised that the Vacant Site Levy payments that are still outstanding have been passed to Finance for and have entered a debt collection process. The Vacant Site Levy has been replaced by the Residential Zoned Land Tax.

10. Work Programme 2023

Ms. P. Philbin advised that the Annual Service Delivery Plan for 2023 and Budget 2023 have yet to be adopted so the work programme cannot yet be agreed. A commitment was given to prioritise the work programme for the SPC for the next meeting.

11. AOB

Cllr. M. Crowe queried works being carried out at the Dyke Road. It was confirmed that these works are being carried out by Irish Water and the work programme is due to run into 2023.

Cllr. P. Keane thanked all for attending and the meeting concluded.