**Minutes for Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) Meeting for (*Planning*)**

**Held on MS Teams on 14th October, 2022**

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| **Present (Councillor and PPN members)** | * **Cllr Thomas Phelan (Chair)**
* **Cllr Liam Brazil**
* **Cllr Tom Cronin**
* **Donal Lehane (Social Inclusion Rep)**
 | * **Cllr Frank Quinlan**
* **Cllr Seanie Power**
* **Cllr Eamon Quinlan**
* **John Galloway (Env. Rep)**
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| **Present (WCCC Officials)** | * **Kieran Kehoe**
* **Hugh O’Brien**
* **Claire Loughnane**
* **Aisling O’Sullivan**
 | * **Marcus Linehan**
* **David Quinn**
* **Bríd Veale**
* **Claire Murphy**
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| **Apologies** | * **Cllr Davy Daniels**
 | * **Mary O’Halloran (Comm. & Vol Rep.)**
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| **Item No.** | **Decisions Taken** | **Responsibility/Action/When?** |
| 1.M1.Approval of Minutes | * Minutes of Meeting (13th July, 2022) were proposed by Cllr Sean Power, seconded by Cllr Frank Quinlan and agreed.
 | Adopted minutes to be published on website and added to Decision Time |
| 2.Matters arising and updates | * N/A
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| 3. Topic – Draft Development Contribution Scheme 2023-2029 | * Marcus Linehan Executive Planner made a presentation to the committee on the Draft Development Contribution Scheme 2023 – 2029 which is required following the adoption of the new County Development Plan which came into effect on the 21st of July, 2022.
* The presentation highlighted the main changes from the existing Development Contribution Scheme 2015-2021 the timelines to implement the new scheme and how the new scheme compares/aligns with other Local Authorities adjoining Waterford.
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| 4. Issues from Committee Members  | * Cllr Cronin welcomed the introduction of new exemptions for agricultural developments by applicants that qualify for the Dept of Agriculture, Food & the Marine ‘National Reserve (Young Farmer/New Entrant) and Young Farmers Scheme’ and enquired whether the Nitrates Directive still in place?
* Marcus confirmed that the Nitrates Directive is still in place.
* Cllr Power also welcomed the new proposals for Young Farmers and the changes with regards to the incremental increases on Residential Developments.
* Cllr Brazil likewise welcomed the proposed changes but felt that the charges are still high compared with other Local Authorities but agreed they are an improvement on what was there before.
* Marcus Linehan acknowledged the positive feedback from the committee. In response to Cllr Brazil’s comments on the high rate, advised the committee that it is Plannings only way of raising discretionary income and the rates must reflect this.
* Cllr Brazil felt the Rural parts of the county not getting the value of the Development Contributions by way of services, i.e. lighting & footpaths, compared to those living nearer towns and the city.
* Cllr Power agreed and suggested a change of the wording to remove services as some do not apply to all who pay Development Contributions.
* Kieran Kehoe acknowledged these suggestions & agreed the wording could be looked at with a view to amending it.

He also advised the committee that Waterford City and County Council is competing with the other cities in Ireland with regards to providing the greatest savings and providing an attractive base for new business. We are the most competitive city to do commercial business in and we must ensure that our charges align with this belief.* Cllr Thomas Phelan put to the committee, are we making ourselves too attractive and not reaping the benefit of big businesses/international companies basing themselves in Waterford by charging a lower Development Contributions rate than other cities.
* Cllr Phelan also enquired as to the next steps with regards public consultation process, How do we make the public aware and further to this, how do we show the public where the funds from the collection of Development Contributions are benefiting, ie Community Facilities
* Kieran Kehoe advised the committee that it is important to strike a balance in terms of the charges. We are low compared to other cities and we need this competitive advantage to attract commercial businesses but if there is a suggestion to go higher it will be considered.

With regards to consultation with the wider public, we can look at workshops/Online Forum with dedicated groups.Kieran supported Cllr Phelans point regarding identifying schemes that are supported by Development Contributions with a view to contacting the Communications Officer to organize campaign to publicize these works.* Cllr Phelan also suggested the use of signage to point out where funding from Development Contributions is being used to highlight how these levies are being kept in the communities.
* Marcus Linehan concluded the meeting by advising of the timelines, ie; Draft Scheme to be on display for 6 weeks from Tuesday 18th of October to Tuesday 29th of November 2022.

CE report is then prepared within 4 weeks of expiration of public consultation period for the consideration of members.Adoption (modify) scheme by Resolution not later than 6 weeks after the receipt of the CE Report.Adoption in early February 2023. |  |
| 7. AOB | No other business. |  |
| Date/time next meeting | The proposed date for the next meeting to be confirmed at a later date. |  |
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