

**STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE**

**STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of Strategic Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee Meeting**

**held via Microsoft Teams**

**on Thursday, 21st October 2021 at 3pm**

**PRESIDING**: Councillor Turlough McGovern, Chairperson.

**PRESENT**: Councillors - Colm Murray, Paraic Brady, Pat O’Toole and Gerry Warnock.

Ms. Fiona Fenelon, Tess Murphy and Stephanie Igoe.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**  Mr. John Brannigan, Director of Services.

Mr. David Tubridy, Senior Engineer.

Mr. Con Diffley, Senior Executive Engineer.

Mr. Liam Kiernan, Assistant Engineer.

Ms. Martina Mc Grath, Administrative Officer,

**APOLOGIES:** Damien O’Reilly and Maria Keelty.

**MEETINGS**

**ADMINISTRATOR**: Ann Marie Mc Keon.

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES.**

On the proposal of Councillor Pat O’Toole seconded by Councillor Gerry Warnock, it was unanimously agreed to adopt Minutes of Strategic Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee meeting held on the 22nd July 2021 as circulated.

**MATTERS ARISING.**

None.

**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.**

None.

**POLICY/BYE LAWS TO PROHIBIT RIDING OF BICYCLES, SCOOTERS, ETC ON FOOTPATHS.**

John Brannigan, Director of Services informed the members that The Government has approved a new Road Traffic Bill which legislates, for the first time, the use of e-scooters and e-bikes on Irish roads. The publication of the Road Traffic and Roads Bill 2021 will be introduced into the Dáil in the coming weeks. The members highlighted the importance of proper legislation to curb unsafe e-scooter habits emerging, such as multiple people using scooters at once and their use on paths and pedestrian areas. The members unanimously agreed to defer this item until further information is received from the Department. On receipt of the Bill from the department it will be circulated to members

**POLICY ON SIGNAGE FOR CHILDREN AT PLAY**.

Councillor Gerry Warnock informed the members that he had made a request at Longford Municipal District that consideration be given to developing a policy for children at play signs in relation to housing estates. Councillor Warnock explained how the Estate Manager in housing had erected a number of signs in estates at his request. Following further discussion regarding this type of signage in housing estates it was agreed that there needed to be some control/policy as to where these signs should be erected. For new housing estates it was unanimously agreed that children at play areas should be identified at planning stage.

For existing estates, it was agreed that the current Children at Play Policy should be updated and brought back to the SPC for consideration.

**PAID PARKING POLICY FOR WAIVERS.**

Martina McGrath presented the paid parking policy for waivers to the members and the reason why there is a need for this policy. The Paid Parking Policy for Waivers is the oldest item on the Audit Tracker, dating back to the Local Government Audit Service 2015.

This policy will be used to assess all Traffic Fine appeals in a fair and transparent manner. No major departures from this Policy are permitted. Minor departures, however, may be permitted but only on a case-by-case basis. Where this arises the decision of Longford County Council will be final.

On the proposal of Councillor Pat O’Toole seconded by Gerry Warnock it was unanimously agreed to accept the proposed Draft Paid Parking Policy for waivers. The proposed policy will now be forwarded to the Longford Municipal District for final approval.

**IMPACT OF HOUSING FOR ALL STRATEGY ON THE HOUSING SITUATION IN LONGFORD.**

John Brannigan Director of Services gave a high-level presentation to the members which included the following:

There are three types of Affordable Housing available

* Private Affordable Scheme
* Cost Rental
* Local Authority Scheme

**Planning and Development Act 2000; Section 93**

* “a person who is in need of accommodation and whose income would not be adequate to meet the payments on a mortgage for the purchase of a house to meet his or her accommodation needs because the payments calculated over the course of a year would exceed 35 per cent of that person's annual income net of income tax and pay related social insurance”

**Private Affordable Scheme – Due to Launch in 2022**

* National Special Purpose Vehicle
* Short term demand measure
* Time/Budget limited
* Available Nationally
* Median House Prices
* First Come/First Served

**Cost Rental**

Minimum 25% discount on open market rents of comparable properties with the benefit of the applied for Affordable Housing Funding taken into account

Costs modelled over 40 years

**Local Authority Administered Scheme**

1. There are seven selection criteria’s and some of the criteria will be scored
2. Affordability Challenge
3. Minimum number of dwellings
4. Location
5. Residential Density & Layout / Deliver
6. Unit Cost Ceilings
7. Affordability Gain
8. Inclusion

The members welcomed the presentation and thanked the Director of Services for the work that he has done for Longford over the last number of years with the Department. The members issued their dismay at the recent Housing for All Plan which they considered is set to fail for rural counties and noted that the housing market is currently dysfunctional, and no consideration given to the working class. John Brannigan, Director of Services explained that Longford County Council have procured KPNG to prepare an argument to put forward to the Department to get affordable housing for Longford and this report should be completed in six to eight weeks. The members welcomed this news.

**UPDATE ON ACTION PLAN FOR HOMELESSNESS IN LONGFORD.**

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) had asked Local Authorities to hold off on preparing Homeless Action Plans pending the issuing of National Guidelines on same. These have not issued yet. However, under Housing For All, there is a commitment to issue the guidelines as a priority. Recently the DHLGH has asked for information in relation to Homeless Action Plans from our Lead Authority in the Midlands Region - Westmeath so it appears that they are currently working on the guidelines.  Once guidelines issue the Lead Authority in Westmeath will commence the preparation on the Regional Homeless Action plan in consultation with Longford, Laois, Offaly and Westmeath local authorities and other relevant agencies.

Simon Community

Tess Murphy highlighted the great work carried out by the Simon Community and enquired if Longford County Council could provide funding to support them with the services they provide. Tess mentioned that other local authorities around the country were providing funding and John asked Tess to provide the details of these authorities and that he would investigate the matter.

**NEXT MEETINGS DATES FOR 2022**.

The members noted the dates of the meetings in 2022.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Ann Marie Mc Keon

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Ann Marie Mc Keon**

**Meetings Administrator.**

**Confirmed and adopted at Strategic Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on the 3rd February 2022.**

***Turlough Mc Govern***

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Chairperson.**