

**MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STRATEGIC
POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 13TH OCTOBER, 2020 VIA ZOOM AT 3.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Cllr. Edward Timmins
Cllr. Shay Cullen
Ms. Tessa Stewart
Cllr Patsy Gannon
Mr. Conor McCarthy
Ms. Erica Doyle

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms. Breege Kilkenny, Director of Services
Ms. Sorcha Walsh, Senior Planner
Ms. Theresa O'Brien, Senior Executive Officer
Mr. Jonathan Sexton
Mr. Mark Devereux, Senior Engineer
Mr. Tom Griffin Senior Chemist

APOLOGIES: Cllr. Sylvester Bourke, Chairman
Cllr. Gerry O'Neill

At the outset Cllr. E. Timmins stated that he had been contacted by Cllr. S. Bourke and had agreed to chair the meeting today in Cllr. S. Bourke's absence.

Item 1: Adoption of Minutes of Meeting held on the 20th July 2020.

The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 20th July 2020 were proposed by Cllr. Patsy Glennon, seconded by Cllr. Edward Timmins and adopted.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

Cllr. E. Timmins referred to the previous meeting and requested an update with regard to the report that was to be prepared for the Members in relation to development contribution expenditure over the last 10 to 15 years.

Ms. B. Kilkenny responded by saying that following the previous meeting, an email had been sent to the Head of Finance. Ms. T. O'Brien confirmed that she had followed up on the email by speaking to Ms. Breda McCarthy, Finance. Some work had been done a number of years ago. It is hoped to review that report and to add to it. Each Directorate would have to be involved in the compiling of the report. However, priority was being given, at the moment, to preparing the budget. It was confirmed that it would be forwarded to the Members of the SPC as soon as it was prepared but she felt it would not be ready for the next meeting.

Item 2: Forward Planning Update

Ms. S. Walsh stated that the Chief Executive's Report on submissions received had been discussed at the full Council Meeting on the 7th September 2020. Members put forward a number of proposals which are currently being reviewed by the Executive and will be included in the Draft Development Plan, the chapters of which are currently being drawn up.

One of the issues that arose at the meeting on the 7th September 2020, was that of population targets. Ms. Walsh confirmed that she had been in contact with the Regional Planning Team and the Office of the Regulator in relation to same and that the lines of communication would be kept open.

Ms. B. Kilkenny stated that the Forward Planning Unit were working continuously on the Plan. She stated, however, that if the situation changes, there may be a delay due to Covid and staff resources.

Cllr. S. Cullen queried what the targets are likely to be. He referred to Ashford and the large amount of planning applications being lodged for the area. Developers are aware of the changes in the population targets and are urgently lodging planning applications.

Ms. S. Walsh referred to a judicial review against a development in Kildare where she had become aware of the preparation of the figures. She had contacted the Department who confirmed that the ERSI were preparing a report. The targets do not come from the National Planning Framework. They were an addendum report to the National Planning Framework known as the National Planning Framework Road Map. They do not have the same status as the National Planning Framework. It is possible that the Minister may be able to review them.

Ms. Walsh stated that developers were lodging applications not just in Ashford but all around the Country. If the developers felt that there was going to be a reduction in the amount of land zoned and population targets in the towns then they were going to lodge applications. The current target is 16,000 houses, 5,000 of which have commenced. This figure will be reduced when houses are actually commenced and not just when the planning application is granted.

Ms. T. Stewart referred to a letter that she had received from the residents of Ashford. A link road had been promised from the Roundwood road to the old N.11 to direct cars outside the village, there is no path into the Main Village. She referred to a current application for 122 houses in the area.

Ms. S. Walsh stated that the current Development Plan and Local Area Plan had gone through the statutory processes and that members of the public had the opportunity to raise concerns. Any current application that is considered by the Planning Authority would be considered having regard to the adopted Development Plan and Local Area Plan and the targets contained therein. The 130 unit development was to be linked with a new site beside the school. She stated that An Bord Pleanala had a different view to that of the Planning Authority in that An Bord Pleanala's view was that houses were needed. The Planning Authority wished to see services being provided. An Bord Pleanala or the Planning Authority could not take cognisance of a draft Plan.

Ms. B. Kilkenny stated that in relation to current application she would have to seek a report from Mr. F. Keogh, Senior Engineer. She stated that the Planning Authority was in a state of flux until the County Development Plan is actually adopted.

Cllr. P. Glennon referred to West Wicklow and stated that the West was being discriminated against in the scaling back of the Plan.

Ms. S. Walsh stated that she was aware of Cllr. Glennon's view on the matter. The Forward Planning Unit would do whatever they could to accommodate West Wicklow. Certain limits and restrictions were having to be complied with in the preparation of the Development Plan. She stated that towns on the east coast of the County were facing the same restrictions as West Wicklow and confirmed that the West was not being targeted.

Cllr. E. Timmins stated that the main issue in West Wicklow is infrastructure including roads and sewerage infrastructure.

Cllr. S. Cullen referred to the lack of infrastructure in Newtownmountkenedy where 1000 houses were being built but with no schools. He also referred to Ashford where a derelict site development got permission 7 to 8 years ago which is causing a lot of frustration to the people of Ashford. A link road was supposed to be provided from the development site of 133 houses to Glanbia to link to the N.11. He referred to another application for 140 houses at the back of Ballinalea which is adding to the frustration and the lack of open space facilities.

In response to a query from Cllr. E. Timmins, Ms. S. Walsh confirmed that no report had been received from the department in relation to wind strategy.

Item 3: To receive a presentation and discuss the process of the designation of Bathing Waters

Mr. T. Griffin gave a detailed presentation to the Members.

It was agreed that the presentation would be circulated to the Members.

Mr. C. McCarthy referred to The Cove Beach, Arklow which is an excellent amenity which he has used for many years. The tide comes all the way in so therefore the beach gets washed twice a day.

Water Quality in County Wicklow – An Analysis of EPA Report for County Wicklow 2015 - 2018

Mr. Jonathan Sexton gave a detailed presentation on the report which had been received from the EPA in relation to the quality of water in County Wicklow for the years 2015 to 2018.

It was agreed that a copy of this report would be circulated to the Members.

Ms. B. Kilkenny complimented Mr. T. Giffin and Mr. J. Sexton and the Lab Team. Lawpro seemed to be taking some of the credit but it is the Local Authorities on the ground who are doing most of the work. She confirmed that Mr. Sexton would be making the presentation to the full Council meeting.

Ms. E. Doyle thanked Mr. Sexton for the presentation and queried whether County Wicklow's figures could be made available. Mr. Sexton stated that they could be compiled from the framework app but that they wouldn't differ too much from the national picture.

Item 4 To Fix Date & Time of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Planning Development and Environment Strategic Policy Committee would be held on Monday, 14th December 2020, commencing at 11.00 a.m.

Item 5 Any Other Business

Mr. C. McCarthy referred to the dezoning of residential land in the County and queried if the land could keep some sort of zoning. He stated that Wicklow is going to have to attract industries into the County. Covid may bring about decentralisation. He stated that the Council should not strip back zoning completely.

Ms. S. Walsh stated that under instruction it has been identified there is too much land zoned for housing. The Council has 3 options

- 1 dezone the land
2. Bank it (it would mean that the land is in theory suitable for housing but is not needed at the moment) or
3. Zone the land for different use. She stated that there is a shortfall of open space in some towns and it may be difficult to zone land for employment instead of residential. Ultimately it is the Members decision. There is an abundant level of land zoned employment in the Development Plan. She stated that developers were moving away from green field developments and were expanding

existing areas. If the Members zoned land employment, all services would have to be able to be provided. A lot of consultation takes place with the water and waste water department. The provision of schools and public transport is also a consideration. She stated that the Forward Planning Unit would be happy to listen to the Member's views. In future people may be working from home more and therefore more hot desk areas will be needed and every new house may need a Seomra and improved services such as Broadband.

Cllr. E. Timmins referred to the small and large village boundaries. He queried if the boundaries of the villages could be extended.

Ms. Walsh confirmed that out of the 5000 application commenced, there were only 15 units in villages. Noone is applying to build in the villages due to a number of factors: landowners may not have any interest in selling the sites, the site may not be suitable for effluent disposal systems, there are no services available and people may not be aware of the restrictions in large and small villages. She stated that the Team could look at the boundaries, discuss same with the Municipal Districts who would have the local knowledge including landowners who would be willing to sell.

She referred to a possible serviced site initiative where the Council would buy the site, service it and then sell it on, thereby recouping its expenditure.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date: _____

