

**Minutes of Meeting of Planning, Economic Development and Infrastructure Strategic
Policy Committee held in on Wednesday, 1 December 2021.**

Members Present:

Councillor Frank Dolan (Cathaoirleach)
Councillor Brendan Barry
Councillor Enda McGloin
Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire
Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn
Councillor Justin Warnock

Officials Present:

Helen Denning, Economic Development
Joseph Gilhooly, Director of Services, Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructural
Services
Johanna Daly, Senior Executive Officer Economic Development

Apologies:

1 Adoption of Minutes of 29th September 2021

Proposed by: Cllr. Enda McGloin

Seconded by: Cllr. Finola Armstrong McGuire

**2 To receive a presentation on the Chief Executive's Draft County Development
Plan 2023-2029 following the draft Plan having been presented to the Elected
Members on 26th November last**

Bernard Greene, Senior Planner gave a presentation on the draft County Development Plan. Next stage of the plan is to re-engage with the Councillors in workshops at MD level and work through the land use zoning objectives and separate plans for each of the centres. Members will submit motions to amend the draft plan and a period of time will be taken to prepare a response with a formal Council meeting on the 24th January 2022 where motions will be addressed and conclude 30th January. The plan will go on display in mid-February for period of 10 weeks this will give planning time to engage with the wider community through a webinar.

Seán Ó Conláin congratulated Bernard and acknowledged all the hard work involved. He questioned why non-elected representatives/PPN are not involved until February and asked if controversial community issues could be debated i.e. renewable energy/forestry. He stated that “well-being” was mentioned and is an initiative that could be part of the plan. He also mentioned the SLNCR Greenway project and its strategic importance to the county.

Bernard stated there has been engagement with the public at pre-draft stage with 43 submissions. The economic/community element of the Development Plan is taken from the LECP and that's where the PPN has huge role. Regarding renewable energy there is a need to achieve a balance, Leitrim is very conscious of the importance of landscape and have gone a step further than most other LA in looking at the landscape character and the ability to absorb very large structures. He stated that regarding forestry again there is a need to look at the ability of the landscape to absorb commercial forestry. There is a landscape evidence-based document that will be presented to the members in due course.

Cllr. Justin Warnock stated Kinlough is a tier 2b village with the plan only allowing to build 8 houses per annum in the confinement of the village this needs to be addressed. No houses to rent with population of 1200. Cllr Warnock asked how Kinlough can grow unhindered.

Stephen Clancy supported Cllr. Justin and stated Kinlough is an area under urban influence you can't get properties to rent and it's very difficult to acquire planning permission to build.

Bernard stated the Government have been clear they won't provide infrastructure unless it's based on a robust plan that adheres to a national hierarchy. Growth allocated to Leitrim is 1300 units over 6-year plan. It's about viability of development not zoning or servicing land.

Joseph Gilhooly stressed we must try as a county to set structure and hierarchy that suits Leitrim with 1300 units. Justin points are valid, but the lack of housing units is the same in most towns.

Seán Ó Conláin asked if the various greenways be included in a strategic sustainable transport map for the county?

Cllr. Enda McGloin raised a concern re topography issues with Drumshanbo which identified areas marked in yellow – residential but it will prove very difficult to build on.

Bernard accepted the point but stated that topography issues are a concern in all villages and towns

3 Receive update on Rural Transport

Fiona O'Shea and John Carr from Local Link gave a presentation to the SPC members.

Cllr. Frank Dolan acknowledged the improvement in the service however, he stated that the night service in Dromahair is a big loss to the people and the economy in the village.

Cllr. Justin Warnock added the local link has transformed Kinlough operating 7 days a week giving connectivity to Manorhamilton and Rossinver.

John Carr addressed that under Connecting Ireland it is proposed that there be 3 services 7 days p/w from Carrick on Shannon to Ballyshannon with additional services between Carrick on Shannon and Drumshanbo. John stated that there is scope in timetable if there is demand into Dromahair on Friday evenings.

Seán Ó Conláin wondered if bus routes could be mapped onto various tourism facilities/attractions i.e. looped walks and asked if buses can transport bikes?.

Fiona stated the possibility is included as a spec for the vehicles in the tender process which is now with the NTA. The mapping of timetables, it's hoped that this can be done with Hidden Heartlands, Failte Ireland, LCC, Tourism & NTA.

4 Receive a presentation on Biodiversity Plan

Ashling Cartright gave a brief introduction to the draft 5-year County Leitrim Biodiversity Action Plan. Plan is funded under Rural Development Leader Programme with match funding coming from Leitrim Development Company & Leitrim County Council. This plan is community-based plan. The plan will be useful in leveraging funding towards climate change and biodiversity environment. Overall aim is to create awareness of biodiversity by providing support and encouragement to our communities. Leitrim Development Company will lead the coordination and facilitation of the actions in the plan. The National Heritage Working Group of the Leitrim Heritage forum has reviewed the plan already and will also guide the actions of the plan.

Sean Meehan, ecologist and Deborah Darcy, ecologist went through the main themes

1. Approving knowledge of biodiversity resource
2. Protecting wildlife corridors and biodiversity hotspots
3. Promote and encourage biodiversity awareness through education and training
4. Invasive species knowledge
5. Biodiversity and Sustainability

Seán Ó Conláin appreciated the approach about being community led but stressed that it requires appropriate resources. He asked how people's attitudes can be changed.

Ashling stated that unless people are aware and understand the importance and benefits of biodiversity there is no need for a plan – the knowledge has to be created in first place.

Sarah Malone, Heritage Officer added that there is funding for the Local Authority under National Biodiversity Plan for sustainable agriculture and pollinators.

Cllr. Justin Warnock agreed with Seán in relation to communities and urged the need for farmers to get on board. Justin also stated that a Biodiversity Officer is needed.

Sarah stated that there are proposals for a Biodiversity Officer with the Department working with Heritage Council and CCMA and National Parks and Wildlife services. Funding is ear

marked for over 3 years which will make Biodiversity Officer posts available to 10 Local Authorities in 2022, 10 in 2023 and 5 in 2024.

5 AOB - Broadband, LECP Guidelines

Johanna Daly read out a report compiled by our Broadband Officer, Richard Molloy. In Leitrim, there are currently 11,469 premises identified by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications as intervention areas where there is no existing or planned commercial high speed broadband network. National Broadband Ireland (NBI) is the company which was awarded the contract to roll out the broadband network. However, the rollout of the National Broadband Plan is approximately six months behind schedule due to the disruptions caused by Covid-19. According to current timetables, NBI are on track to provide 58 premises within the Glencar and Sramore townlands with fibre to the home by February 2022. By November 2022, 8.4% of premises. By December 2024, high-speed fibre broadband will be available to 37.6% of premises. The remaining 62.4% of premises (i.e., 7,154 premises) will receive high speed broadband between January 2025 and December 2026.

In advance of the Fibre-to-the-Home roll out, the National Broadband Plan provides for the delivery of Broadband Connection Points (BCPs) nationwide. Within Leitrim there are currently 11 BCP locations.

- In addition to BCPs, Primary schools within Intervention Areas are also being connected for educational access as part of the National Broadband Plan. To date the following schools in Leitrim have been connected under the National Broadband Plan Aughawillan National School & Saint Michael's Primary School

Seán Ó Conláin asked that this information needs to be aligned with the 'plan' and would like to be updated. In relation to the BCPs/Multi Hub Projects he asked that community groups be asked what works/doesn't work in relation to the procedures under the grant funding.

Johanna Daly stated that the guidelines are set by the department, and we have to adhere to them.

LECP Guidelines

Johanna Daly gave a presentation to the members on the new LECP guidelines. The main difference for compiling the new LECP is that it will be carried out using a two-pronged approach.

1. The overall LECP integrated detailing high-level goals for full 6-year LECP period.
2. 'Implementation Plans' – Prioritised actions as well as performance indicators is a function of the implementation plan.

There are 6 stages to the plan

1. Preparation

2. Public Consultation
3. Development of high-level goals, objectives and outcomes
4. Finalisation of LECP
5. Implementation
6. Maintaining, Evaluation and Review

The responsibilities of the LECP are a reserved function, the economic element is overseen by the SPC with the community element overseen by the LCDC. There will be consultations and an Advisory Steering Group set up to assist in the preparation, drafting, adoption and implementation. This group will be made up of at least 1 member of the LCDC, 1 member of the SPC, the Chief Officer and Director of Services and any person that both the LCDC and SPC consider likely to make a significant contribution. An online event will be held on the 9th of December to give more information on the process of completing the LECP.

Cllr. Enda McGloin asked if Casual Trading could be part of next year’s work programme. Joseph Gilhooly agreed to have it included on our agenda at our next SPC meeting of the 23rd February.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

SIGNED: _____
Councillor Frank Dolan
Chairperson

SIGNED: _____
Helen Denning
Economic Development
Planning, Economic
Development and
Infrastructure Strategic Policy
Committee

DATE: Monday, 21 February 2022