**Minutes from Environment and Planning Strategic Policy Committee Meeting**

**Thursday 10th May 2018, 9.30am, Old Reference Library**

**Present: Cllr.** Damien Brady (Chairperson), Paddy Denning, IFA, Cllr. Val Smith, Cllr. Fergal Curtin, Cllr. Winston Bennett, Conor Craven, Paddy Connaughton, Colm O’Callaghan, Nicholas O’Kane, Marice Galligan, Pat Gaynor.

**Apologies:** Cllr. Madeleine Argue, Andrew O’Gorman.

Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Cllr. Bennett and seconded by Cllr. Curtin.

1. **Taking in charge of Estates**

Pat Gaynor gave an overview of the national situation. He stated that in 2006 each local authority were required to develop a taking in charge policy. Pat explained that figures from the National Survey of Unfinished Estates, indicated that Co. Cavan had 147 unfinished estates in 2010 and this has subsequently reduced to 13.

He advised that out of a total of 236 housing estates, 12 estates were taken in charge in 2012 and a further 24 in 2017. There are currently 36 applications for taking in charge, of which 17 have been validated. These particular estates will be put forward before the September Council meeting for approval.

Cllr. Curtin raised a query in respect of the timeframe to take all 200 estates in charge. Mr. Gaynor advised he was unable to give a definitive timeframe, however, 29 would estates be completed by the end of 2018. Cllr. Smith queried whether the Department sets any annual targets for the Council to meet. Mr. Gaynor advised there was no specific targets set by the department.

Cllr. Brady asked who could apply for an estate to be taken in charge. Mr. Gaynor stated that ideally the developer of the estate would be involved, but if they are no longer in business or insolvent, then homeowners are entitled to apply. However, 51% of homeowners in the estate must agree for the Council to take over their estate.

1. **Cavan Town Residential Variation & Vacant Sites Variation**

Marice Galligan advised members of the reasoning behind the Council varying the Cavan Town and Environs Development Plan 2014-2020. It was considered that the gradients of the Phase 1 lands in some cases were such that commercial viability was questionable. She explained that would affect the population growth in Cavan Town and would mean that we would not achieve our expected growth as set out in the Development Plan.

Marice pointed out the review of the plan will commences in June. Work is also ongoing on the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy which is due to be completed at the end of year. Therefore, she outlined that draft plans will not go on public display until the RSES plan is finalised meaning it could be 2.5 to 3 years before a new plan is adopted.

Ms. Galligan advised the members that the current plan had estimated a population growth of 2,195 persons between 2014-2020. This would result in the requirement of 65 hectares being zoned as Phase 1 residential land. She pointed out that Phase 2,3,4 residential lands are not deemed suitable for residential purposes.

Ms. Galligan stated advised that the primary objective of the vacant site levy is urban regeneration and increased housing supply. The legislation is due to incentivise developments or the use of vacant land and properties. It targets key sites held back by owners, which are undermining the achievement of development plan objectives.

Ms. Galligan confirmed that vacant lands will be identified and that register has been established, however there are no entries to date. After variation, the Local Authority will consider sites within the zonings that are vacant or in need of regeneration that meet the criteria and are in the zonings for inclusion on the register. This procedure will involve notifying the owner of proposed entry, allowing a submission period, entry to register and allow for an appeal process. Marice confirmed that the Levy will be 3% for 2019 and increasing to 7% by 2020

Cllr. Bennett raised a query in respect of the 65 hectares of land required, and asked whether the Council had any plan to acquire some this land. In reply, Ms. Galligan advised that the Council may acquire partial sites as not all sites will be feasible for development.

Cllr. Brady asked if a developer has just recommenced works on a site, is it classed as vacant? Ms. Galligan replied advised that this does not eliminate them from inclusion on the register and the situation would have to be reviewed before issuing a levy.

Cllr. Curtin enquired if a developer cannot afford to complete a site, does the levy apply? Ms. Galligan advised that the levy will still apply

Nicholas O’Kane advised that levies will be utilised more so in cities such as Galway, Dublin, and Cork.

Paddy Connaughton stated in terms of planning in the county, there is still alot of single housing being built in rural areas and that we need to consider making our towns and villages more attractive to live in.

Cllr. Bennett asked if there was much uptake on the grant scheme in 2017 for upgrading properties. Mr. Connaughton said figures were not available but he expected the figures to be quite low.

1. **Connacht Ulster Regional Waste Plan – Local initiative**

Conor Craven advised the meeting that a free hazardous waste event will be taking place at Corranure Civic Amenity Centre on Saturday, 26th May. Hazardous waste such as paints, aerosols, weedkillers, etc will be taken for free, however, normal charges will apply for household waste and recycling. Mr. Craven advised it will be advertised on local radio and in newspapers. Mr. Craven stated that a similar event took place in 2015 and 10 tonnes of waste was taken in.

Cllr. Brady enquired if a similar event would be taking place at the other civic amenity centres. Mr. Craven advised that the other centres do not have the facilities to take this type of material and it will only be taking place in Corranure.

Cllr. Brady informed the meeting of a his visit to Cashel, Co. Tipperary along with staff from the waste management section and Belturbet Tidy Towns to discuss their Zero Waste Project. Cllr. Brady said the visit was very informative and has provided useful information to support Belturbet Tidy Towns in their project to become the first Zero Waste town in the Connacht Ulster region.

Mr. Craven advised the meeting that the EPA were interested in supporting the project and an application for funding was being submitted in the coming days.

1. **2018 Spring Clean**

Cllr. Brady thanked the community groups who took part in this year’s Spring Clean event. Mr. Craven thanked the Councillors for attending the launch on 12th March. He informed the meeting that Probation Services have undertaken litter picks along National routes and it is envisaged that they will undertake similar litter picks along other National and Regional roads.

Mr. Craven also advised that the Council had received funding of €54,700 for the extensive clean up of 4 sites and purchasing a drone under the 2018 Anti Dumping Initiative.

**AOB**

Cllr. Bennett raised the issue of slurry spreading in the County and stated that if slurry cannot be moved out of the County, it will have serious implications on the farming industry in the County. He asked for research to be conducted to see how other European countries deal with this issue. In response, Mr. Connaughton advised that a joint initiative between Cavan and Monaghan County Councils is currently researching this matter and more information will be available by the next SPC meeting.

Mr. Craven advised that LA21 funding will be advertised in the local newspapers and encouraged all Tidy Towns Committees to take part in this year’s Tidy Towns Competition.

Mr. Denning referred to a recent article in the Anglo Celt regarding best practice when spraying pesticides following MCPA detections in drinking water in County Cavan. Mr. Denning called for the Council’s support for a sticker to be supplied with the MCPA which will act as a gluing agent and will stick to rushes rather than running into the ground. Mr. O’Callaghan stated that levels in the drinking water were not an issue under World Health Organisation standards.