



**Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe**  
**Galway County Council**

**Coiste Polasaí Straitéiseach Gnóthaí Forbairt Eacnamaíochta & Fiontraíochta**  
**Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)**  
**Cruinniú /Meeting**

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016, 12.00pm

**Galway County Council, Centre Point Building, Liosbaun, Galway**

**Members in attendance**

Cllr. Jimmy McClearn, Chairperson	Galway County Council
Cllr. Mary Hoade	Galway County Council
Cllr. Michael Finnerty	Galway County Council
Cllr. Tom Healy	Galway County Council
Cllr. Seán Ó Tuairisg	Galway County Council
Cllr. Karey McHugh	Galway County Council
Dan Dowling	Community representative
Paul Mannion	Scott Tallon Walker Architects

**Present**

Catherine McConnell	A/Director of Services, Galway County Council
Kieran Coyne	Galway County Council
Brian Barrett	Galway County Council
Valerie Kavanagh	Galway County Council

**Apologies**

Michelle Murphy	Business / Commercial representative
Cllr. Peter Feeney	Galway County Council
Breda Fox	Galway County Council
Paul Quinn	Trade Union representative

**Welcome & Introductions**

Cllr. Jimmy McClearn welcomed those in attendance to the third meeting of 2016 and read out the apologies.

### **1. Minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC held on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016 and the joint SPC meeting with Housing, Culture and Recreation SPC on the ECOC bid held on May 10<sup>th</sup> 2016 & matters arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016 were approved on the proposal of Cllr. Michael Finnerty and seconded by Cllr. Seán O' Tuairisg.

Under matters arising Cllr. Seán O' Tuairisg said that the World Fly Fishing Championships had taken place in the County and had gone very well. On behalf of the organising committee he thanked Galway County Council for their support. He also said that the Irish team had come in third place with the majority of the team from County Galway.

Cllr. Tom Healy expressed his congratulations on Galway successfully winning the bid to become European Capital of Culture 2020. He added that infrastructural investment was now needed to support the designation.

Cllr. Michael Finnerty also added his congratulations on the successful outcome.

### **2. Nomination to be sought from the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC for the Advisory Steering Group**

Ms. Catherine McConnell explained to the committee that Cllr. Shane Donnellan who to date was a member of the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC had swapped places with Cllr. Gerry Finnerty on the Environment, Water Services, Fire & Emergency Services SPC. As Cllr. Donnellan was also a member of the LECP Advisory Steering Group his position on that Group is now vacant and a new nominee must be sought. Cllr. Jimmy McClearn proposed Cllr. Karey McHugh and she was seconded by Cllr. Michael Finnerty. There was no other proposal.

### **3. Update on Local Economic & Community Plan 2016-2022**

Mr. Brian Barrett updated the committee on the status of the Local Economic & Community Plan. He said that the plan was adopted at the start of the year and actions are currently being implemented. The Advisory Steering Group (ASG) tasked with the implementation and monitoring of the plan are now preparing a 2 year action plan for 2016 and 2017. The ASG will have sub groups that will report and feed into the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC.

Mr. Barrett told the committee that a mapping and monitoring system was needed to capture the implementation of the plan and this is currently being explored.

Ms. Catherine McConnell added that some of the community measures had already started and that the HSE were leading on the Health and Wellbeing Subgroup. This could be used as a template for other subgroups. The Director of Services added that the Plan is now in print and should be available in the next three weeks. She added that the Plan would be launched in September to help promote it across communities in the County.

Cllr. Tom Healy asked if the NUIG Economic Data Gathering project could be used as a means of tracking the implementation of the Plan. Mr. Barrett said that the NUIG project was designed to capture results and outcomes such as CSO data and that a different system for capturing work on the ground was needed.

Cllr. Tom Healy asked how the actions for Connemara will be delivered as Forum Connemara had won the LEADER application for Connemara. Ms. McConnell replied saying that the LCDC has an oversight role in LEADER and that an appeal had been lodged so they will await this outcome.

#### **4. Galway West of Ireland European Region of Gastronomy (ERG) 2018 Update**

The Director of Services introduced this item and asked Mr. Kieran Coyne to give an update of the current situation with the successful designation.

Kieran informed the meeting that Galway has now been officially awarded a European Region of Gastronomy 2018, the first region in Ireland to receive this designation. The award was presented by the European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development and President of IGCAT at a ceremony held in Aarhus, Central Denmark at the IFAMA (International Food and Agribusiness Management Association) conference. The award ceremony was followed by a 'Taste of Galway' which featured a range of excellent local foods and produce from Galway.

This award follows on from an expert jury visit of 3 judges to Galway at the end of May 2016 which was very successful and involved a number of meetings with key partners, visits and meetings with local producers through our Made in Galway initiative and an presentation and meeting with a range of key stakeholders (40 in total) in Galway County Council.

The European Region of Gastronomy award provides Galway with an excellent opportunity to build on the strong reputation and the excellent name it has in terms of a tourist destination, by building its profile further nationally and very importantly internationally.

As previously advised at the SPC meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016 the lead up to securing this designation required significant work locally involving a wide range of stakeholders from the public, private, knowledge institutions and community & voluntary sectors.

Five key focus areas for Galway were agreed for our programme entitled '*From the Ground Up Feeding our Future*' and these are Education and Health; Linking Urban / Rural; Cultural Diversity; Sustainability and Feeding the Planet; Supporting SMEs and Innovation. Bid Book was circulated to the SPC at their last meeting.

Galway is planning an official launch of our programme in September and the next steps include:

- further development of the governance structure;
- development and implementation of the detailed programme – particularly the collaborative actions under key focus areas; identify and maximise resources and determination of timelines and budgets for projects;

- development of a marketing and communications strategy
- development of the EU element of our programme.
- Establishment of a steering group underpinned by working groups and an internal GCC working group

Ms. McConnell added that it would be important to work with the Local Enterprise Offices in the region to bring companies together, showcase their produce and give them more exposure on an international stage. They are aiming to hold two food showcases. The Director reminded the group of a project called the Ba Ba project which was one of the projects included in the Galway European Capital of Culture (ECOC) 2020 Bid aimed at showcasing hill farmers.

Cllr. Seán Ó Tuairisg said that the designation had great potential and opportunity but that it requires funding and resources. He added that there must be a special focus in the County and to try and make the most out of it.

Mr. Kevin Kelly, Chief Executive stated that for both bids (ERG and ECOC), the judges had particularly noted the enthusiasm they were met with on the ground. He said that both designations present great opportunities but also some challenges and there will be resource implications. However he added that now that the designations are in place it provides a good platform to talk to other bodies to try and leverage funding. He also added that it's important that the public don't get confused between the two designations and that good communication would be important to prevent this.

Cllr. Mary Hoade complimented the staff of the Community, Enterprise & Economic Development Unit for their work on the bid. She said that it would be important that a food element is included in festivals and that the public are aware of what Galway 2020 is.

Cllr. Tom Healy stated that the designation was a good opportunity especially for how we brand ourselves. He added that it was important to coordinate the stakeholders to maximise potential.

Ms. Catherine McConnell referred to Teresa O'Reilly's Tourism Strategy presentation at the last SPC meeting and how she stated the importance of branding Galway. Ms. McConnell added that time and careful consideration should be given to any proposed branding.

Cllr. Karey McHugh added that engagement and self-activation in communities will be crucial. She said that it will be important to engage with local tourism committees and get them involved.

## 5. REDZ Update

Kieran Coyne gave an update on the REDZ initiative. REDZ is a recommendation of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) report and is a pilot scheme designed to foster rural economic development. There are 10 designated REDZ zones identified in County Galway. Specifically the Commission recommends that economic planning at regional/local level should be conducted using an approach that considers functional rather than administrative boundaries and facilitates full community participation i.e. sub-county zones within which most people live and work. The aim of this pilot initiative is to support projects throughout Ireland with a view to determining best practice with regard to how such projects should be initiated, designed, implemented and evaluated. The pilot will assist in determining what kind of interventions could be rolled out in a broader context to support the economic development of towns, villages and their rural hinterlands.

From a County Galway perspective seven applications were submitted covering seven of the 10 designated zones. Six were successful in receiving REDZ support. These are outlined as follows;

### **An Cheathrú Rua (Approved €25,000. Drawdown €15,994)**

The application is centred around a marine based network to promote marine tourism and market particular activities based on the common marine coastal strengths for South Connemara. Included in the application will be a diving school fit out.

### **Ballinasloe (Approved €60,500. Drawdown €60,500)**

The application is centred around a number of interventions arising out of the Ballinasloe Town Centre Economic Benchmarking report. Projects are mixed and varied and range from a community cinema upgrade to shop front façade improvement and from visual merchandising workshops to local festivals.

### **Glenmaddy (Approved €25,000. Drawdown €25,000)**

The application is centred around the refurbishment of Glenamaddy Vocational School so that it can become a hub for Training, Wet-Trade Training, Further Education, Social Enterprise and other initiatives to benefit the entire Zone.

### **Gort (Approved €47,000. Drawdown €47,000)**

Burren Lowlands initiative whose immediate focus is to build the infrastructure necessary to enable Fáilte Ireland to incorporate the Burren Lowlands as a loop of the Wild Atlantic Way.

### **Oranmore (Approved €25,000. Drawdown €24,125)**

Development of 'Bridge that Gap' initiative. Bridge that Gap is a social enterprise with an integrated approach to rural economic development that facilitates communication between rural areas.

### **Tuam (Approved €25,000. Drawdown €25,000)**

The **Progress Tuam** Project jointly led by EQUAL Ireland, the Tuam Chambers of Commerce and the Western Traveller and Intercultural Development Company Ltd will provide training or expertise as required for the purpose of successfully producing high quality and comprehensive Business Plans for the following projects:

1. Bedroom Furniture Manufacturing
2. Fishing Tourism
3. Establishment of a National Museum of the Traveller Community
4. Pedestrianisation of Town Centre
5. Establishment of a Tuam Business, Enterprise and Community Development Group
6. The Sugar Factory: Future uses

General Observations include the timeframe to roll out the scheme once advertised by the Department was too short and in particular from the project delivery and implementation perspective. The individual projects had a limited window to complete their projects once the letter of offer was issued to them. This limited window was pre agreed by the Dept. and left the Local Authority with very little flexibility in ensuring projects had time to be worked through. The full impact of ten REDZ pilot will not be known given that some of the projects are on a phased development basis and potential strategic links (ECOC, Gastronomy) will take time to develop.

Cllr. Jimmy McClearn said that the Glenamaddy example of restoring the old technical school building was a prime example of how successful the REDZ initiative can be. He added that it would be good if the Department could indicate if a second round was coming so that communities could start to prepare themselves.

Cllr. Tom Healy suggested that an application pack could be made available for groups so that if a second was announced they would be ready to apply. Cllr. McClearn pointed out that there could be different criteria so this may not be possible.

Paul Mannion asked if the communities had to match fund the projects. Mr. Coyne replied saying that they had to match fund 15% in cash and 10% in labour.

## 6. Review of Galway County Council Community Support Scheme Grants

The Community Support Scheme covers the following category areas;

- Community Based Economic Development
- Facility Upgrade in Accessibility, Fire Safety or Energy Efficiency
- Tidy Towns
- Arts
- Social Inclusion Activities or Services
- Sport
- Comhairle/Youth
- Heritage
- Promotion of the Irish Language

Each year at budget time an amount is allocated for the Community support Scheme for ratification by Elected Members. The spread of allocation is quite varied and supports both operational costs and one off pieces of work for largely a volunteer type applicant. Currently staff within Galway County Council who work on the CSS have initially reviewed the scheme in terms of ensuring that the budget is targeted as per changing requirements and circumstances for the volunteer/community group sector. It was agreed to seek the views of the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC to move this review forward.

To focus the mind below are a number of points which could support a way forward;

- Is there a requirement to look at the capacity of groups in the sense that the scheme needs to focus on capacity more to ensure new or groups with low capacity are in a position to meet the application requirement. The recently established Public Participation Network (PPN) may be one means to develop the capacity issue.
- In some of the categories listed above there has been a trend in recent years of some successful applicants receiving year on year on funding. While there is no issue over the authenticity of the applicant or indeed the quality of the respective application is there a case to be made to limit this unless an applicant can clearly demonstrate added value from one year to the next.
- Should consideration be given to having an online application only system similar to Sports Capital bearing in mind that the nature of the applicant is largely volunteer and used of the current manual system. On the flip side the Sports Capital application process has proven the adaptability of the applicants once they have a project on its own merits

- Is there a need to look more forensically at the balance between Economic and Community/Social to reflect changing priorities and various plans and policies that Galway County Council and by extension the Community, Enterprise & Economic Development Unit are involved in. Moreover is there a case for reviewing the categories as listed above in terms of how they are described and what they are intended to support.
- Has the SPC a view on projects, if funded, with the potential to 'open a can of worms' i.e. community defibrillators or community CCTV to name but two examples. The issue here would not necessarily be on the requirement or need for such projects (assuming this is proven) but more a case of if one is supported then the budget will not extend to supporting a multiple amount of similar type projects.

Cllr. Jimmy McClearn said that he would be in favour of an online application system but that it should be one where you can view all the questions at the beginning so that the person can go away and get all the relevant information and answers.

Mr. Kevin Kelly stated that the Community Support Scheme was a very important scheme for communities even if the individual amounts are small. He said that overall the scheme was a lot of money and it should therefore support the objectives of the local authority and the LECP.

Paul Mannion said that there are a lot of various types of online systems on the market so choosing the right one would be important.

## **7. AOB**

Cllr. Seán Ó Tuairisg asked if anyone had information about the cycling signposts that have appeared in Connemara. He said that they are incorrect and the Area Engineer doesn't know who erected them. The committee did not know anything about the signs.

Cllr. Tom Healy stated that the preliminary census data had been released and while there was an overall increase in the population of County Galway, Clifden had suffered the second largest ED population decline in the Country. He said that the tourism sector is great for Connemara but it is not yearlong and there needs to be a better sectoral balance in the area. It was also noted that road infrastructure and transport links are also vitally important for an area.

The date for the next meeting was agreed for Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016 at 10am in the Centre Point board room.

Cllr. Jimmy McClearn thanked the committee for their attendance.