

**Minutes of the Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee Meeting
held in Áras Contae an Chláir on Monday, 28th September 2020 at 11.00am**

Present: Cllr Pat McMahon, Chairperson
Cllr Michael Begley
Cllr P.J. Ryan
Cllr P.J. Kelly
Cllr Gabriel Keating
Cllr Pat Daly
Ms Rosaleen O'Reilly
Mr Pat Keogh
Mr Pat Morris
Mr Seamus Ryan (remotely)
Ms Emma Karran (remotely)
Ms Aoife Sugrue, CARO, (remotely)
Mr David Clements, NTA, (remotely)
Liam Conneally, Director of Service
Padraic McElwee, Head of Enterprise
Jason Murphy, Senior Executive Officer (remotely)
Valerie Fleming, Assistant Staff Officer

Apologies: Cllr Johnny Flynn

Cllr Pat McMahon expressed sympathy on behalf of all present to Cllr P.J. Ryan on the recent passing of his brother Mr Tom Ryan, RIP and to the Danagher Family, Newmarket on Fergus on the passing of Mr Liam Danagher, RIP.

1. Minutes of Economic Development SPC meeting 15th June 2020.

The minutes of the Economic Development SPC meeting held on 15th June 2020 were proposed by Cllr Gabriel Keating, seconded by Cllr P.J. Ryan and agreed.

**2. Climate Change and Biodiversity -
presentation by Ms Aoife Sugrue, Climate Action Regional Office (CARO)**

Ms Aoife Sugrue introduced the work of the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) and outlined that four CARO regional offices have been established in the country each with a lead local authority. Cork is the lead authority for the Atlantic Seaboard South Office of which Clare is a member and Cyril Feeney, Senior Engineer, is the Clare County Council representative.

Cllr Gabriel Keating thanked Aoife for the very informative presentation and suggested that Clare County Council set aside one week each year to address blocked gullies, river outlets etc to assist in alleviating flooding and also to address the issue of overhanging trees.

In response to a query from Liam Conneally Aoife outlined that there is no closing date for the project to create native woodland on publicly owned lands and she advised Liam to notify Cyril Feeney of any lands proposed for this scheme so that he can feed this information back to the CARO office. Grant funding is available for this project.

Emma Karran stated that the language used when speaking about climate change should be strong and sufficient. She also suggested that food security, water supplies, accommodation of refugees should all be included in local authority training plans.

Pat Morris asked that the consideration be given to the visual screening of the sewerage treatment plant on the way into Ennis – on the east side near the railway.

Cllr P.J. Kelly stated that the least pollution is coming from rural Ireland and he would hate to see development restrictions put on rural Ireland.

Liam Conneally welcomed that there are climate action workshops planned for local authority staff and elected members through CARO.

Cllr Pat Daly asked if CARO would provide training to the AILG of which he, Cllr Michael Begley and Cllr John Crowe are members.

| |
|--|
| <p>3. LEO: -Government's July Stimulus update -Brexit Preparation</p> |
|--|

Padraic McElwee, Head of Enterprise, advised that €1.4m in Covid supports have been delivered through Clare Local Enterprise Office in 2020. Training slots relating to Brexit are fully booked up until the end of November 2020 and Padraic requested that the SPC members advise any business they are in contact with to attend these training sessions as they are very informative.

Padraic outlined the Government's July Stimulus plan in which €7.2bn has been allocated to labour market and employment supports, enterprise supports, capital projects and new additional funding.

Cllr Gabriel Keating referenced the €500m for Government Capital projects and highlighted Coláiste Uí Comhraí in Carrigaholt as a potential project for this funding.

Cllr Michael Begley queried if consideration is being given to direct freight services to Europe to avoid the UK landbridge.

Seamus Ryan added that focus should be put on a direct link from Ireland to France from Rosslare and said that VAT charged on point of entry is going to put a huge burden on businesses and asked if the Department of Finance could help alleviate this burden.

Padraic McElwee stated that the Road Hauliers Association has made representations regarding a direct link to Europe but LEO's function is to focus on local businesses and preparing them for the impact of Brexit.

Cllr Pat Day asked if the €500m Capital spend is going to local authorities or the private sector. He added that €60m of the fund is for vacant social housing with some set aside for Heritage, Art, Culture and the Gaeltacht.

Padraic responded that the detail of this funding commitment has yet to be worked out.

Seamus Ryan suggested that some of the funding could be used to kick start renewable energy projects such as the production of hydro-electricity.

4. Planning:

- Planning presentation on the review of the County Development Plan

Helen Quinn, A/Senior Planner, advised that Forward Planning is now in week 2 of the 99 week County Development Plan making process. This process will be divided into three strategic stages and it is hoped to adopt the final plan by September 2022. A public workshop is scheduled for Thursday, 1st October by appointment only. An issues paper has been published highlighting the broader areas of the plan and Helen advised that any matters relating to land zonings cannot be considered at this early stage.

Liam Conneally requested the Economic SPC members promote public engagement with the County Development Plan review process.

Cllr Gabriel Keating said that he will be putting an emphasis on rural Ireland and tourism when discussing the Plan.

Cllr Michael Begley expressed concern at the level of control the OPR have over the plan making process.

Cllr P.J. Ryan advised that he is fearful of the impact of Covid-19 on the opportunity for members of the public to input to the County Development Plan.

Cllr Pat Daly asked if planners have any indication of how much land will be zoned in each Municipal District as this information would be very useful to elected members.

Pat Keogh referred to the flood relief works being carried out and asked if there will be an assessment post these works and if the housing needs assessment will be included as both assessments would be very useful to the construction sector.

Cllr P.J. Kelly highlighted the importance of Councillors involvement in CDP review process.

Emma Karran referred to the Shannon Estuary and pollution from the Aughinish Alumina plant and also asked if carbon budgeting will be included.

Helen Quinn stated that she is hoping there will be open and frank discussions with Councillors and the public when drafting the County Development Plan. Engagement with the OPR is an obligation on local authorities and she will endeavor to ensure that all engagement is positive. She stated that remote working as a policy objective to encourage economic activity in rural Ireland will form part of the CDP review discussions and in this regard members of the public are being engaged with through various media, social media, webpage, video etc. In all situations the accessibility officer is available to take notes on behalf of any person that requires this service. The amount of land zoned per municipal district and housing demand will be considered when drafting the Core Strategy element of the Plan. The Strategic Flood Assessment will have regard to all flood risk improvement works across the county and the resultant implications for land use. All factors regarding the Shannon Estuary will be considered in conjunction with neighbouring local authorities, Shannon Foynes Port Company and other stakeholders and a Climate Change chapter will be included in the new Plan.

- Ennis 2040 Economic & Spatial Strategy presentation

Liam Conneally advised that a Designated Activity Company (DAC) will be established to implement the Ennis 2040 Strategy which is now completed.

Cllr Pat Daly requested an update regarding the Data Centre and the planning application for the motorway plaza. He added that the serious lack of parking in Ennis needed to be addressed in the Ennis 2040 plan.

Cllr P.J. Ryan asked if something could be done to alleviate the number of trucks parking around the Industrial Estate in Shannon.

Liam Conneally responded that in preparation of a planning application submission a winter birds survey must first be carried out on the Data Centre site and as such the planning application cannot be lodged until Q1, 2021. The Data Centre will attract other industries and employment opportunities but is only 1 of 9 opportunity projects included in the Ennis 2040 Strategy. It is planned that parking need in Ennis will be addressed with the provision of a new multi-storey car park. The Junction 12 motorway plaza may alleviate parking issues in Shannon but that matter will need to be addressed separately.

- LSMATS

Seán Lenihan gave the background to the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS) and introduced David Clements and other members of the National Transport Authority (NTA) who joined the meeting on line.

David Clements outlined that the NTA are tasked with preparing transport strategies for cities consistent with NPF, RSES and MASP. The transport demand for Clare will be included in the LSMATS. David outlined that the NTA aim to have 10% cycling rate and stated that there is no viability around a community railway network for Shannon.

Liam Conneally added that an LSMATS workshop was held for the Shannon Municipal District members and that a comprehensive submission will be made on behalf of Shannon MD. Any comments arising from this presentation are to be forwarded to David Clements or Seán Lenihan.

6. A.O.B.:

Cllr Pat McMahon, Chair, thanked everybody for their attendance and contribution to the meeting

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
Cllr Pat McMahon
Chairperson

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
Liam Conneally,
Director of Economic Development.