



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

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

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2018  
**Council Offices, Galway County Council, Galway**

**Members in attendance**

Cllr. Joe Byrne	Galway County Council
Cllr. Tom Healy	Galway County Council
Cllr. Mary Hoade	Galway County Council
Cllr. Séan Ó Tuairisg	Galway County Council
Dan Dowling	Community Representative
Paul Mannion	Development/Construction Sector Representative

**Present**

Alan Farrell	Galway County Council
Kieran Coyne	Galway County Council
Lisa Glynn	Galway County Council
Denise Feeney	Galway County Council

**Apologies**

Cllr. Peter Feeney	Galway County Council
Cllr. Jimmy McClearn	Galway County Council
Kevin Kelly	Galway County Council
Breda Fox	Galway County Council
Paul Quinn	Trade Union Representative
Michelle Murphy	Business/Commercial Sector Representative

As Cllr. Peter Feeney apologies were noted Cllr. Joe Byrne chaired the meeting on the proposal of Cllr. Tom Healy and seconded by Mr. Paul Mannion.

Cllr. Joe Byrne extended sympathies to Mr. Alan Farrell on behalf of the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC on the recent passing of his father.

### **1. Minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC held on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and matters arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018 were approved on the proposal of Cllr. Tom Healy and seconded by Mr. Dan Dowling.

Ms. Lisa Glynn updated the members on the Cleaner Communities Awards Ceremony, which is to be held on Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2018 in the Claregalway Hotel. All members were invited to attend.

Ms. Lisa Glynn informed members that the BOI National Enterprise Town Award judging took place in Kinvara, Ballyar, Connamara Láir and Athenry in late September with excellent feedback and comments on the process from the judges and participants. All groups along with 3 members of Galway County Council will be invited to attend the Awards Ceremony on Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018 in the Lyrath Hotel, Kilkenny.

Cllr. Joe Byrne commended Galway County Council on their work in relation to the BOI National Enterprise Town Awards and noted that the competition was very worthwhile for communities to enter, as it brought groups together and raised awareness in the locality.

Mr. Alan Farrell acknowledged the work of Economic, Rural and Community Development Unit in relation to the BOI National Enterprise Town Awards along with the efforts of the four entrants. Mr. Alan Farrell noted that there were many learnings from the process including how the Council would service same due to the staffing constraints and also how to link community groups and businesses together to work on joint initiatives. He stated that Galway County Council look forward to working with towns and villages across County Galway to deliver on key objectives and further economic and community development.

Cllr. Tom Healy recognised the staffing and financial resource constraints faced by Galway County Council and stated same needs to be addressed so the Council can continue to deliver a high-quality service to County Galway.

Mr. Paul Mannion noted that there were many different community groups across County Galway and there are many challenges facing these groups in accessing funding. He encouraged Galway County Council to continue their efforts in supporting these groups in their application for various funding streams.

There were no further matters arising.

## **2. Public Participation Network (PPN)**

Ms. Denise Feeney gave a presentation to the members on the Public Participation Network (PPN) using the PPN's website, [www.galwaycountypn.ie](http://www.galwaycountypn.ie).

Ms. Denise Feeney outlined that the PPNs are new structures for public engagement and participation in Local Government in each Local Authority area and were established under the Local Government Reform Act 2014. This network is a collection of over 800 community and voluntary groups from all over County Galway. Ms. Denise Feeney stated that the main role of the PPN is to facilitate groups to nominate representatives to Local Authority policy making boards and committees. The PPN also provides and share information relevant to community and voluntary groups, as well as organising information workshops, training and seminars for groups throughout the county. The PPN website also features an 'issue based template' that allows community groups to submit any issue they have in their community, which can then be directed to the relevant community representative to raise at the relevant decision-making committee. The PPN's website also showcases the list of upcoming events, news items and funding streams that are in the County presently.

Cllr. Joe Byrne thanked Ms. Denise Feeney for her presentation and invited questions from the floor.

Mr. Dan Dowling stated that the free training courses offered to PPN members were very beneficial and saved community groups a lot of money.

Cllr. Tom Healy stated that he has had a very positive experience with the PPN and would encourage other community groups to join the PPN. He queried whether the PPN could do anything regarding LEADER funding, as it currently is very hard to get such funding and it is not targeted at all groups.

Ms. Denise Feeney stated that there was no representative from Forum Connemara currently on the PPN secretariat. She stated that this issue was raised with the GRD Board recently and the PPN will bring it to the next meeting.

Mr. Alan Farrell stated that the PPN came in under the Local Government Reform Programme and it was useful to have a PPN co-ordinator and secretariat in place. Mr. Alan Farrell informed the members that a review of the PPN in County Galway took place in April 2018 and the PPN were now engaging with the SPCs to share information on their role.

Cllr. Joe Byrne proposed that this PPN presentation be given to full Council and Mr. Alan Farrell welcomed same. Ms. Denise Feeney to organise same.

Mr. Paul Mannion stated that training resources provided by the PPN seemed useful, as training would help groups especially when they are applying for grants.

### **3. Town and Village Renewal Scheme**

Mr. Kieran Coyne informed the members that the Town and Village Renewal Scheme was administered through a two stage process by Galway County Council earlier this year i.e. an expression of interest form, which was assessed by an internal team within the Council and those shortlisted were invited to submit a full application. The full applications were assessed by the Council and the maximum of 12 projects were submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development for funding at the end of June.

Mr. Kieran Coyne stated that Galway County Council were approved for 8 of their 12 applications and that the approved listing was circulated to all Councillors. He informed members that Galway County Council were awaiting a formal offer of these grants from the Department at present. Once same was received, the Council would issue contracts to all successful and liaise with each group on further steps. Mr. Kieran Coyne noted that it was hoped to run a procurement workshop to assist groups similar to last year to ensure that public funds were spent in an appropriate way.

Cllr. Joe Byrne queried when the next round of the Town and Village Renewal Scheme funding would be open.

Mr. Alan Farrell responded to state that it would likely open in 2019. He stated that Galway County Council received funding for 8 of the 12 projects they had submitted but have submitted a query to the Department as to why others were unsuccessful. He further stated that Galway County Council were very successful in the amount of funding received for each project.

#### **4. Urban and Rural Regeneration and Development Fund**

Mr. Alan Farrell stated that Galway County Council submitted 7 applications, 6 of which were led by the Economic, Rural and Community Development Section of Galway County Council and 1 was led by the Planning Section. He stated there was a focus on submitted at least one application per MD and that the MD Managers were responsible for the oversight of these applications and it was decided that the main towns in each MD would get priority in the application. Mr. Alan Farrell informed the members that the minimum spend on the project had to be €500,000 and this had to be drawn down in 2019.

Mr. Alan Farrell outlined the Tuam MD project focused on various aspects in Tuam with a theme of connectivity and has support from Action Tuam. The Ballinasloe MD project focused on various components on an overall plan focused on health for Ballinasloe Town and was supported by the BACD. The Loughrea MD project was the boardwalk in Kinvara with cooperation from Failte Ireland, Clare County Council among others. The Connamara MD project focused on projects around Clifden under the theme of tourism and it was supported by Failte Ireland and the Clifden Chamber of Commerce. The Oranmore/Athenry MD project focused on tourism and food in Athenry town including the BIA Innovator and other associated projects in the town. Galway County Council also submitted a project for reimagining the use of Council owned historic buildings across County Galway.

Mr. Alan Farrell stated that an announcement on the successful applications by the Department is likely to be due in November and Galway County Council is hopeful of obtaining funding for at least some of their submissions. He noted that other public-sector bodies in Galway were also entitled to apply e.g. Udaras na Gaeltachta etc. so competition will be high, as the Department have received a large number of applications from across the country.

Cllr. Joe Byrne acknowledged the work of Galway County Council in relation to these applications. He stated that communities could not progress with their plans for their locality without such funding being made available by the Department.

## **5. Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC)**

Mr. Kieran Coyne gave an overview of the Atlantic Economic Corridor and circulated a presentation he recently received at an AEC taskforce meeting. He stated that the AEC taskforce was set up and Galway County Council were in the process of hiring an AEC Officer on a fixed term contract to lead on same for the Council. Mr. Kieran Coyne is covering the role in an acting capacity along with his current role. Mr. Kieran Coyne stated the AEC involved 9 counties and there was a number of subgroups set up with a particular focus, such as tourism, infrastructure etc. He further stated that the AEC would feed into national policy and aims to build on the natural asset base in the AEC. Mr. Kieran Coyne stated that as soon as the AEC Officer was appointed they would be invited to present to the members.

Cllr. Tom Healy queried whether the regional assembly had any input and also stated that it would be very important for the AEC to not only benefit areas within the AEC but to spread same outside the Corridor to other areas.

Mr. Alan Farrell responded to state that the regional assembly has a role as part of RSES. He stated that the Government were behind the AEC and resources had been committed to same. Mr. Alan Farrell stated that the Department would be providing part funding for this post in Galway County Council. The AEC Officer will work for Galway County Council but will link with other counties as well as the taskforce to progress matters. Mr. Farrell stated that a focus in County Galway would be on full county ensuring that the County's existing strengths are leveraged and also ensure that there is a link with the AEC network as well as other national and EU funding schemes.

Mr. Dan Dowling queried how the AEC will link to the National Planning Framework and the LECF.

Mr. Alan Farrell stated that the AEC plans will need to link to all of those plans including the County Plan and will not operate in isolation.

Cllr. Joe Byrne stated that it was a positive that Galway County Council were putting in place an AEC Officer, who would have a dedicated role in relation to this and this person could highlight economic priorities to the members.

Cllr. Mary Hoade queried whether all other Local Authorities in the AEC appointed a dedicated person to the AEC role, as she stated that same would be important to ensure its success.

Mr. Kieran Coyne responded to state that most Councils had an interim arrangement in place to cover the role, for example, interim cover, acting roles etc. while other counties are in the process of hiring or have hired an AEC Officer.

Cllr. Séan Ó Tuairisg queried whether Udaras na Gaeltachta would have input into the AEC.

Mr. Alan Farrell stated that they would have input and it is hoped that they would be able to work in partnership with the AEC Officer and taskforce.

## **6. AOB**

Mr. Kieran Coyne stated that an email had issued to the members regarding the National Digital Strategy and he encouraged members to send their feedback to himself or Eimear Dolan by Friday, 9 November 2018.

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 4 December 2018 at 10am in the Centrepoint Boardroom Galway County Council Offices.

The meeting then concluded.