

**Minutes of the Rural Development Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) held on
Tuesday 16th November 2021 at 10.00 a.m. in the Council Chamber and on-line
via MS Teams**

In attendance:

Cllr. Pat Hayes
Cllr. Shane Talty
Cllr. Mary Howard
Cllr. Pat Burke
Cllr. Joe Killeen
Mr. Denis Tuohy
Mr. Leonard Cleary
Ms. Bernadette Haugh
Ms. Claire Rutherford

Organisation:

Chair
Elected Member
Elected Member
Elected Member
Elected Member
Agriculture/Farming
Director of Service, Rural Development
A/Senior Executive Officer
Assistant Staff Officer

Apologies

Cllr. Cillian Murphy
Ms. Niamh O'Callaghan
Mr. Eugene Crimmins
Ms. Jean Tierney O'Keeffe
Ms. Anny Wise

Elected Member
Community/Voluntary
Community/Voluntary
Social Inclusion
Environment/Conservation

No. 1 Minutes of Meeting held on 21st September, 2021:

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2021 were proposed by Cllr. S. Talty, seconded by Cllr. J. Killeen and agreed.

No. 2 Matters Arising:

With regard to the increasing number of camper vans holidaying in Co Clare, we need to look at a policy across the county. Team Tourism took that on board. Also looking at the model in Donegal and the provision of services. Will update SPC on Brief and involve the SPC input when drafting policy.

No. 3. Update on Review of Rural Development Strategy

- Presentation by Dr. Seán O'Riordáin

The purpose of the review was to examine how the implementation process was going. The strategy is in place 4 years and the review would identify any gaps on targets set out. B Haugh has led on this review process. Dr Sean O'Riordain and Maureen O'Reilly then gave a presentation on the Review of the Clare Rural Development Strategy. Dr Sean O'Riordain stated that there has been engagement with stakeholders and senior staff. There are 8 strategic actions in the Strategy to renew policy. The final report will include key findings from consultation feedback from the Rural SPC today and the final draft of the report will be ready in January.

The presentation then took place.

Cllr P Hayes thanked Dr. Sean O'Riordain & Maureen O'Reilly for their presentation. A discussion then took place on the presentation. There are a lot of challenges for the Review.

Towns & villages – the water infrastructure is not sufficient. It is important that Municipal Districts have more power. The grants received from Government have been great but the staff to administer them is not available, and so may not be able to deliver. Tulla is a commuter town for Ennis & Limerick, yet the centre of the town needs a face lift. There is a big demand for housing. Vacant properties need to be renovated and this would put life back into towns and villages. Planning can be an issue for some landlords in restoring old buildings, Health & Safety guidelines and it is very expensive to renovate. There is no financial incentive to renovate or rent out. NDP – there is an imbalance in population, not allowing people to move to the county. There is a conflict between National Policy & Local Policy. If the 'Air bnb' market was taken out there would be more rental properties available. We need to see population growth around the county. There are great positives in the county also – we have the Rural & Community Development Officers in County Clare and this needs to be reflected in the Review of the Strategy. The farming sector has to be reflective on any policy, this is part of the review. The farming body will make a submission in the next few weeks, there are strengths and weaknesses that need to be addressed. Housing and the small numbers in schools needs to be addressed. Co Clare has a huge industry in tourism, and it needs to support rural Clare.

B Haugh stated that the Review process started in June. The initial engagement with Dr Sean O'Riordain involved a questionnaire being sent out and they tried to extend reach to as many as possible. Dr. Sean O'Riordain said he would welcome all submissions received. L Cleary thanked everyone for their inputs, there are a few new focus areas. It is hoped to bring the Draft Renewal of the Strategy to the Council Meeting in Q1 of 2022.

4. County Development Plan – Presentation by Helen Quinn, A/Senior Planner

Helen Quinn, A/Senior Planner gave a presentation to the members of the Rural Development SPC meeting on the Clare County Development Plan. Typically the Co Development Plan is a two-year statutory process. After the presentation a discussion took place.

There have been numerous discussions on the CDP, one concern is the levy on land zoned for development. How will the Co Development Plan work for rural Clare? There have been a number of positive engagements with Planning Department. Only the Elected Members were included in the initial consultation. There will be a levy on the market value of zoned land and this needs to be highlighted. The Planning Department will organise a roadshow where they will be able to notify landowners of this levy.

It was proposed that every landowner should have the opportunity to remove their land from zoning. The concern is where services are passing zoned land, this could be quite costly.

Residential zoning only where services are there in towns and villages.

A Special Rural SPC meeting will take place in January in advance of the County Development Plan going to full Council meeting.

A message of sympathy was expressed to the Chief Executive on the death of his brother, Sean. The meeting then concluded