

Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee (Economic Development & Enterprise Support) meeting

held Tuesday, 27th January, 2020 Council Chamber, Mtek: 1 Building.

In attendance:

Cllr. Sean Gilliland (Chair)	Monaghan County Council
Cllr. Sean Conlon	Monaghan County Council
Cllr. David Maxwell	Monaghan County Council
Cllr. Noel Keelan	Monaghan County Council
Cllr. Brain McKenna	Monaghan County Council
Alan Johnston	Monaghan Town Team
Patrick McCormick	Irish Farmer's Assoc.
Karen Jeffares	Transition
Peadar Black	Latton Social Services
Paul Clifford	Director of Services, Economic & Community Development
Adrian Hughes	Senior Planner
John McEntegart	Head of Local Enterprise Office
Toirleach Gourley	Senior Exec Planner
Dermot Brannigan	Chief fire Officer
Cathal Flynn	A\Director of Service
Carmel Thornton	Meetings Administrator
Mary McGarvey	Senior Staff Officer
Joan Ryan	Administrative Officer, Planning

Apologies Received:

Cllr. P.J. O' Hanlon	Monaghan County Council
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1. Welcome and Introduction

The chairman Cllr. Sean Gilliland welcomed all to the first meeting of this SPC. He stated that this SPC is particularly interesting as it crosses many aspects of the Council's business. He promised a brief and factual introductory meeting and then invited all those present to introduce themselves to the group.

2. Presentation on role of the Strategic Policy Committee and Corporate Plan

In his presentation Cathal Flynn gave an overview of the business of Local Government, the structure and function of the SPC's and outlined the process in preparing the Corporate Plan.

3. Presentation on Planning Department

Toirleach Gourley's presentation outlined the functions and work of the Planning section, highlighting the recently published Development Plan and its purpose as a policy document closely linked with the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. He advised that cross border communication agreements are in place as development impacts on both communities. The work carried out under town and village renewal was also outlined.

4. Presentation on Economic Development Unit

Paul Clifford's presentation described the new role of Economic Development within the County Council. Work is ongoing on the Economic Community Plan and there has been engagement with various agencies in seeking investment in County Monaghan, lands have been purchased and planning permission is in place for development. He outlined how LEO works with small industries to help develop and support local enterprise. He described the Bioconnect project and its potential to create business and therefore keep more graduates in the locality. The long-term plan is to upgrade the value of employment in the County and a higher range of jobs and opportunities for remote working

5. Presentation on Fire Service & Building Control Department

Dermot Brannigan briefly outlined the policies of the Fire Service and Building Control and their links with Economic Development. He explained how the section, through its regulatory obligations, has a mandate to inspect both materials and buildings. He also outlined the role of Civil Defence in the community. He explained how world events, for example the Grenfell incident impacts on the policies and procedures for the both services.

6. Questions

The Chairman thanked Mr Brannigan for making his presentation and said he was glad to see the Fire section included in this SPC. He re-capped on the presentations and went on to remark that the close links to this SPC and the business sector are now clear. He requested that the presentations be circulated to the group by email and asked that the members review them and make any observations to Joan Ryan for a response. The group was advised that they could also put forward agenda items through the same contact.

Mr A Johnston asked if there is an Economic Plan in place. P Clifford responded that it will be developed in conjunction with the Local Economic and Community Plan which he will introduce at the next meeting and requested that it be added as an agenda item.

Mr P Black queried a statement made in relation to Monaghan having second lowest income per capita. P Clifford responded that this is related to the type of employment on offer in the local economy, which is predominantly agrifood production and engineering. Cllr. D Maxwell stated that the hope is the Bioconnect project will assist in attracting different types of jobs. Cllr. S Gilliland added that the situation is improving through the introduction of more apprenticeships, he also commented that the Council is cognisant of the fact that more hubs are required to accommodate remote working. J McEntegert stated that there is already a hot desk at MTEK which is well utilised. P Clifford added that remote working is supported at CTEK in Carrickmacross and when the extension is added at MTEK, forty more stations will be available. The Chairman requested that a list of locations be circulated for non-elected members.

Mr A Johnston queried if funding has been secured for the next phase of the Ulster Canal. P Clifford stated that funding is not yet secured but it is planned to extend the canal from Clones to Castle Saunderson.

Cllr N Keelan stated that we all have a job of work to do in promoting Monaghan as a "destination" area both to visitors, business and home buyers. This can be achieved in publicising quality of life, reduced commuting times and various tourist facilities in the County.

Cllr. Gilliland drew the meetings attention to the proposed Standing Orders. These reflect the rules and regulations of the SPC, it has already come through the Corporate Policy Group and will go before the full Council at the February meeting for approval.

7. AOB

Cllr S Conlon thanked all the presenters and welcomed the new representatives on board.

He stated that whilst we are working towards creating an environment to develop economic growth, we have to look at the needs of the workforce and in particular childcare facilities. He appealed that this be included in the Economic Plan and on the SPC agenda, even though the Council has no direct role in developing such services. Cllr B Treanor advised that a local company, Errigal Contracts, provides such a facility for its workers and agreed that it should be considered for the new development. C Flynn responded that there are various opportunities and lands available which could be explored, for example, Latlorcan and Dublin Street Regeneration project.

8. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 24th March 2020 at 4pm in The Council Chamber.

This concluded the business of the meeting.