

**Minutes of Meeting of Urban Development Strategic Policy Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024 via MS Teams & Council Chamber**

**Presiding:** Cllr. Donal Lyons, Galway City Council

Mr. Eoghan Lynch, Senior Planner  
Mr Brendan Dunne, Senior Executive Planner  
Ms Helen Coleman, Senior Executive Planner  
Ms. Patricia Philbin, Director of Services  
Ms. Caitriona Morgan, Atlantic Economic Corridor Officer  
Mr. Derrick Hambleton (An Taisce)  
Ms. Helena McElmeel (Development/ Construction Network)  
Mr. Reg Turner – Chairman of Galway Cycling Campaign  
Ms. Cliona Clancy, Administrative Officer, Galway City Council  
Ms. Edel Finan, Senior Staff Officer, Galway City Council  
Ms. Joanne Georges, Assistant Staff Officer, Galway City Council

**Present on Line:** Cllr. Eddie Hoare, Galway City Council  
Cllr. Frank Fahy, Galway City Council  
Mr. Brian Barrett, Senior Executive Officer  
Mr. Peter Staunton, Executive Planner  
Ms. Rachel Stewart, Business/Commercial Stewart Developments

**Apologies:** Cllr. Eibhlín Seoighthe, Galway City Council

Cllr. D. Lyons, Chairperson, welcomed members and officials to the first Urban Development Strategic Policy Committee meeting which was being held virtually via MS Teams and from the Council Chamber.

**1. Introduction and function of an SPC:**

Introductions were made and a presentation was provided to members on the functions of the SPC.

SPC Members was asked to reflect on what they would like to achieve over the next five years. The following issues were highlighted:

- Working collectively as a group for the betterment of Galway;
- Deliver Actions of the LECP;
- Tackle Dereliction & Vacancy;
- Maintain a focus on a sustainable city and strong community engagement;
- Forward planning should be high on priorities and delivery of infrastructure;
- Centre of city rejuvenation & improved accessibility;

- Heritage buildings brought back into use e.g. Earl House;
- Area Plans to be progressed;
- Policy in relation to Shop fronts enforced;
- Enhanced mobility to include progression of Outer ring road, city bus connects and new light rail;
- Progress on the Harbour;
- Progress The 3 Castles;
- Enhanced regional balance and stronger collective voice with all stakeholders – City and County work together:
- Improved active travel with focus on enhancement of roundabouts & safe crossings for pedestrians;
- Understand each other roles to deliver.

Mr. E. Lynch, Senior Planner advised that the 2 year Development Plan review would commence in January/February next year, and this would be brought through the SPC. The collaboration between Galway City and County council would also be enhanced through the work of the joint SPC. Schedule of meeting dates are to be revised and recirculated on this.

## **2. Lobbying Act 2015:**

The obligations outlined in the Lobbying Act was brought to the attention of members.

## **3. Work Programme and Schedule 2025:**

Cllr. D. Lyons, Chair stated they would agree schedule of meetings going forward once dates are finalised. Happy to start at 9.30am, run for 1 and half.

Cllr. F. Fahy asked for August meeting to be moved to September.

## **4. Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) – Implementation Plan 2024 - 2025:**

Ms. C. Morgan, Atlantic Economic Corridor Officer- Update on the Galway City Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) in terms of the background, aim, process to date, the Implementation Plan for 2024 – 2025 as circulated in advance of the meeting and then the role of this SPC in the process as we go forward.

In terms of background and context Galway City Council has responsibility for leading economic, social and community development in the city. The LECP process was developed to reflect this responsibility under Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by section 44 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014. Both the economic and community elements are integrated into the LECP, and the overall process was guided by an Advisory

Steering Group which was established in 2022, with membership drawn from the relevant SPC at that time and the Galway City Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). The primary aim of the LECP is to set out, for a six-year period (2024 – 2029) the objectives and actions needed to promote and support both the economic and community development of Galway City both by Galway City Council directly, and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

The Galway City LECP was developed through a collaborative process between the executive of Galway City Council, the Elected Members, the citizens of Galway city, the Galway City LCDC, the Economic Development SPC at the time and involved many key stakeholders who represent a wide range of economic and community partners. The adoption of the Plan is a reserved function of the elected members of Council, and Galway City Council adopted our LECP at the January 2024 Council Meeting.

Through that collaborative process this Plan has set out a series of High-Level Goals which are further defined through targeted objectives which represent the specific vision that Galway City Council wishes to deliver or achieve either directly or in partnership with its economic and community development stakeholders over the next 6 years. These High-Level Goals include the following:

- a world class creative city region
- an innovative city
- an equal and inclusive city
- a sustainable resilient city
- a city that promotes health and wellbeing

In line with the Guidelines issued for the LECP, Implementation Plans are and will be developed every two years, based on the high-level goals and objectives and the first Implementation Plan for 2024 – 2025 was circulated. This plan outlines the actions to be delivered for the two-year period from 2024 – 2025 and is being monitored and reviewed to assist in the preparation of the second Implementation Plan 2026 – 2027.

63 actions are contained in the first Implementation Plan 2024 – 2025 as well as relevant key outcomes to facilitate evaluation. Approximately 75% of the actions will be delivered directly by Galway City Council while the remaining 25% will be delivered in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

Implementation Plans, of which this is the first, will be developed every two years. The Implementation Plans are approved by the LCDC and this SPC. In terms of the next Implementation Plan for the 2026-2027 period this process will commence at the end of Q2 2025. This will be a multi-agency plan and will fully consider the resources available to all relevant bodies and detail the actions to be implemented in that period to support the achievement of the high-level goals and objectives.

The draft implementation plan will be presented to this SPC for approval at the meeting during Q4 2025.

## **5. Updates on Planning Actions**

### **a. Joint Retail Strategy for Galway City Metropolitan Area**

Ms H. Coleman, Senior Executive Planner gave a briefing to members on the Joint Retail Strategy for the Galway City Metropolitan Area. KPMG have been appointed to develop a strategy with examples of similar strategies seen in Waterford and Limerick. The strategy includes for a health check of town which will determine how healthy is the retail economy. Significant consultation and engagement with public and stakeholders is planned with workshops organised with the Galway Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. E. Lynch, Senior Planner, said the Retail Strategy provide an opportunity for us to consider what retail is in 2024 and to capitalise on the strengths of the region.

Mr. D. Hambleton highlighted the dependency on the car at designated shopping premises such as Knockncarra, Headford Rd and Doughiska. He stated that more consideration needed to be give to public transport and mobility options at planning stage.

Ms H. Coleman, Senior Executive Planner stated bus connects should improve matters.

### **b. Salthill Village and Seafront Framework Plan**

Ms H. Coleman, Senior Executive Planner gave a briefing to members on the Salthill Village and Seafront Framework Plan. This 18-month project is being carried out by consultants Allies & Morrison Ltd. It will be a vision document and engagement and collaboration will

Mr. E. Lynch, Senior Planner stated that this plan is focused on a broader vision and how individual projects can then be knitted in. It's about having discussions now to enable project delivery.

Mr. D. Hambleton (An Taisce) referred to the last Plan for Salthill. He advised that early consultation with the public is vital. He also highlighted the flood risk in this area and the need for linkage of all the plans.

Ms. H. McElmeel stated participation should be embedded in the project and queried if there was a community representative on the steering committee. Ms. H. Coleman stated there is no Steering Group but this could be looked at.

Cllr. D. Lyons, Chair stated he would welcome the plan but outlined that one of the criticisms of Leisureland and Salthill Park was the lack of local engagement. He highlighted the importance of engaging with all parties.

Referring to the Leisureland and Salthill Park project Mr. B. Barrett, Senior Executive Officer clarified that the engagement to date was for an initial scoping process. This is intended as a long-term project over a period of years and will have multiple ways of engagement from all parties.

Mr. E. Lynch, Senior Planner advised it's an open non-statutory process. Strong business group in Salthill, strong voices, must be reflected in vision. Mr. D. Hambleton (An Taisce) referred to GCCN Organisation, they need to be consulted and was advised by Mr. B. Barrett, Senior Executive Officer that it was standard procedure to inform the GCCN of Council consultation processes and the Council will continue to do this.

**c. Draft Heritage Plan 2024-2029**

Mr Brendan Dunne, Senior Executive Planner outlined that this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Heritage plan for the city and gave a brief summary to date. He confirmed there were 13 submissions received during the public consultation period and that a presentation on these would be given at the next SPC meeting. He stated that there are a number of actions listed in the Heritage Plan that the Council can control and use as an anchor for funding.

Mr. D. Hambleton queried if the plan would be adopted in Q1 2025. Mr. E. Lynch, Senior Planner acknowledged the delay in finalising the plan but was hopeful it would have presented to the Heritage Forum members by the next SPC. Once recommended by the Heritage Forum it would be presented to the Urban Development SPC and then for the full Council for adoption.

Cllr. D. Lyons, Chair referred to Post Boxes at Seamount in Salthill (Protected), we need to protect throughout the city. He also made reference to Water Marks; possibility put them as an action in the Heritage Plan.

Both Ms. H. McElmeel (Development/ Construction Network) and Mr. D. Hambleton (An Taisce) referred to the conservation meeting with Michael Scott and stated it was very informative.

**6. A.O.B:**

Cllr. D. Lyons, Chair proposed the minutes of the previous Strategic Policy Committee held on 16th April 2014 were noted.

Mr. D. Hambleton referenced a request from the previous SPC to issue an invitation to UE to update the SPC members on water infrastructure in the city.

Mr. R. Turner referred to the Red Bull Event at Salthill last weekend and asked if there was a Traffic Management Plan. Ms. P. Philbin, Director of Services outlined the event was exempt from licensing but that there was a Traffic Management Plan in place. Any further queries regarding this even should be directed to Mr. B. Barrett following this meeting.

Ms. R. raised the issue of ghost buses in the city with the lack of punctuality and confidence impacting on usage. Mr .D. Lyons advised this would be referred to the relevant SPC.

Ms. C. Clancy, Administrative Officer advised revised schedule of meetings and presentations to be sent on.

This concluded the meeting. Next meeting scheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025.