

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF SLIGO COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY, 27TH JUNE, 2016 AT 10.00 A.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
COUNTY HALL, RIVERSIDE, SLIGO
TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED DRAFT COUNTY SLIGO DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017-2023.**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Councillor Bree,
- Councillor Clarke,
- Councillor Gormley,
- Councillor Healy,
- Councillor Henry,
- Councillor Keaney,
- Councillor Kilgannon,
- Councillor Maguire,
- Councillor MacManus,
- Councillor MacSharry,
- Councillor Mulvey,
- Councillor O'Boyle,
- Councillor O'Grady,
- Councillor Queenan,
- Councillor Taylor.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mr. Ciarán Hayes, Chief Executive
- Ms. Dorothy Clarke, Director of Services
- Mr. Tom Brennan, A/Director of Services
- Mr. Frank Moylan, Senior Planner
- Ms. Mihaela Davidescu, A/Senior Executive Planner
- Mr. Stephen Ward, A/Senior Executive Planner
- Mr. Noel Ballantyne, A/Executive Technician
- Mr. Kevin Colreavy, Meetings Administrator
- Ms. Karen Gallagher, I.S. Technical Support Officer
- Ms. Jo-Anne McGonigle, Assistant Staff Officer

CATHAOIRLEACH:

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Hubert Keaney, presided.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies were received from Councillor M. Casserly and Councillor J. Lundy.

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The Members were advised of the following format to commence the meeting:

- **Introduction** by *Ms. Dorothy Clarke, Director of Services*
- **Overview of Draft Plan and Process** by *Mr. Frank Moylan, Senior Planner*
- **Outline of changes proposed – Volume 1: Written Statement** by *Ms. Mihaela Davidescu, A/Senior Executive Planner*
- **Outline of changes proposed – Volume 2: Mini Plans** by *Mr. Stephen Ward, A/Senior Executive Planner*
- Followed by Members' **Questions**.

Ms. Clarke said this Plan sets out the overall strategy for sustainable development of the county. Changes at national and local level have been taken into account with preparations having commenced over a year ago. Part of the requirements is for public consultation on the Plan. This is the first time the County Development Plan will have an impact on both city and county. The Sligo and Environs Plan will be replaced by the new Local Area Plan which will commence preparation in 2017. Ms. Clarke, in noting that the county had been impacted by the economic crisis, said the objectives are still relevant.

The draft Plan, once agreed, will go on public display for a period of ten weeks and submissions will be accepted from the public.

Mr. Moylan outlined the background to the Plan and the preparation process in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). The process had commenced in May 2015 and is a two year process for the County Development Plan 2017-2023.

The C.D.P. review process commenced formally with publication of statutory notices inviting the making of submissions during the period between 15th May to 10th July, 2015. 36 submissions had been received. These had been summarised in the First Chief Executive's Report which issued to Members on 31st August last year. On 2nd November, 2015 the Members directed the Chief Executive to proceed to prepare the Draft Development Plan for the County of Sligo.

The proposed Draft County Development Plan was submitted to the Members on 10th June, 2016 and comprises of seven documents

- Volume 1 (Main Written Statement)
- Volume 2 (containing 32 Mini Plans)
- Landscape characterisation map with proposed changes
- Housing Strategy for proposed draft County Development Plan
- County Retail Strategy
- Proposed changes to the Record of Protected Structures and
- Strategic Flood risk assessment.

Members were advised that they may make amendments to the proposed Draft Plan by resolution. Any such amendments must be submitted in writing, by way

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of a written motion, and if the proposed amendment involves the zoning of land should be accompanied by a map.

Following the public display period, the second Chief Executive's Report will be prepared and issued to the Members for consideration. There will be a further opportunity at that time to make amendments and this should be towards the end of the year. A Meeting will also be held to consider the second Chief Executive's Report.

Mr. Moylan confirmed that the current County Development Plan is due to expire in May 2017. The new Plan should be operational on or before that date.

Ms. Davidescu and Mr. Ward elaborated on the report which had been circulated to the Members "Main changes in the Proposed Draft Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023 (compared to the current CDP 2011-2017)".

As this was the first meeting since the A.G.M., Members wished Councillor Keaney well for his term as Cathaoirleach.

The Cathaoirleach advised the meeting that the Executive had been asked to prepare this Plan. He felt there were some very important issues in the document for consideration by the Members. As the Plan would go on public display for ten weeks, this is an important time for submissions to be made before the second Chief Executive's Report comes back before the Members.

Councillor Keaney, Cathaoirleach, said he would leave it open at this meeting for general discussions on all aspects of the Plan and specific areas of interest.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Plan will come back to the Members following the consultation period. This is the start of this phase of consultation and allows for any issues that require to be clarified. This is an opportunity to have this clarification on existing Plan and changes highlighted. The Plan will then go on public display and out for consultation. As outlined earlier, following that consultation period, it will come back to the Members with the second Chief Executive's Report, at which point further detailed consideration of the Plan will be undertaken.

Following further discussions, queries were raised by Members and clarified by the Planning Staff in relation to

- Status of Sligo and Environs Plan,
- the difference between "buffer zones" and "green belts", the Retail Strategy and rural settlements,
- criteria for accommodating one off rural houses in the green belts and sensitive areas
- mapping/listing of rights of way
- issues regarding broadband
- Record of Protected Structures and inclusion of additional structures/façades in the new Plan

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Arising from the discussions, replies and proposals put forward, the Cathaoirleach dealt with the resolutions in the order they had been received by him:

**Proposed by Councillor D. Bree
Seconded by Councillor S. MacManus**

AND AGREED

"Noting that Section 7 (b)(ii)(o) of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2010 requires that the preservation of public rights of way which give access to the seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility, which public rights of way shall be identified both by marking them on at least one of the maps forming part of the development plan and by indicating their location on a list appended to the development plan; and further noting that no map or list of rights of way have been included in the proposed Draft Sligo County Development Plan; this Council requests the department of the Environment to advise the Council of its statutory obligations with regard to complying with the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act."

**Proposed by Councillor D. Bree
Seconded by Councillor T. Healy and Councillor G. O'Boyle**

AND AGREED

That the wording/text and policies contained on pages 193/194 Section 11.1.9 Unconventional gas exploration and extraction (UGEE) be deleted and replaced with the following wording/text and policies:

"It is a strategic goal of the County Development Plan to adopt the 'precautionary principle' in respect of development where significant environmental implications are involved, in particular proposals for unconventional oil/gas exploration and extraction projects/operations.

Further to this, the Council wishes to safeguard and nurture the unspoilt/ green image and reputation of Sligo and the health of its present and future communities, centred on the rural characteristics of the County, agricultural activity, the landscape and its environmentally sensitive lands and water bodies – both surface and groundwater.

This Council is cognisant of the significant ongoing controversy around, and the significant proven levels of risk associated with, unconventional oil/gas exploration and extraction internationally and acknowledges that the high volume of public objections to unconventional oil/gas exploration and extraction

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internationally, nationally and locally relate to potential and actual adverse impacts on the environment and human health, including impacts on:

Local Communities;

Local Infrastructures;

Local Landscapes and Amenities;

Water Quality and Water Supplies;

Air Quality and Safety;

Land/Soil Integrity;

Agriculture;

Tourism;

Climate Change;

Local Businesses;

Property Prices.

Objections are not solely restricted to the above.

Applications for onshore exploration licences have been received for the Northwest Carboniferous Basin including parts of Leitrim and several other counties.

It is acknowledged by this Council that there is significant and growing public concern in respect to the social, public health, economic and environmental impacts that may be associated with unconventional oil/ gas exploration and extraction in County Sligo and adjoining counties. This Council will endeavour to protect the rights of the people of Sligo and adjoining counties to be safe in their own communities and understands that short term national policy can have long term and permanent negative effects.

In 2012 Sligo County Council adopted the following motion: "Recognising the dangers that hydraulic fracturing/fracking poses to water quality, to human safety and the general environment, this council resolves to work together with other local authorities in the region, to oppose the practice of hydraulic fracturing/fracking and we call on the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Irish Government to ban the practice of hydraulic fracturing/fracking North and South of the border."

Having regard to the foregoing, the Council has set out the following policy with regard to hydrocarbon exploration and extraction

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Policy (P-UGEE-1) It is the policy of the council to apply the precautionary principle to Unconventional Oil/Gas Exploration and Extraction (UGEE) projects/operations proposed within the county. Given the scientific evidence, and personal testimonies, of the risks of UGEE projects/operations and with the objective of avoiding the risk of serious danger to human health or the environment, it is therefore the policy of Sligo County Council that UGEE projects/operations shall not be permitted within the County of Sligo.

Policy (P-UGEE-2) It is the policy of the Council to carefully scrutinise any unconventional oil/gas exploration and extraction project/operation proposal outside the County where it may, due to geographical proximity, have a significant impact on the County and where available evaluation does not allow the risks to the environment of the region, the ecology of the region and human and animal health within the region to be determined with certainty. It is also the policy of this Council in such cases to seek from the relevant authorities a comprehensive full life cycle Health Impact Assessment, together with a full life cycle analysis of all possible cumulative and permanent negative effects for the potential full development.

Policy (P-UGEE-3) It is the policy of the Council, in the eventuality that an outside body or bodies takes steps to overrule Policy (A) (P-UGEE-1) above, that a comprehensive full life cycle Health Impact Assessment, together with a full life cycle analysis of all possible cumulative and permanent negative effects for the potential full development, will be required for any proposal for oil/gas exploration and extraction projects located inside the County, as a mandatory component of the evaluation of any such proposals.

Footnotes

1. 'Precautionary Principle': -

(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001395/139578e.pdf>)

2. *Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction (UGEE) refers both to the use and full life cycle of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) of low permeability sources such as shale gas deposits, coal seams and tight sandstones. The impacts of UGEE projects/ operations to be considered are those arising from UGEE projects/ operations in their totality, not just from fracking activities, including all stages of UGEE projects/operations, i.e. drilling, construction, commissioning, operation, decommissioning and aftercare as well as off-site and other developments.*
3. *Including but not limited to the Compendium of Scientific, Medical and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking (Unconventional Gas and Oil Extraction) Concerned Health Professionals of NY, July 2014*

(<http://concernedhealthny.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/CHPNY-Fracking-Compendium.pdf>)".

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Proposed by Councillor S. MacManus
Seconded by Councillor T. Healy

AND AGREED

"To amend the sentence in Section 13.4.1 which begins 'In order to substantiate' so that it would read: 'In order to substantiate a rural housing need, the following documentation, if relevant can be submitted:"

Proposed by Councillor S. Kilgannon
Seconded by Councillor T. MacSharry

"That Section A on Page 74 of Housing Policy in green belts and sensitive areas to read: Landowners including their sons and daughters, brothers and sisters and nieces and nephews".

It was agreed to defer this motion to the meeting of the sub-committee to be established to examine this issue in the context of the County Development Plan.

Proposed by Councillor S. Maguire
Seconded by Councillor D. Mulvey

AND AGREED

- 1. Strandhill Mini Plan (Page 2) The Enterprise, Technology Centre is currently over prescribed.*
- 2. (33.8 - Page 9) Improve and enhance existing business, enterprise and industrial development within Strandhill by providing essential infrastructure and supporting the provision of high-speed telecommunications".*

Proposed by Councillor M. Gormley
Seconded by Councillor M. Clarke

AND AGREED

"That the following text on Page 229 (13.4.3) 'Excellent guidance is contained in the Cork Rural Design Guide <http://www.corkcoco.ie/co/pdf/578944050.pdf>" be deleted".

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Proposed by Councillor M. Gormley
Seconded by Councillor Clarke, Councillor Queenan and Councillor O'Grady

That the following text on Page 73 P-RAUI-HOU-1

- A. *Landowners, including their sons and daughters, who wish to build a first home for their permanent occupation on the landholding associated with their principal family residence where they have lived for a minimum period of seven years"*

be amended

- 1. To include relatives*
- 2. To delete the minimum period of seven years.*

Also to add the following:

Persons residing in the area for a period of 7 years or native to the area who work locally but may not be related to the landowner that it be the policy of the Council to accommodate one off rural houses in the green belts and sensitive areas".

It was agreed to also defer this motion to the meeting of the sub-committee to be established to examine this issue.

Proposed by Councillor D. Bree
Seconded by Councillor G. O'Boyle

AND AGREED

"That the Gate Lodge at the entrance to Doorly Park (adjacent to Riverview Lodge) be included in the proposed Record of Protected Structures".

Proposed by Councillor S. MacManus
Seconded by Councillor T. Healy

AND AGREED

"That in 13.3.10 the second paragraph be moved to become the first and that the final sentence in that paragraph be amended to read:

'The proposed names must be approved by Sligo County Council prior to the launching of any advertising campaign for a development'.

Further that the following new paragraph be added:

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'Name plates should be durable and maintenance free and be fixed where they are clearly visible to the motorist, cyclist or pedestrian on approaching, from both directions'."

**Proposed by Councillor S. Kilgannon
Seconded by Councillor R. O'Grady**

"Having considered the proposed Draft Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023, dated the 10th June, 2016, prepared by the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with section 11(5) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, it is hereby resolved: -

To approve the Draft Plan with Amendments by the Elected Members and that public notice be given of the preparation of the Draft Plan and that written submissions or observations be invited from the public for the further consideration of this Planning Authority before the making of the Plan in accordance with the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2007"

This resolution was agreed with Councillor Bree and Councillor Queenan abstaining.

END OF MEETING:

The meeting concluded at 1.30 p.m.