

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

held 19th October 2022 on MS Teams

In attendance:

Cllr. Sean Gilliland (Chair)	Monaghan County Council
Cllr. Colm Carthy	Monaghan County Council
Cllr. David Maxwell	Monaghan County Council
Patrick McCormick	Irish Farmer's Assoc. – Agricultural Pillar Rep
Karen Jeffares	Transition Monaghan – Environmental Pillar Rep
Cathal Flynn	Director of Services Planning & Economic Development
Adrian Hughes	Senior Planner
Toirleach Gourley	Senior Executive Planner
Dympna Condra	Tourism & Marketing Executive
Angela Gallagher	Administrative Officer, Planning Section
Hannah McKenna	Clerical Officer, Planning Section

Apologies

Cllr. Sean Conlon	Monaghan County Council
Cllr Noel Keelan	Monaghan County Council
Alan Johnston	Monaghan Town Team – Business Pillar Rep
John Tobin	Carrickmacross Chamber of Commerce
Paddy Sherry	Knockatallon Ramblers – PPN Rep

Cllr Sean Gilliland welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that there has been changes since the last meeting. Mr Paul Clifford retired from Monaghan County Council and he wished to pay tribute to him regarding his work and dedication to his service to Monaghan County Council and throughout the County. Cllr Sean Gilliland stated that Mr Paul Clifford had a way with people and it would be remiss of him as Chair of the SPC not to pay tribute to him and wish him all the very best on his retirement.

Cllr Sean Gilliland then welcomed the new Director of Service, Mr Cathal Flynn to the SPC and stated that he has all the attributes of Mr Paul Clifford and stated that he is enthusiastic and is currently also working on the Peace Campus in Monaghan Town.

1. Previous Minutes & Matter arising

The minutes of meeting on 7th June 2022 were proposed by Ms. Karen Jeffares and seconded by Cllr. Sean Gilliland.

Ms Karen Jeffares asked about the new Local and Economic Community Plan and if the SPC committee feeds into this and the LCDC advisory committee. She also asked about the Economic Strategy and how the SPC feed into the Plan and when is it likely to happen?

Mr Cathal Flynn confirmed that the SPC committee plays a significant role in the development of the LECP. The preliminary census data has been recently released and there should be no impediments to moving forward with high level goals Mr. Flynn expected that the goals will change somewhat from those adopted in the previous LECP but reiterated the need for consistency with national and regional strategy objectives. Mr Cathal Flynn confirmed that the SPC should be feeding into the plan and that we need to be looking at the key next steps.

2. Draft Irelands Ancient East Strategy

Ms Dympna Condra informed the group that Failte Ireland's Regional Strategy document for Ireland's Ancient East was nearing completion and that the draft strategy was currently out for public consultation. It had been advertised nationally and on the main Fáilte Ireland website, with a submission deadline of 28th October 2022. Ms Condra stated that this is an overall framework document and that each county within the IAE destination (12 in all) would require individual Destination and Experience Development Plans. However, she indicated that Monaghan is a step ahead in this regard as the Monaghan Destination and Development Plan has already been developed and it was launched in June by Ministers Humphreys and Martin at a tourism industry event in Castle Leslie.

Cllr. Sean Gilliland asked if the information about the draft IAE strategy public consultation was on the Council's website and Ms Condra stated that it would be uploaded that evening. Mr Cathal Flynn asked if a response was required by the Council, however Ms Condra stated that meetings had been held directly with Failte Ireland early in the plan development process to cover this.

3. EPlanning

Ms. Angela Gallagher provided the group with an update on Eplanning which is due to roll out in County Monaghan in November 2022. The LGMA is delivering the training and providing support to Local Authorities in providing this service. Tipperary and Galway Council have been using the portal since December 2021 and have indicated that 60% of their planning applications are now being submitted online.

Ms. Angela Gallagher advised that the working group have also been developing a system for online submissions and Part VIII developments. Monaghan County Council is in phase 1, the roll out is expected in November and an Agents Forum will be organised to update the local agents.

Cllr. Colm Carthy welcomed the introduction of online planning and that the process is being streamlined, reams of paper no longer need to be submitted for a planning application and that this will also be welcomed by Agents.

Cllr. Sean Gilliland stated that the move to online planning will have a positive impact on the Environment.

4. Residential Zoned Land Tax

Mr Toirleach Gourley made a presentation to the Committee regarding the Residential Zoned Land Tax. The objective of the tax is to activate zoned and serviced residential development land and land zoned for mixed use, including residential, for development to increase housing supply and to ensure regeneration of vacant and idle lands in urban locations.

Cllr. Colm Carthy asked about Existing Residential properties, green space and asked how this is determined?

Mr Toirleach Gourley stated that there is a process that the Council is going through at the moment called trimming, where roads, footpaths and open spaces are being removed from the draft map.

Cllr Colm Carthy asked in relation to Council owned property where the Council may be required to pay tax, where do you envisage this happening? Do we have zoned land which will be liable?

Mr Toirleach Gourley said the tax is due in early 2024 and two areas which would be liable, the CTek II site in Carrickmacross and the site at Latlorcan.

Mr Patrick McCormick stated that the Irish Farmers have grave concerns regarding this tax and have sought an exclusion for agricultural land, however a response has not been forthcoming and stated that if farmers have land which is zoned they should look to have it de-zoned.

Mr Patrick McCormick asked if the Council informed landowners that their land is zoned or is it up to them to check themselves and some owners may not be aware that their land is zoned.

Mr Toirleach Gourley stated that the legislative requirement is that the Local Authority publish a map rather than contact each individual landowner and the reason for this is because a lot of land is unregistered. There will be continuous messages and notices published in the press and social media to get the message out and there may also be some public events. Notification will be put in the National press also.

Mr Patrick McCormick asked if an individual looks to have their land de-zoned, how favourably will this be looked upon?

Cllr. Sean Gilliland stated that if they can prove they are actively farming the land it goes a long way to help get the land de-zoned.

Mr Toirleach Gourley stated that they have received clarification and the key consideration is if the land idle or vacant, the Council will make a judgement call and affected landowners can make a submission.

Mr Toirleach Gourley stated that in relation to de-zoning of land, preparation of the new Development Plan, which must be adopted in 2025, will commence in the new year and public consultation on zoning in the draft plan will be commenced in 2023. If the Local Authority is looking at the zoning and de-zoning of land it would be more appropriate to have it done at this stage in a comprehensive manner and not on an individual basis.

Mr Patrick McCormick asked about non-active use and asked if he was correct that agricultural land may not be liable if it is farmed and may be excluded?

Mr Toirleach Gourley stated that there is discretion in the village sites and mixed use or town centre regarding active agricultural use, but this does not apply in respect of lands specifically zoned residential.

Mr Adrian Hughes stated that Monaghan is likely to be the first Local Authority to prepare a County Development Plan following the introduction of the tax and that Councillors are likely to be petitioned not to zone land. The Planning Authority will be consulting with the members regarding the zoning of land as part of the process of preparing the draft development plan in 2023.

Cllr. Sean Gilliland agreed with spreading the word through the Council's Social Media platforms. Mr Adrian Hughes confirmed that the Department will be arranging a national public press release in addition to the Council's publications.

5. AOB

Mr Cathal Flynn referred to the Economic Analysis Report and stated that it will be emailed to the SPC Members, there has been 6% growth in County Monaghan and that he recently met with the IDA along with the Deputy Chief Executive, Patricia Monahan.

Cllr. Colm Carthy wished to thank Cllr Brian McKenna who he is replacing on the committee. Cllr Sean Gilliland welcomed Cllr Colm Carthy and wanted to pay tribute to Cllr Brian McKenna for his contribution to the Committee over the years.

6. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that another meeting be arranged for the end of November and only 2 items will be on the agenda.

Economic Plan & Zoned Land Tax