

Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee

Minutes of meeting held at 10.00 a.m. on Friday, 23 February 2018 in Aras Chill Dara, Naas.

Cathaoirleach: Councillor Suzanne Doyle

Present: Councillors Mark Lynch, Padraig McEvoy, Naoise Ó Cearuil, Mark Wall; Mr. Brendan Allen, Mr. Gerry Prendergast.

Apologies: Councillor Morgan McCabe

Also Present: Sonya Kavanagh, Director of Services; Michael Kenny, Senior Planner; Peter Minnock, Director of Services; Jacqui McNabb, Head of LEO, Veronica Cooke, A/Senior Executive Officer, Mark McLoughlin, Administrative Officer.

1. To consider draft minutes of meeting held on 2 December 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2017 were proposed by Councillor Wall, seconded by Councillor O’Cearuil and duly adopted.

2. Economic Development

2.1 To receive an update from Head of Enterprise

Jacqui McNabb, Head of Enterprise gave an update on the operation of the Local Enterprise Office – Business Support Unit for 2017. She highlighted a number of areas:

- Financial support: 54 applications for €824,236
- Job creation 22 new jobs across 60 companies.
- Shop front grants: 95 successful applications for €155,000

Other areas of activity included: Participated in Ireland’s Best Young Entrepreneur, Trading online vouchers; mentoring of 125 assignments; 1,633 participants in 107 training programmes;

J. McNabb outlined the business challenges for 2018 including Brexit, Innovation, Recruitment, GDPR, premises and competitiveness. She outlined the targets for 2018 by enhancing client engagement and driving best practice.

She outlined the plans for the Mid-East Region Innovation Think Space (MERITS) which had received funding under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund 2017-18 which

would improve collaboration between a number of key partners such as Maynooth University and private industry and could create 120 jobs in the premises.

2.2 To consider policies around rates relief scheme

S. Kavanagh, Director of Services outlined the provisions of a number of schemes in operation in other local authority areas. Councillor Lynch stated that the cost of such a scheme would be minimal and that it should be targeted at towns and villages for new businesses.

S. Kavanagh advised that any incentive scheme would not result in a reduction in payable rates but would have to be funded from another source. She said that it was difficult to measure the success or otherwise of similar schemes as they coincided with a general uplift in the economy. She noted that the vacancy rate was less than 10%. She said that there would have to be clear rules similar to the shop front scheme to make administration straight forward. She noted that some schemes gave business a contribution over three years.

Councillor McEvoy said that any scheme would commit Council to funding out of future budgets beyond the current Council. J. McNabb stated that an expansion of the shop-front scheme could be examined.

It was agreed that the Director would investigate the potential for new business support scheme and report back to the committee.

3. Planning

3.1 To Receive an update on Forward Planning

The Director gave an update on work being carried out in the forward planning area highlighting a number of issues:

- A variation required to the Maynooth LAP in respect of LIHAF to facilitate residential development.
- Ministerial Direction in respect of the Celbridge LAP which may require further work as a result.
- Potential for masterplans for South Green, Kildare; and Confey, Leixlip
- Implications of material contravention of South Dublin Plan to rezone 500 acres near Kildare border.
- Pressure to deliver Naas LAP and Athy LAP

Mr. G. Prendergast said that he was disappointed with the National Planning Framework (NPF) as there was little in it for County Kildare. He said that increased

capacity on the rail line was critical to the centre of the county and an increase in the size of Naas to deliver the economies of scale to encourage business to set up.

Councillor McEvoy said that a demographic profile of the county was required and all members expressed their disappointment with the NPF.

3.2 To receive an update on submissions to National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

A copy of the submission in respect of this was circulated to the members and noted.

3.3 Briefing on Planning and Development Regulations 2018

V. Cooke, A/Senior Executive Officer gave a briefing on the provisions of the Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2018 whereby there is now an exemption for the change of use, and any related works, of certain vacant commercial properties into residential units without the need to obtain planning permission for works undertaken before 31 December 2021. The changes in regulations were part of an objective of Rebuilding Ireland to maximise housing supply and renew urban and rural areas. She advised that the exemption did not apply to the ground floor of buildings and were for a maximum of 9 individual residential units in each building and only applied where units were empty for a minimum of 12 months.

4. Work Programme

4.1 Policy on naming of residential developments

M. McLoughlin circulated draft policy document in respect of the naming of residential developments.

Councillor McEvoy said that there should be a template for developers to complete to put the onus on them to carry out the research for appropriate names.

Councillor Lynch said that he thought the naming of residential developments should go to the relevant municipal district for consideration.

It was agreed to review at the next meeting.

4.2 Pre-planning guidelines.

A document was circulated to assist applicant in applying for one off rural houses. M. McLoughlin advised that the document would be put up on the Council's website to assist applicants in preparing their planning applications.

4.3 Award Scheme

A document was circulated outlining the potential for such a scheme. The Director of Planning agreed to investigate the matter and report back to the next meeting.

5. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Friday 25 May 2018.

The meeting closed.