

**Minutes of the Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee Meeting
held in Áras Contae an Chláir on Monday, 16th December 2019 at 11.30am**

Present: Cllr Pat McMahon, Chairperson
Cllr P.J. Ryan
Cllr Pat Daly
Cllr Johnny Flynn
Cllr P.J. Kelly
Cllr Gabriel Keating
Cllr Michael Begley
Mr Pat Morris
Ms Rosaleen O'Reilly
Ms Emma Karran
Mr Pat Keogh
Mr Seamus Ryan
Ms Elaine D'Alton
Liam Conneally, Director of Service
Padraic McElwee, Head of Enterprise
Brian McCarthy, Senior Planner
Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer
Valerie Fleming, Assistant Staff Officer

1. Welcome and Introductions.

Cllr Pat McMahon welcomed everybody to the meeting. Each person introduced themselves and stated who they were representing on the Economic Development SPC.

Cllr Gabriel Keating requested name tags for the next SPC meeting. Liam Conneally agreed that these will be provided.

2. Work Programme 2020.

Liam Conneally, DOS, welcomed everyone to the meeting and using a PowerPoint presentation outlined the structure and work programme of the Economic Development Directorate. He stated that the purpose of the Strategic Policy Committee was to assist and advise the Council in the formulation, development and review of policy. He advised the meeting that the Planning Department would be bringing forward the review of the County Development Plan and the Development Contribution Scheme as requested by the Elected Members of Clare County Council.

Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, continued the PowerPoint presentation to outline the role and major projects of the Property Management section of Economic Development.

Padraic McElwee, Head of Enterprise, highlighted the Local Enterprise Office work to date this year.

Brian McCarthy, Senior Planner, spoke about the Planning Department work including Taking in Charge, Development Management, Enforcement and Forward Planning.

Cllr Johnny Flynn stated he has requested that a specific Climate Change SPC be established but is aware it has been decided that each SPC is required to include Climate Change as a part of their Agenda. He acknowledged the work of Liam Conneally and Carmel Greene in securing the LIT presence in Ennis and of Liam and Brian McCarthy for their work on the Strategic Development Zone proposal for UL. He stated he would like to see part of the Gaurus site zoned for the provision of a secondary school. With regard to the Construction sector Cllr Flynn said he would like to see this SPC act as an overseer to ensure Irish Water and other utility providers speed up and improve their services and the speed of their connections. Cllr Flynn also stated that he is anxious to look at the growth of Ennis as proposed by Ennis 2040 and tie this in with the public transport system.

Cllr Pat Daly referred to the former Our Lady's building on the Gort Road, Ennis and asked if its designation as a protected structure could be delisted.

Elaine D'Alton requested a Terms of Reference for the SPC and stated that she still hopes an SPC can be created specifically to deal with climate change. She stated that future economic activities should take Climate Change Adaptation Strategy Objectives into account.

Elaine D'Alton and Emma Karran requested an agreed Statement of Outcomes at the end of each Economic Development SPC meeting.

Emma Karran queried if there were plans for the development of the Shannon Estuary.

Pat Morris requested a copy of the final RSES document.

Cllr Michael Begley referred to climate change and stated that while it is a very important issue that any work in this area should not negatively impact on the economic development of Clare or Ireland.

Cllr P.J. Ryan stated that the work of this SPC is to benefit the whole county and mentioned Shannon Airport as an item for the SPC to consider working on.

Cllr P.J. Kelly said that he does not consider the National Planning Framework is good for rural Ireland. He also queried if an impact assessment has been carried out on the advantages and disadvantages of Brexit on County Clare and requested a copy of any such assessment.

Seamus Ryan requested information on the marketing of the Data Centre and asked if the Council have a preference for an end user for the Junction 13 Data Centre site; what progress has been made on the categorizing of properties owned by the Council; if the Council is considering working towards encouraging the use of robotics, (higher end manufacture, AO, Robotics and Blockchain) and what work is being done with the Government's Transition Fund in preparing for the repurposing of Moneypoint in the County."

Pat Keogh supported Cllr Johnny Flynn's point regarding Irish Water and other utility companies. He requested that a member of Irish Water be invited to a future Economic Development SPC meeting to discuss certain issues such as Irish Water's refusal to accept phased payments.

Cllr Johnny Flynn requested that any such presentations at SPC meetings would be focused on questions from the SPC members and would take more of a workshop format.

Liam Conneally responded that the workings of the SPC are set out in the Scheme for the Strategic Policy Committees 2019 – 2024 and as agreed by the full Council at their September 2019 meeting. He clarified that the Economic Development SPC will focus its work on policy and will not be dealing with operational issues or specific sites.

He advised climate change and biodiversity will have an impact on all policy work of this SPC and in this regard stated that he would request Clare County Council's Heritage Officer to make a presentation at a future SPC meeting.

Liam acknowledged the comments regarding Irish Water and stated that he will request a member of Irish Water to attend a future SPC meeting and will contact the members to submit their questions in advance of this meeting. He stated that this is most likely to be at the March 2020 SPC meeting.

Liam stated that the business of this SPC will continue to be carried out efficiently, with an open mind and in accordance with the SPC Scheme and Standing Orders as agreed by the Council's elected and SPC members.

Liam agreed that Biodiversity climate change impact is very important but that a balance must be struck between looking after current and future generations regarding the sustainable development of the planet.

Regarding the National Planning Framework (NPF) Liam stated that this framework was adopted in 2018 and is now national policy which cascades down into regional and local planning policy.

Padraic McElwee advised that he has prepared an internal document regarding the impact of Brexit on Co. Clare but it has not yet been published due to the changing Brexit conditions. As Brexit is now more certain he will update the document and forward a copy to SPC members.

Brian McCarthy advised that the former Our Lady's building is a Protected Structure of regional importance and that there are no plans to remove it from this protected structure register. However, as the County Development Plan is scheduled for review in 2020 a submission in relation to the delisting of the Our Lady's building can be made at that time. He stated that the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) was a significant work item for the previous SPC and that the final document is expected to be published on 30th January 2020 after which it will be circulated electronically to SPC members.

The development of Shannon Estuary was dealt with in a plan-led way by Clare County Council which included input from Shannon Foynes Port Company, Kerry County Council and Limerick City and County Council. The development of Moneypoint and Cahercon are both dealt with in this plan and are identified as opportunity sites for marine related development in the Shannon Estuary Integrated Framework Plan.

Emma Karran queried how to input to the Data Centre proposal and Liam Conneally advised that the Data Centre will require planning permission and the normal opportunity to make submissions to the future planning application process will apply.

Using a Powerpoint presentation Padraic McElwee spoke on the *Future Jobs Ireland 2019 – Preparing Now for Tomorrow's Economy* publication based on the OECD document and outlined the main points of this jobs policy document to SPC members.

3. Agree 2020 Schedule of Meetings

The proposed schedule of SPC meetings for 2020 was circulated with the Agenda and was proposed by Cllr PJ Ryan, seconded by Cllr Pat Daly and agreed by the SPC members.

Training for SPC members is to take place on Friday, 24th January 2020 with the next formal SPC meeting in March 2020.

4. Clare County Council Corporate Plan 2019 - 2024

Liam Conneally advised this item was on the Agenda for noting by SPC members and that the Council's Corporate Plan 2019 – 2024 will be considered by the full Council at their December 2019 meeting this afternoon.

The Chairman thanked the SPC members for their positive engagement and the Council staff for their presentations on the various work items.

The SPC Scheme, the Corporate Plan and the SPC Standing Orders were circulated to all SPC members.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____

**Cllr Pat McMahon
Chairperson**

Date: _____

Signed: _____

**Liam Conneally,
Director of Economic Development.**

Date: _____