

SPC 3 (Planning, Community & Economic Development, Arts & Culture Committee)

Meeting 2nd November, 2021 – Notes of Patricia Gardiner, Environmental Representative of PPN.

Agenda & Minutes:

The agenda, minutes and reports were sent out two weeks before the meeting as requested at previous meetings. The Standing Orders document governing Council meetings was attached and I note the following from Strategic Policy Committees, Item 61. Operation and administration: *'...The SPC Chair and relevant Director of Services should meet well in advance of an SPC meeting to clarify the agenda for the forthcoming meeting and to agree on objectives and what they would like as expected outcomes...'*

On reading the Standing Orders I also note that my earlier concerns about whether my contribution was reflected in the Minutes is redundant as they are only intended to record attendances, decisions and ... (g) *'such other matters considered important'*. Perhaps this explains why the comments made by myself and the other two PPN reps at a previous SPC 3 meeting as to how we would be involved in the actual strategic policy development were not referred to in the Minutes while a wide range of general comments were included.

Sligo Vision 2030 – KPMG Report

After listening to the presentation by KPMG on the Draft Revised and Updated Socio-Economic Statement & High Level Goals for the new LECP process (Sligo Vision 2030) update, I noted that we couldn't relegate 'Climate Change' to one heading, that it had to be central to the entire document, that every decision must be made in the context of reducing our emissions, that it couldn't be business as usual anymore. I said that I felt Sligo County Council wanted to push ahead with all its major road building projects as if the COP 26 debate wasn't going on; that we are the local leaders who can drive transformational change but not if we continue to do business as usual. I asked a specific question about the updated report, which was answered by KPMG. I later sent David an email with links to specific innovative projects in small European cities which are addressing carbon reduction issues. Dorothy Clarke responded to my comments and questions, noting that climate change was at the heart of everything the Council does. Rather than pursue this debate fruitlessly, I emailed Dorothy & Rosaleen O'Grady, as Chairperson, separately.

County Development Plan Update

There was an update on the Review of the County Development Plan which was interesting, especially in that there were 90 submissions received by the public, both individuals and groups. That was the highest they'd ever received and they were a little taken aback by this, especially the quality of some of the submissions. To me, it shows that people care about how their community is developed and are willing to take the time to make submissions if they are facilitated and informed about how to do it. The next two milestones are:

By 19 November 2021 (by week 16) –prepare the first Chief Executive’s Report on the submissions made during initial public consultation and submit to elected members

By 6 February 2022 (by week 26) – the Members direct the Chief Executive to prepare the Draft Sligo County Development Plan 2023-2029 (CDP) and the Draft Environmental Report (ER).

In addition to considering the contents of submissions, the preparation of the County Development Plan will have to address several strategic issues affecting the future development of the County including:

- **Consistency with NPF and RSES** e.g. promoting Compact Growth (NSO 1) and achieving population growth targets
- **Housing** – Stimulating supply in the right places
- **Regeneration** – Promoting Town Centre First principle / revitalising rural towns and villages
- **Climate Change** – Contributing to the achievement of national targets on renewable energy and climate change mitigation measures
- **Sustainable mobility** – Integrating land use with transportation and encouraging modal shift away from the private car

I asked how the aims of the County Development Plan were coordinated with the Sligo Vision 2030.

Sligo Public Realm Plan

There was also an update on the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and I am copying the highlights below:

In May 2020, the Planning Section submitted two applications to the URDF fund. Notice that they were approved for funding was announced in March 2021. The projects for which URDF support have been approved are:

- **Sligo Public Realm Plan** – the transformation of a number of Sligo’s streets and spaces – €19.16 million
- **City Campus – Sligo’s cultural and learning hub** – an exciting collaboration between Sligo County Council and Sligo IT which will involve a new County Library, a new Sligo IT library, a new County Museum, offices and some residential – €28.68m

The planner noted that it was hoped these projects would be finished by 2028. I asked if the seating and bike racks for O’Connell Street would be put in place before that date, as I have been told on a number of occasions that these items were dependent on these other projects being finished (or some such reason), and have raised it also at previous SPC 3 meetings (in the context of encouraging walking and cycling). Chairperson O’Grady said they would look into this and come back to the Committee.