

## Notes on Planning SPC Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022 (a hybrid meeting)

### Present:

Cllr Peter Keane, Cllr Frank Fahy, Cllr Michael Crowe

Brendan Mulligan

### In attendance:

Patricia Philbin, Director of Services, Caroline Phelan, Senior Planner, Helen Coleman, Senior Executive Planner, Jim Higgins, Heritage Officer, Simone Watson, Senior Staff Officer, Marcella Kilgarriff, Assistant Staff Officer

### Online:

Cllr Clodagh Higgins (Mayor), Cllr Owen Hanley, Liam Blake, Senior Executive Planner, Ronan O'Reilly, Senior Executive Engineer, Phelim O'Neill, Head of Property, Land Development Agency (LDA)

### Apologies;

Derrick Hambleton

Meeting started at 2:00pm

### 1. Minutes and Matters Arising

Cllr Frank Fahy expressed his delight with the action taken in relation to the bridge over the Dyke Road and the quality of the work.

B. Mulligan noted that the external members of the SPC had been afforded no more opportunity to have an input into the draft development plan than any member of the general public.

### 2. Update on Dyke Road and Sandy Road Regeneration Sites

Mr Phelim O'Neill, LDA, gave a verbal update on the progress to date on both sites as follows:

#### Dyke Road Regeneration Site

The LDA has progressed the recruitment of a Design Team and has been working with Galway City Council in relation to governance and the design brief. It is proposed to redevelop it on a phased basis:

- Residential.
- Commercial/Cultural.
- Potential redevelopment/re-use of the Black Box.

The interactions with the Headford Road Retail Park and the proposed pedestrian bridge linking to the University will be considered.

In terms of programme there was mention of preliminary design and a feasibility study by the end of the year. It is hoped to kick off in Q1. It will need 15 months which will include significant public consultation and consultation with various stakeholders.

### Sandy Road Regeneration Site

Much of the baseline work has been done. It involves lands owned by ESB, Galway City Council, Galway County Council and land in private ownership.

Once the Draft Development Plan 2023-2029 is adopted the final checks will be done and a framework for public consultation will be in place early in the New Year.

It will be a substantial development, which will be phased, with residential in Phase 1. The ESB are a willing stakeholder.

### **3. Flood Defences Update**

Ronan O'Reilly gave an update on the 'Coirib go Cósta' flood relief scheme.

Arup was appointed as consultant in November 2020. The first meeting of the OPW, the Sanctioning Authority, Galway City Council, the Client and Arup, the consultant, took place in November 2020.

The flood relief scheme will protect against a 1 in 100-year Fluvial (river) Flood event and a 1 in 200-year Coastal Flood event.

The standard process has 5 stages – the 'Coirib go Cósta' scheme is currently at Stage 1:

- The review of the Flood Model is nearing completion.
- A Communication Strategy has been developed – [www.coiribgocosta.ie](http://www.coiribgocosta.ie)
- The Hydraulic Model will be finalised in the next couple of weeks.

The next steps will be:

- Development of potential options.
- A Public Engagement Day.
- Consider all feedback.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Public Engagement.
- Design Preferred Scheme.
- Submit scheme for statutory consent.

The scheme will protect the following areas:

- Caravan Park in Salthill.
- Blackrock Diving Tower and full promenade along Grattan Road and South Park.
- City centre around the Docks.
- Industrial lands at the harbour.
- Huntsman Inn and G Hotel at Lough Atalia.
- Ballyloughane beach and railway line.

A schematic of possible flood defence options was presented.

Examples of flood defences deployed elsewhere in Ireland were presented including;

- Glass walls in Waterford.
- Embankments including Public Amenity such as a 3m cycleway.
- Walls as in Cork with public realm improvement.
- Walls as in Fermoy.

The programme for the works is to be reviewed once the full extent of the works is determined. As it stands now it is expected that;

- An application for statutory consent will be made in mid-2024.
- The scheme will be handed over in 2028/2029.

B. Mulligan requested that the presentation be circulated.

Cllr Frank Fahy remarked that it was a great presentation and enquired if flood protection be provided at the Railway Bridge at Lough Atalia. He also asked about the impact on visual amenity at the Promenade – how high will the flood protection have to be?

The Mayor, Cllr Clodagh Higgins, observed that flood protection works in Salthill could be a sensitive issue and enquired about the phasing of the works.

Cllr Owen Hanley asked if there is engagement with the Active Travel Scheme and if there would be a possibility that hard protection works would deflect flooding to adjacent unprotected areas?

Cllr Peter Keane observed that there is a huge opportunity to incorporate walkways and cycleways as amenities as part of the works.

Ronan O'Reilly responded that:

- He is cognisant of the impact on visual amenity.
- The Flood Relief Scheme is being considered with and without the proposed Harbour Extension.
- It is too early to comment on the Phasing of the works.
- Active Travel are engaged with the project.
- Displacement of flood waters is a significant risk and is being given careful consideration to avoid negative impacts on adjacent unprotected areas.

Caroline Phelan, Senior Planner, confirmed that the planners have been fully engaged with the project.

#### **4. Development Plan – Material Alterations Chief Executive's Report Update**

Helen Coleman said that the Chief Executive's Report following the public consultation on the Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Development Plan had been issued to Elected Members during October. There had been 108 submissions. It is hoped to have meetings with Councillors towards the end of the month and that the plan would be adopted thereafter.

Brendan Mulligan observed that as the GCCN Representatives had only received a copy of the Chief Executives Report on the afternoon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> November there wasn't an opportunity to convene a Environmental Linkage Group meeting to consider it prior to the Planning SPC meeting. Instead GCCN had decided to support the following specific submissions and requested that Councillors ensure consistency with the recommendations in these submission in making the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029:

1. GLWC-C5-1 Environment 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

The Chair asked Brendan Mulligan to send the request to Marcella Kilgarrieff.

Caroline Phelan stated that there isn't a possibility for the Planning SPC to make a submission at this stage of the plan making process. The Chair has the discretion to bring the matter back to the Council.

## **5. Draft Heritage Plan Update**

Jim Higgins referred to the Heritage Plan 2030 having been launched. Heritage Officers are charged with developing procedures. They have met but have not produced any guidelines yet. They did indicate that Galway City could proceed with drafting its own Heritage Plan. Jim indicated that he would be in a position to go ahead with a preliminary meeting of the Heritage Forum by the end of November. He confirmed that Cllr Owen Hanley, Cllr Frank Fahy and Derrick Hambleton from the Planning SPC had previously expressed interest in being involved in the Forum. He went on to list out many names of people who would be involved, including Caroline Stanley, many of whom had been engaged previously. He said many people had expressed an interest in being involved.

He envisaged that it would take 3 or 4 meetings of the Heritage Forum to produce a draft Heritage Plan which would then be put before the Council for approval.

Jim Higgins confirmed that he has asked the NPWS to nominate an ecologist with a particular interest in natural heritage.

B. Mulligan noted that Derrick Hambleton, who was unavoidably absent, would welcome the probability that there would be a meeting of the Forum before the end of the month.

Jim Higgins said that every other Local Authority has a Forum that meets 4 times per year to oversee the implementation of their Heritage Plan and we should have such a forum.

Caroline Phelan said that the City Council wanted to go out to the public to get public feedback before we had the Forum. She said there are some actions ongoing on a continuous basis under the current plan. An advertisement had been placed in the papers for expressions of interest for the last Heritage Plan.

Cllr Peter Keane suggested that perhaps the Council could endorse the proposed membership of the Heritage Forum at the December Council meeting. Jim Higgins will send the list of proposed members to Marcella Kilgarrieff.

## **6. ESB Utility Boxes**

Liam Blake explained that there are two classes of exempted development available under Schedule 2 of the planning regulations:

Class 29: By any electricity undertaker: volume  $\leq 11\text{m}^3$

Class 31: By a statutory undertaker providing telecoms: volume  $\leq 2\text{m}^3$

Cllr Crowe referred to a number of specific utility boxes including one opposite the Hardiman Hotel, in Quay Street, etc., which he described as eyesores. It appeared no aesthetic consideration had been given to them.

Cllr Peter Keane enquired if there were any proposal to make them more aesthetic. Liam Blake said he would look into it but it is constrained by the exemptions under the planning regulations.

Caroline Phelan clarified that the box opposite the Hardiman Hotel is actually an EPA air quality monitor. The City Council has received approval for a Conservation Officer. She would like to advance management plans for the Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and perhaps the issue of utility boxes could be addressed as part of that. There are 11 ACA's – the city centre ACA will be the first priority.

Cllr Peter Keane noted that 10 new staff appointments had been sanctioned and hoped to see those being filled in the first half of 2023.

## **7. Preliminary Population Results - Census 2022**

Brendan Mulligan referred to an email he had sent to Councillors and members of the Executive in which his analysis of Census 2022 Preliminary Results showed that population growth in Galway City Council's functional area was underperforming that of other local authority areas and had achieved only 15% of the growth required to achieve the NPF target population for 2026. Other local authorities in the NWRRA Region have achieved between 41% and 88% of their higher NPF population projections for 2026. As a result, the NPF population targets for 2026 and 2031 are probably unachievable. The NPF's population target of at least 120,000 by 2040 may still be achievable but will require something transformational such as Transport Oriented Development facilitated by Very Light Rail.

Caroline Phelan queried the population growth for Galway City of 4.4% since 2016 in B. Mulligan's analysis which was different to that in a LGMA Research paper 'Review of preliminary data published by the CSO' in September which found there had been a growth of 6%. Helen Coleman gave B. Mulligan a copy of the Research Paper as it was not publicly available.

## **8. Short Term Lettings (STL) Update**

Caroline Phelan reported that twenty cases are being pursued under enforcement. Liam Blake explained that the new legislation has put the focus on the platforms. Under the new legislation if a platform advertises a property for STL without permission it will be an offence.

There have not been many applications for planning permission. The policy is to recommend refusal. No permissions have been granted but a couple of decisions are under appeal.

## **9. Vacant Sites Update**

The Residential Zoned Land Map has been on public display since the 1<sup>st</sup> November. This supersedes to some extent the Vacant Sites legislation. No submissions have been received to date.

There are vacant sites which are still liable for levies. In summary:

- There are 6 vacant sites in total of which;

- Levy paid in full on 1,
- 1 at valuation arbitration,
- 1 currently under appeal
- Second notices issued to the remainder

Caroline Phelan said that a third notice may be issued before handing the cases over to debt collection.

#### **10. Work Programme**

Patricia Philbin said that a Work Programme cannot be prepared yet as that the Annual Service Plan has not been agreed and the Budget for next year has not been adopted yet. She will make a Work Programme available as soon as possible.

#### **11. AoB**

Cllr Michael Crowe asked what works are being carried out on the bank of the Corrib beside the Dyke Road. It was confirmed that Irish Water had been granted planning permission last year to construct a new water intake and these works relate to that. Cllr Crowe observed that these works are being carried out on a green recreation area and hoped that Irish Water is adhering to the planning conditions and that full restoration will be carried out. Liam Blake confirmed that a number of conditions required proper reinstatement on completion.

In response to Peter Keane, it was confirmed that Galway City Council had recommended refusal of a SHD application at Bóthar an Chóiste. An Bord Pleanála has since refused permission for this development. The City Council has recommended refusal in relation to another SHD development in Westside.

Brendan Mulligan

A GCC Representative on the Planning SPC