

Planning, Development and Environment Strategic Policy Committee
Minutes of meeting held on 19th July 2021
Via Microsoft Teams Platform

Present:

Cllr. Sylvester Bourke, Jim Wood, Cllr. Gerry O'Neill, Cllr. Patsy Glennon, Tessa Stewart, Shane O'Connor, Cllr. Shay Cullen, Michael Byrne

In attendance (WCC):

Breege Kilkenny, Director of Services, Fergal Keogh, Senior Engineer; Sorcha Walsh, Senior Planner; Jackie Carroll, Senior Executive Officer; Siobhan O'Brien, Administrative Officer; Tom Griffin, Senior Executive Chemist; James Callery, Environmental Awareness Officer; Karina Fitzgerald, Senior Executive Planner.

As the Cathaoirleach, Councillor Sylvester Bourke was unavoidably delayed, it was agreed that Councillor Shay Cullen would take the Chair and commence the meeting. The Cathaoirleach arrived at the meeting to take over from Item 3.

Item 1 Minutes of meeting of 14th December and Matters Arising

The minutes were proposed by Councillor Patsy Glennon and seconded by Tessa Stewart. There were no matters arising.

Item 2 Circulars and Correspondence

Notice of Motion referred to SPC from Council meeting of 5th July 2021

'That this Council invites the Planning Department of Wicklow County Council to prepare and deliver a presentation to members which specifically illustrates the existing provision of land that is available across the County to be used for education.'

The members received a comprehensive overview of Wicklow County Council's interaction with the Department of Education regarding identification of land suitable for provision of schools. The members were advised that there is sufficient land zoned in the Development Plan for

schools, however the Department need not be restricted to only zoned lands. It was noted that the Department carries out an analysis of need and has its own Forward Planning Unit.

Concern was expressed by committee members about lack of school places and noted that the pace of school provision is outstripped by the population growth. The communication between the Council and the Department was noted as key, and the members were assured that there was constant communication.

It was further noted that the draft County Development Plan further strengthens the process with the requirement of Social Infrastructure Audits – developers will have to show that social facilities have capacity to deal with the proposed development.

Item 3 Development Management

Update on e-Planning

The members received a presentation on ePlanning, the new online planning application system, which is being rolled out on a phased basis nationally. The scheme, led by the LGMA, is currently being piloted in Galway and Tipperary local authorities. Wicklow has set up an Internal Working Group to progress the roll out and is scheduled to be commencing rollout from quarter 1 2022.

The benefits to both the planning applicant and the Council were highlighted and the members welcomed the initiative, noting that Wicklow appeared to be prepared for the roll out.

It was noted that training will be provided to the members, the agents and other relevant personnel prior to commencement of the system.

There will be implications for staff when testing the new system and operating the current systems.

Update on Development Contributions

The current Development Contribution Scheme was introduced in October 2015 and provides for 3 classes of public infrastructure and facilities in respect of which contributions are sought.

Class of public infrastructure and facilities

Description

Class 1	Roads and Transportation
Class 2	Stormwater Drainage
Class 3	Community & Recreational Amenity

The Council is currently undertaking a detailed exercise on the development contribution scheme, in line with the recommendation of the Local Government Auditor. As part of this exercise an amount of the contributions collected will be used to offset debit balances on a number of capital accounts (mainly relating to completed Roads projects). In addition, as part of the completion of the ongoing Balancing Statement exercise with Irish Water, this may also result in the handover of some contributions to Irish Water.

When the capital balances and IW exercises have been fully completed, the Council will be in a position to provide a more complete and accurate picture of the value of the development contribution scheme.

Item 4 Forward Planning

Update on draft County Development Plan

The draft Plan as amended by the Members and associated environmental reports has been on public display since the 4th June. The Draft Plan and associated documents will be available to view and download from the consultation portal until Monday 16 August 2021. Submissions or observations regarding the Draft Plan and the associated Environmental Report have been invited from the public and interested bodies and it was noted that, whilst not a lot of submissions have been received as yet, there was good feedback .

The new consultation portal was working well and this technology is assisting with the new requirement to publish on the website within 10 days of receipt of submission.

The members discussed the timeline in detail and noted that there was some interest from elected members in extending the public consultation period up to a year, in line with new legislation. It was noted that there were some concerns on the potential to delay on preparation of Local Area Plans if the members agree to such an extension.

Item 5 Pollution Control

The members received a presentation on Pollution Control.

The committee was updated on areas including Drinking Water Sampling, S4 Discharges, Farm Inspections, River and Lake Sampling, Bathing Water Sampling, Septic Tank Inspections, Planning inspections and Air Monitoring, including ambient air monitoring stations, of which the latest has been provided in Greystones.

It was noted that, in the recently published EPA report on water quality, Wicklow's biological ratings show that 83% of rivers have Good or High Biology, which shows a marked, continuous improvement in water quality in County Wicklow.

The comprehensive presentation was welcomed by the Cathaoirleach and the committee members and the breadth and quality of work carried out by the Pollution Control team was commended.

Item 6 Waste Management

The members received a presentation on Waste Management, focusing on the national Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy.

It is accepted that now, waste policy can no longer be about the narrow consideration of how to treat the waste we produce, based on a linear consumption model that cannot be sustained - there must be a transition to a circular economy which will allow a focus on the impacts of consumption patterns beyond just waste generation.

The committee was given an overview of the Action Plan, showing the key target areas of Priority Waste Streams (food waste, single use plastic and plastic packaging, construction and

demolition waste and texties) and other target areas (municipal waste, consumer protection, citizen engagement, green public procurement, and waste enforcement.

The initiatives undertaken by Wicklow in these target areas were highlighted and welcomed by all.

Item 7 Schedule of Meetings 2021

It was agreed that the next meetings would be held in late September and December.

Item 8 Any Other Business

There was no further business.

Signed:

Cathaoirleach

Dated:

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