



Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee

Minutes of meeting held at 9.30 a.m. on Friday, 10 May 2019 in Áras Chill Dara, Naas.

Cathaoirleach: Councillor Suzanne Doyle

Present: Cllr. Morgan McCabe, Cllr. Pádraig McEvoy, Cllr. Billy Hillis, Mr. Gerry Prendergast, Cllr. Daragh Fitzpatrick, Ms. Majella O'Keefe, Ms. Evonne Boland

Also Present: Peter Minnock, Director of Services; Sonya Kavanagh, Director of Services; Jacqui McNabb, Head of Enterprise; Liam McGree, Senior Planner; Ken Kavanagh, Senior Executive Officer, Mark McLoughlin, Administrative Officer, Amy Granville, Senior Executive Planner.

Apologies: Cllr. Mark Lynch, Cllr Mark Wall, Mr. Brendan Allen

1. To consider draft minutes of meeting of 15 February 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2019 were proposed by Councillor B. Hillis, seconded by Councillor M. McCabe, and duly adopted.

Economic Development and Enterprise

2. To receive an update from the Head of Enterprise

Ms. McNabb advised the committee that the business support unit had had a considerable increase in volume of enquiries particularly from SMEs. She noted that the MERITS building will be tendered in June. When completed it will accommodate 120 people, together with facilities for remote working.

Work was proceeding on the development of the Model School, Athy as a Food and Drink Hub. Work was also progressing on the development of fourteen spaces in the Irish National Stud for entrepreneurs in the equine industry which would open by the end of the year. Talks were also ongoing in respect of green energy enterprise in Newbridge.

Other activity included a retail conference at the end of May aimed at enhancing the online presence of businesses, a trade mission to Boston in October and a presence at Punchestown races. She noted the success of St. Mary's School, Naas in coming third in the schools entrepreneur competition. She noted that the shop front scheme was still operating successfully and that they were looking at ways of further improvements.

Ms. M. O'Keefe commented on the promotion of the 'purple pound' – the promotion of disability awareness and the potential in this area of activity.

Ms. McNabb said that grant applications in this regard would be considered favourably and dealt with promptly.

Councillors McEvoy and Doyle both mentioned the success of the Future Pigs Green Generation Company in Nurney and the potential this business has for developing renewable energy. Councillor McCabe welcomed the food hub and commended the launch of the *skillsnet* programme in Athy.

Planning

3. To consider the report on the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023

The report on the two year review of the County Development Plan was noted. The report is on the agenda for the May council meeting. The committee asked that consideration be given to holding a special council meeting on the County Development Plan when the new council is in place.

Mr. Minnock advised the meeting that the Council were working closely with Irish Water on prioritising water infrastructure to facilitate town and village development.

4. To receive a report from the Rural Housing Sub-committee

Councillor Seamie Moore, chair of the sub-committee joined the meeting. He outlined details of his report in respect of the sub-committee [see Appendix 1 outlining a

number of specific recommendations]. He noted that the Executive and members had agreed on most issues although there was some difference of views on the interpretation of social and economic need. It was agreed that an Agents' meeting would be held and that greater emphasis would be placed on the pre-planning process.

Councillor Doyle stated that she did not necessarily agree that the report reflected the level of frustration amongst members over rural housing.

Councillor McEvoy said that a document to assist applicants in dealing with Agents should be prepared while Councillor Doyle said that a new pre-planning guide would be helpful.

Councillor Moore acknowledged the work of the Planning Department in facilitating the meetings of the sub-committee.

Action: It was agreed that the findings of the rural housing sub-committee would be used to inform the members prior to any variation or adoption of a new Kildare County Development Plan.

5. To receive an update from the Director of Planning and Strategic Development.

Mr. Minnock, Director of Services advised the committee that there were three issues of note: the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy had been adopted by EMRA and would come into effect shortly [24 June]; the National Planning Framework was now policy and thirdly the new planning regulator was now in position. He advised the committee that the Council are considering options in relation to the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 following adoption of RSES. He would recommend that priority be now given to reviewing or varying the County Development Plan and that local area plan processes be put on hold (other than Naas and Leixlip) until a new county plan was in place.

6. Referral from Celbridge-Leixlip Municipal District meeting (March 2019)

Councillor Doyle noted apologies from Councillor Cussen who was unable to attend. Mr. Ken Kavanagh advised the committee that the matter had been addressed by the members when formalising the Kildare County Development Plan.

There was a discussion about some of the issues in respect of the naming of housing estates, in particular timeline difficulties.

Action: Councillor Doyle advised that the matter could be dealt with in any forthcoming review or variation of the Kildare County Development Plan.

7. Any Other Business

Councillor Doyle noted that this was the last strategic policy committee for the Director, Mr. Minnock and thanked him for his work in the planning department over the last number of year and contribution to the County. She wish him well on his forthcoming retirement on behalf of the committee.

Mr. Kavanagh also wished Councillor Billy Hillis well on his forthcoming retirement from the Council and wish the other councillor well on their forthcoming election campaign.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting is schedule for 6 September 2019.

The meeting closed.

APPENDIX 1

Report from Sub-Committee on Rural Housing Policies

To ;
The Chair and Members of KCC Economic Development, Enterprise & Planning
SPC
The Director and Officials of KCC Planning Section.

Foreword

Following Full Council debates on Rural Housing it was agreed to form a sub-committee to examine the text wordings of the Rural Housing Policies as they exist within the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 and resolve perceived interpretation differences that had evolved through REFUSALS of planning permissions over the last six months of 2018. There was an inference that the new National Planning Framework (NPF19) and Ministerial Guidelines from 2005 had been introduced with an over-rigid adherence.

Two elected members from each Municipal District were nominated to attend. Cllrs Weld, Fitzpatrick, Young, Cussen, Redmond, Miley, Doyle, Stafford, Kelly and Moore.

Four meetings were held between 7th February and 28th March 2019 between the selected members and a range of planning officials that included at different times, The Director, Peter Minnock, Senior Planners Liam McGree, MI Kenny, Patricia Conlon, Other Planners, Ken Kavanagh and Mark McLoughlin. It was agreed that Cllr Moore would Chair the meetings.

At the first meeting, members robustly challenged the out-turn of refusals in planning decisions in Kildare County Council against the numbers in other nearby counties. Officials indicated that NPF 19 did not amend or conflict with policies that already existed in the Kildare CDP and Ministerial Guidelines became effective from the dates issued. Summary details of Planning Decisions in KCC were requested for the next meeting. Subsequently from that meeting members requested Refusal Details for November 2018 decisions. Members and Officials debated the refusal reasons on 10 of the 15 applications. In general members accepted the site uniqueness of each application and the quality of some application created different reasons for acceptable refusals. No case was noted as being refused for any reasons other than those not conforming with requirements in the CDP. In one case it was noted that a Further Information request would still have resulted with a less than happy applicant, knowing that the range of FIs were insurmountable.

A motion from two of the subcommittee members Cllrs Doyle and Miley, for the March Full Council meeting, resulted in all elected members supporting a motion to have Rural Housing applications examined in a more positive light and not to have existing policies augmented by other new policies. The Chair deemed that no further debate would be allowed on this motion.

The members requested that the next meeting of the sub-committee (28th March) be devoted to a re-appraisal of the text of Rural Housing Policies RH1, RH2, RH9 and RH10.

This re-appraisal would help Officials and Members to formulate policy changes in any future rural housing policy reviews or CDP review. Officials agreed to note the recommendations and research any proposals that were not already part of the present CDP.

Among the recommendations of the Review Group of the existing CDP policies were

- RH1 -----No Changes; Members Satisfied
- RH 2-----No Change; Members Satisfied
- RH 9 (1)---- Planning Section agreed to consider and compile a Design Manual of houses, suitable for rural site areas.
- RH 9 (4)-----Planning Section to develop a scheme to encourage Cluster House development, suitable for co-op or family member requirements
- RH9 (4)-----Planning Section to limit over-saturation or ribbon building of any area by consideration of a policy, co-relating the number of Rural Housing applications in any area to the size of nearby villages.
- RH 9 (4)-----Planning Section to accord with Irish Water to eliminating infrastructure deficiencies in otherwise suitable locations.
- RH 9 (5)-----Planning Section to consider a text insertion to allow for suitable re-planting schemes, where reasonable hedgerow removal is required for vehicular access.
- RH 10-----No changes; Members Satisfied.

- Planners also agreed to 'broaden' pre-planning meetings with 'recommendations' to change unsuitable proposals, where possible.
- Planners agreed to convene Agents Briefings, to help reduce the number of inappropriate planning applications.

There was a members acceptance that strong evidence did exist, showing many planning applications, that subsequently received 'refusals', would never have got to an application stage with the initial presentation if;

- pre-planning meetings were undertaken,
- agents or members were more pragmatic with applicants
- unrealistic expectations of applicants were dampened by members or agents
- an awareness that even pre-planning meetings lacked the values of a site inspection.

The Chair wishes to note the willingness of Officials and Members to work towards an agreeable outcome to the Review and to thank the Planning Officials for making all requested information available for examination and discussion.

Seamie Moore Cllr

Chairman

28 March 2019

On behalf of the Sub-Committee Members