**Minutes from Environment and Planning Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 9th January 2018, 2.00pm, Old Reference Library.**

**Present:** Cllr. Damien Brady (Chairperson), C Craven, P. Connaughton, ((A/DOS), C. O’Callaghan, (A/Sen. ENG), P. Denning, (Agriculture Pillar), Cllr. Val Smith, Cllr. Fergal Curtin, Cllr. Madeleine Argue, Cllr. Winston Bennett, N. O’Kane (Sen. Planner,) M. Galligan (SE Planner).

**Apologies:** Andrew O’Gorman, Thomas Cooney.

Minutes of previous meeting were proposed by Cllr. Argue and seconded by Cllr. Winston Bennett.

The Chairperson advised the meeting that a letter of resignation had been received from Orla Sheridan. The Chairperson acknowledged the contribution that Ms. Sheridan had made in progressing the work of the Committee.

1. **NWRA – Draft Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy Consultation Issues Paper**

This Issues Paper is a consultation document that has been prepared in advance of drafting a new Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).

Mr. O’Kane presented the projected targets set out for the Region in relation to future development and compared the Council’s projected targets over the same timeframe.

In 2017, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government prepared a draft National Planning Framework (NPF). It will provide a National Planning Framework to guide national, regional and local planning and investment decisions.

**NPF Projections**

Mr. O’Kane informed the meeting that the NPF provides the broad parameters for the region, which the RSES must make provision for and the key provisions include the following:

* Accommodate a population increase of between 150,000 and 175,000 people up to 2040 within the region (growth of 1 million for the whole country, 50% in the main 5 cities and 50% elsewhere)
* Create 110,000 new jobs to support the projected population increase, with a total of 450,000 jobs necessary within region
* Population and jobs growth to be aligned to occur within the same functional area and to a limited number of larger and regionally distributed centres.
* 30% of new housing to be delivered in existing built up areas
* Large towns of over 10,000+ population (Cavan Town) identified for 40% population growth by 2040
* Rural areas (Towns/Villages with a population <10,000, including open countryside) identified for 15% population growth by 2040

Current population of Cavan Town is 10,914. A 40% increase would see this rise to 15,280 by 2040. Current population of Rural Cavan is 65,177. A 15% increase would see this rise to 74,953 by 2040. This relates to a growth in population for the whole County of 14,142, bring the total population up to 90,234.

County Cavan has seen the largest growth in the region over the period of the last Census of 4%, with Galway seeing a growth of 2.2% in the same period.

**Cavan County Council’s Projections**

The Planning Departments projections forecast a population growth up to 102,000, up significantly from the NPF projections.

They also project that a growth of 17,000 new jobs is required to align with its projected population growth. This is significantly higher than the NPF target of 10,000.

Mr. O’Kane informed the meeting that the Regional Strategy needs to take into consideration investment priorities i.e. extension of M3, improvement of Broadband, provide funds to the local authority to purchase land, be Brexit Ready.

An Employment Catchment Survey was carried out and the following data was retrieved:

* 138,000 people within a 30 minute drive time of the main towns in the County
* 900,000 people within a 60 minute drive time of the main towns in the County

Cllr. Bennett emphasised the importance of the N55 and stated that Dundalk to Sligo route should be prioritised. He also agreed that we should be Brexit ready. He asked if any development sites were readily available for new industries looking to establish themselves in Cavan.

Mr. O’Kane advised that there were no lands currently available.

Cllr. Argue stated it is currently difficult to get planning permission in rural areas. She added it is unfair that the smaller towns are being targeted for smaller growth. She also advised that a new site has been identified for a new campus for Cavan Institute and that it will play an important role in attracting more industry and jobs to the County.

Cllr. Curtin stated the greatest growth in the County was in the East with towns such as Virginia with their close proximity to the M3 as a major factor for future growth. He also felt that the projected increase in houses per year was small, and that there is currently a housing shortage in the area.

Paddy Connaughton advised the meeting that Galway will be the main economic driver in this region. There is currently no great linkage between Cavan/Monaghan and Galway/Mayo. There is not a natural integration with the West and that doesn’t reflect the population growth experienced in Cavan.

The Chairperson asked if any particular infrastructure is being targeted?

In response, Mr. O’Kane advised that there is a substantial cost in acquiring lands and servicing them.

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**AOB**

No items were raised.

**Close of meeting**

The meeting concluded at 3.00pm. The date for the next meeting was set for Tuesday, 27th February at 9.30am in the Old Reference Library.