



Minutes for Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) Meeting for (Planning) MS Teams - 23rd March 2023

Present (Councillor and PPN members)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr Thomas Phelan (Chair)• Cllr Liam Brazil• Cllr Tom Cronin• Cllr David Daniels• Cllr Seanie Power• Cllr Mairead Tobin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• John Galloway (Env. Rep)• Donal Lehane (Social Inc. Rep)• Mary O'Halloran (Comm. & Vol Rep.)
Present (WCCC Officials)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kieran Kehoe• Liam McGree• Claire Loughnane• Aisling O'Sullivan• Hazel O'Shea• Hugh O'Brien• Marcus Linehan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• David Quinn• Rosemary Ryall• Audrey O'Mahony• Rose Ryall• Ger Mulhall• Michelle Moran
Apologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Niall Harrington (Bus. Rep)• Cllr Frank Quinlan	

1. Minutes & Matters Arising

The minutes of the last meeting were proposed by Cllr Seanie Power, seconded by the Chair, and agreed.

Matters arising: No matters arising.

Action: Adopted minutes to be published on the website and added to Decision Time.

2. Welcome new SPC member

The Chair welcomed Cllr David Daniel, who replaces his father Cllr Davy Daniels, and expressed his condolences on the sad loss of Cllr Daniels. Kieran Kehoe paid tribute to his contribution to the work of the Council over many years.

3. Residential Zoned Land Tax - Update

Hugh O'Brien gave a presentation on the current status of the Residential Zoned Land Tax. The issue of land valuations was raised, including when the process of valuation would begin, and whether it will be a self-assessment process. Hugh O'Brien stated that the function of the Local Authority is to identify the parcels of lands, but that we will have no role in collecting the tax and landowners will have to deal directly with Revenue in relation to this.

Concerns were raised regarding farmers who might not want to give up agricultural land for housing. Hugh O'Brien stated that in relation to the valuation of agricultural land specifically, a last minute change to the regulations was made before the draft map was published, stating that agricultural land that is actively being farmed will be outside the scope, whereas previously it was considered to be in scope. However, agricultural land zoned in larger towns is still within the scope of the legislation.

Concerns were also raised regarding whether An Bord Pleanála would give a determination on appeals within the 16 week timeframe, and the consequences of that. Kieran Kehoe stated that An Bord Pleanála had committed to increasing resources to deal with the influx of these on a national level.

4. Dungarvan & Tramore Local Area Plans - Update

Presentations were given on the current status of the Dungarvan & Ballinroad Local Area Plan (by Marcus Linehan) and the Tramore Local Area Plan (by David Quinn).

In relation to the Tramore Local Area Plan, the expansion of the population in recent years was raised and the need for more green spaces and amenities, such as that at Williamstown, as well as the development of tourism in the area, for example the Metalman, and the Old Railway House. Kieran Kehoe stated the the Local Authority is working with community sports organisations, but that the Local Authority does not have ownership of any of the suitable sites in the area. However they are preparing plans around the backstrand for many uses, including exercise facilities. He also stated that the Local Authority does have ownership of the Station House and is exploring options for its use. Finally in relation to the Metalman, there are issues with access.

The submission of the National Transport Authority to the consultation was discussed, in relation to their role in producing a Local Transport Plan, their shared ownership of responsibility for this, and difficulties around where funding should come for in such an arrangement. Marcus Linehan stated that preparing an LTP is an objective of the Development Plan, as well as the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, and that the NTA's submission recommended that an LTP be prepared and that they will liaise with the LA in this regard (through the Roads section). Liam McGree stated that he will speak to Roads with a view to kick-starting this.

5. Derelict Sites - Update

Audrey O'Mahoney gave a presentation on Derelict Sites. The issue of consequences for the site owners was raised, and the question of how the LA can go about becoming the site owner. Kieran Kehoe stated that the new Proactive Dereliction & Vacancy Management Unit being set up will engage with owners where they are known, but if engagement is not forthcoming the option is available to progress to CPO to bring such properties back into productive use. The new URDF call 3 will also provide resources to CPO or agree purchase of derelict properties. 130 properties/sites have already been identified across the main urban centres of Waterford City, Dungarvan and Tramore and will be pursued through the Derelict Sites process.

The issue of derelict farm houses was raised, and whether rural areas will be targeted for inclusion. Kieran Kehoe advised that the Derelict Sites process will be applied across the county to get properties back on to the market.

6. Medieval Walls Interpretation Plan

Rose Ryall gave a presentation in relation to the city's Medieval Walls, and advised that a small committee be established (less than 10 people) in relation to the Medieval Walls, involving a combination of elected members and LA staff.

7. Taking in Charge Policy - Update

Liam McGree gave a presentation in relation to the Taking in Charge policy.

The issue of the register of Estates Taken in Charge was raised, and whether it could also be made available to the public the estates which have not been taken in charge, at what stage of the process they are (particularly estates with legacy issues arising from the recession). Liam McGree stated that we also track all estates in the process of being taken in charge. There are legacy issues, with bonds in place as a mixture of cash, assets, insurance, partial bonds and bonds being rolled from one phase or development to another. A bond reconciliation is currently underway.

Concerns were raised in relation to the adequacy of bonds for large non-residential developments, such as solar farms, and in the case of this type of development whether the bond will be held until the end of life of the development or just until completion of the construction, and the potential implications in the future if the bond is insufficient and, for example, the developer goes out of business. Liam McGree stated that in relation to non-residential developments are calculated on a case by case basis, and that the bonds will be held for longer as they relate to the re-instatement of the site.

Concerns were also raised in relation to the increasing use of holiday homes being occupied as permanent dwellings. Liam McGree stated that this use constitutes unauthorized dwellings, and while acknowledging the pressures around housing needs, that issues will arise from people taking control of public space directly outside their holiday units, to which they have no legal right. He also stated that he did not recommend taking in charge of these open spaces, and if they were to do that, we would have to go through the planning permission process in order to regularize the situation.

The suggestion was made by the Chair raised the issue of maintenance in large housing developments, where the LA obviously can't take on the maintenance of the common areas, perhaps planning permissions could be conditioned to require storage facilities for e.g. lawnmower, in common areas.

8. Any Other Business

The date for the next meeting has already been scheduled for 6th June 2023.