



Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee
Minutes of meeting held at 3.00 p.m. on Thursday, 14 January 2021 via Video Conferencing.

Cathaoirleach: Councillor Ivan Keatley

Present: Cllr. Pádraig McEvoy, Cllr Kevin Duffy, Cllr. Peggy O'Dwyer, Mr. Gerry Prendergast, Ms. Majella O'Keefe, Ms. Evonne Boland; Cllr Michael Coleman; Cllr Rob Power, Cllr Seamie Moore

Also Present: Eoghan Ryan, Director of Services; Sonya Kavanagh, Director of Services; Jacqui McNabb, Head of Enterprise; Mairead Hunt, Senior Executive Officer; Caroline O'Donnell, A/Senior Planner; Mark McLoughlin, Administrative Officer.

1. Conflict of Interest Declarations

The Cathaoirleach advised the members that it was a requirement at all strategic policy committee meetings for members to declare any potential conflicts of interest for items under discussion at the meeting. The item was noted.

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 10 December 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2020 were proposed by Councillor O'Dwyer, seconded by Councillor McEvoy and duly adopted.

3. To consider the Draft Kildare Economic Strategy 2025

Ms. S. Kavanagh, Director of Service gave the members an update on the Strategy. She advised the members that as opportunities arise they will be acted on, even if they are not in the strategy, while some of the items in the strategy are already underway. She highlighted the eight key focus areas and summarised the actions under each area:

- Indigenous Industry / SMEs
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) (MERITS building will include 'landing space' for companies)
- Knowledge economy
- Equine Industry (Equine hub scheduled to open this year in Irish National Stud)
- Agri-food sector (including Food Hub in Athy)
- Tourism, Hospitality & leisure
- Retail
- Climate Action & Green Economy

Councillor Keatley thanked the members for making submissions on the Strategy said that the document will go to full Council for approval at the next meeting. He asked who will make up the technical group to advise on the Strategy.

Councillor McEvoy said that a number of municipal districts members had met to discuss the opportunities created by the loss of Bord na Mona activity and the need for European investment in the west of the County. He asked if there was a review procedure for the Strategy.

Mr G. Prendergast said that work was need to maximise space available for business and that an additional MERITS building was required.

Councillor Moore asked if space would be available for businesses coming out of MERITS.

Ms. J. McNabb advised the members that the Enterprise Office was looking at advance buildings. She advised that the technical group advising on the Strategy would be industry specialists

Ms. Kavanagh advised the members that the Strategic Policy committee will oversee the actions in the Strategy.

Action: On the proposal of Councillor McEvoy and seconded by Mr. G. Prendergast, it was agreed that the Draft Kildare Economic Strategy 2025 be submitted to the Corporate Policy Group for approval.

4. To consider the Kildare Pollinator Plan 2109-2022

Ms. B. Loughlin, Heritage Officer outlined the details of the Pollinator Plan to the members. She said that the Council's Pollinator Plan 2019-22 was prepared as a response to the National Pollinator Plan with local authorities being a key partner in its delivery.

Councillor Moore said that the involvement of residents associations was an important aspect of delivering the plan.

Ms. Loughlin said that they were working with tidy towns associations and with the Parks Department to reduce down the amount of grass cutting taking place.

Mr Prendergast said that golf courses could also play an important part.

Councillor McEvoy asked how many towns had bio-diversity plans.

Ms Boland said that a mindset change was required with residents associations and a policy was needed on invasive species such as laurel.

Ms. Loughlin advised that there were 11 in place with 10 more to be completed in 2021.

Councillor Keatley note that the Council was going glyphosate free and that LPT funding had been allocated to this.

Action:

On the proposal of Councillor O'Dwyer and seconded by Councillor McEvoy It was agreed that the Kildare Pollinator Plan would be sent to Corporate Policy Group and full Council for noting.

5. Any Other Business

Ms. O'Donnell advised the Committee that the Planning Department were in discussions with Transportation Department in respect of a submission on the Greater Dublin Area Transportation Strategy.

Councillor McEvoy said that it was important to get a cohesive view on modal shifts. Towns were expanding and creating unsuitable transport usages. He said that the NTA should provide analysis to local authorities.

Councillor Duffy said that the NTA needed to be more ambitious including electrification of the railway line as far as Portlaoise.

Mr. Prendergast also stated that the railway line was a priority for electrification.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 25 March 2021.

The meeting closed.

Councillor Ivan Keatley

Chairman

