

Minutes of Meeting of Planning & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee held on Tuesday 8th December 2020 at 10.00a.m. in Thurles Municipal District Council Chamber, Castle Avenue, Thurles.

Present: In the Chair - Cllr. Phyll Bugler
Councillors – Micheál Lowry, Joe Hannigan, John Carroll, Michael Fitzgerald, Ger Darcy. Patti O’Neill.
Cllr Michael O’Meara, Mike Edwards via zoom.

In Attendance: Eamon Lonergan, Acting Director of Services
Brian Beck, Senior Planner
Nuala O’ Connell, Senior Executive Planner
Sadhb Hanley, Assistant Planner
Brian Clancy, Administrative Officer

Apologies: Dave Carroll, Chief Fire Officer, Cllr. Marie Murphy, Cllr. Roger Kennedy, John O’Shaughnessy.

1. Minutes of last meeting held on 21st October 2020

The minutes of the last meeting held on 21st October 2020 were proposed by Mike Edwards, seconded by Cllr. P. Bugler and adopted.

Arising from the minutes Brian Clancy stated he had advised Ger Walsh, SEO Corporate Services that our SPC had passed a recommendation that the quorum for meetings of the Committee be amended to state that it shall be five members, four of whom shall be elected members of the County Council with one external. He also advised that it was proposed that under ‘Arrangements for Meetings’ that Civic Offices, Thurles Municipal District, Castle Avenue, Thurles be included as an acceptable location for meetings of the SPCs because of its central location in the county. Ger Walsh replied that the amendments as proposed will revert back to the Privilege & Procedure Committee for consideration prior to being submitted to the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) for approval and he advise of the final decision in this regard.

In relation to a request received from the Infrastructure SPC ‘that housing estates are developed in phases from the back out, which could lead to the earlier provision of leisure and amenity areas’ Brian Clancy stated that he had advised the Infrastructure SPC Meeting Administrator as follows: ‘this matter was considered at a meeting of the Planning & Emergency Services SPC held on 21/10/20 as part of a discussion on a draft taking in charge policy which is currently being prepared. I have been requested to advise you that phasing of housing estates is development specific

through the individual planning permission and working from the back out is not considered to be advisable in all cases as matters such as access roads, rights of way etc have to be considered. It is intended that the draft taking in charge policy will be discussed again at a future meeting and if agreed a recommendation will be put before the Corporate Policy Group that the policy be placed on the agenda of the full Council for adoption in early 2021.'

2. Cluster Guidelines Review

Nuala O'Connell, Senior Executive Planner gave a presentation to the meeting on Cluster Guidelines Review and replied to queries raised. The principal points were as follows:

Presentation Overview

- Background
- Cluster Guidelines
- Policy into Practice
- Where to next?

Background

- Decline in rural Ireland
- Post Office closures
- Funding boost of €913,266 for Tipperary under Town & Village Renewal Scheme
- Realising our Rural Potential

Research Policy Response

- National Planning Framework
- North & South Tipperary County Development Plans (As Varied)

Responding to the Challenge: Revitalisation of our Villages

- Opportunity for applicants to build their own home
- Services Sites
- Upsizing and Downsizing
- Density & Scale appropriate for villages
- Building on Public & Community Investment
- Strengthening Communities
- Supporting Services

Cluster Housing Guidelines: Purpose & Scope

- Multi-disciplinary approach
- Easy to Read and Easy to Use
- Low Density & Serviced Sites
- Engagement with the Department, Irish Water, EPA etc.
- Research & Best Practice
- Stakeholder & Public Engagement

Cluster Development: 5 Step Approach

A Cluster Housing Development is a 'low density housing scheme comprising of up to 6 no. detached dwellings on individual sites on lands in a village'

5 Steps to Design and Develop a Cluster Scheme

1. Planning Policy
2. Desktop Study
3. On-Site Assessment and Preliminary Site Strategy
4. Pre-Planning Consultation
5. Site Strategy and Design

Templederry



Emly

Figure 19:
Emly site strategy



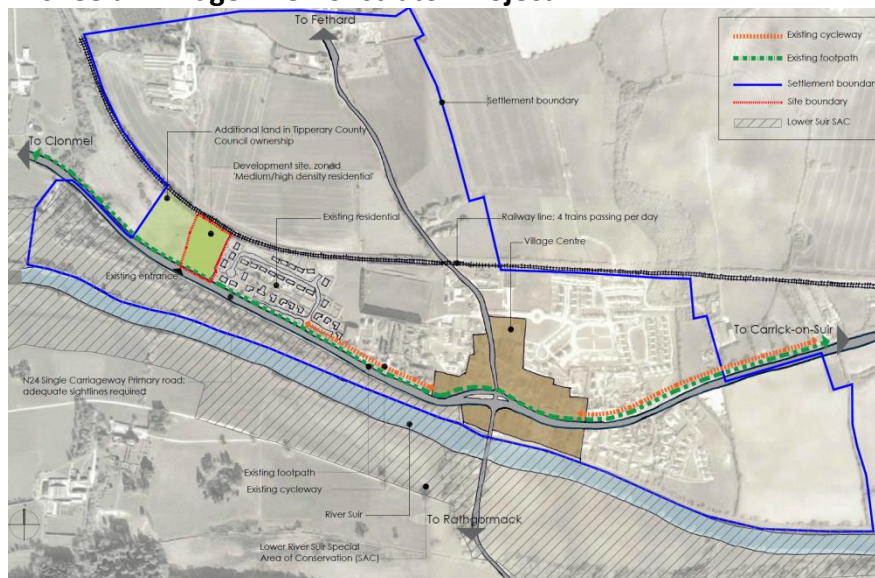
Policy into Practice: Next Steps for Tipperary County Council

- Demonstrator Project
- Effective Use of Public Land for Regeneration
- Role of the Local Authority

Steps in the Serviced Site Initiative



Kilsheelan Village: Demonstrator Project



Rural Regeneration & Low Carbon Planning

- Tipperary Energy Agency
- National Biodiversity Data Centre
- Kilsheelan Tidy Town Development Committee

Where to Next?

- Promote
- Encourage
- Facilitate
- Demonstrate

Cllr. J. Carroll welcoming the concept of Cluster Housing as part of initiatives to address stagnation in villages. Challenges include in some cases poor location, percolation and topography but it is all about people as critical mass is needed to maintain schools, shops etc. Cllr. G. Darcy stated the guidelines are great but promotion is a problem and cited Cloughjordan Eco-village as a project which had brought life back to the village. There is potential for a cluster in Carney but a proper access road is required. Nuala O'Connell stated the Cluster Guidelines had received national recognition and had been circulated to all local authorities. An application for funding has been made under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) for Kilsheelan Cluster Housing Project which will be a model for serviced site developments across the country.

Advice is available from Tipperary Energy Agency and an ecologist. Brian Beck stated that one off rural housing will still be there but this is giving people another option. Cllr. J. Hannigan welcomed the innovation indicating that the offering needs to be sold with Kilsheelan as a flagship to include energy efficiency benefits. Nuala O'Connell stated that innovation is being promoted in energy efficiency and regeneration. Cllr. M. Lowry stated the concept must be achievable and the benefits must be explained clearly to get buy-in. Brian Beck stated that a mindset change is needed to encourage people to absorb and generate electricity from home. Patti O'Neill stated that as an architect she welcomed this approach to include passive solar gain and appealed for flexibility which should encourage restoration of derelict buildings in villages with retrofitting which would result in the lowest carbon footprint as these buildings are rooted in their surroundings. Cllr. M. Fitzgerald stated it was good to hear about rural revitalisation but cluster housing hadn't worked in the past as it wasn't thought out properly. No-one should be forced to pursue cluster housing. Cllr. P. Bugler was concerned that there wasn't huge interest in this concept to date and asked how far the development should be from the speed limit, is a septic tank required for every house and how far back from the road does the development need to be. Nuala O'Connell stated that marketing and a promotional programme is critical and a dedicated section of the Planning website will be devoted to Cluster Housing. Phasing is acceptable and one site at a time can be developed. In relation to location the example of Templederry was cited where zoning has been removed from land touching the blue line on the map of the village. A concentration of 6 septic tanks would be acceptable subject to percolation as it is recognised that some 50% of our villages are not serviced by wastewater treatment plants. Distance back from the road is not stipulated.

Cllr. J. Carroll stated that consultation with Roads Section is important and he agreed that renovation of derelict buildings within villages should be encouraged. In reply to Cllr. J. Hannigan Nuala O'Connell stated that pre-planning consultation was the first step, percolation test would be required and the density of the site would need to be examined to determine if it could accommodate the design. A demonstrator document will be prepared. Brian Beck stated that this concept would give, for example, over 65s an opportunity to

downsize and build a smaller house suited to their needs within a village. Eamon Lonergan welcomed Patti O' Neill to the meeting. He stated that the Cluster Guidelines are a good concept but need to be delivered which would involve consultation with Planning, Roads and Housing. The product needs to be worked through and can be run in parallel with rural housing and the SPC will revert to this topic next year.

3. Update on Record of Protected Structures (RPS) Review

Sadbh Hanly, Assistant Planner gave a presentation on the Review of the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and replied to queries raised. The principal points were as follows:

Background

- Each development plan must include policy objectives to protect structures or parts of structures of special interest and to preserve the character of architectural conservation areas within its functional area' (Section 10, 2000 Act)
- A protected structure is recorded for its special interest under one or more of the following categories.7 a) Architectural; b) Historical; c) Archaeological; d) Artistic; e) Cultural; f) Scientific; g) Technical; h) Social
- An Architectural Conservation Area is a place, area, group of structures or townscape with a special interest

Scope

- ▶ Review of the County RPS – towns to form part of LAPs
- ▶ North Tipperary – RPS reviewed in 2010 as part of the County Development Plan 934 structures)
- ▶ South Tipperary – RPS reviewed in 2010 under Section 55 of the Planning and Development Act (899 structures)
- ▶ 1,833 structures currently protected in the County
- ▶ The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) recorded structures of merit listed and given an importance rating i.e. Local, Regional, National or International - all structures with a regional or higher rating be included on the RPS
- ▶ 2,472 (1,157 north and 1,315 south) structures noted on the NIAH – 2,031 are Regional or above
- ▶ Over 2,000 surveys complete
- ▶ 18 ACAs reviewed

Example

Graigue, Moycarkey c1860



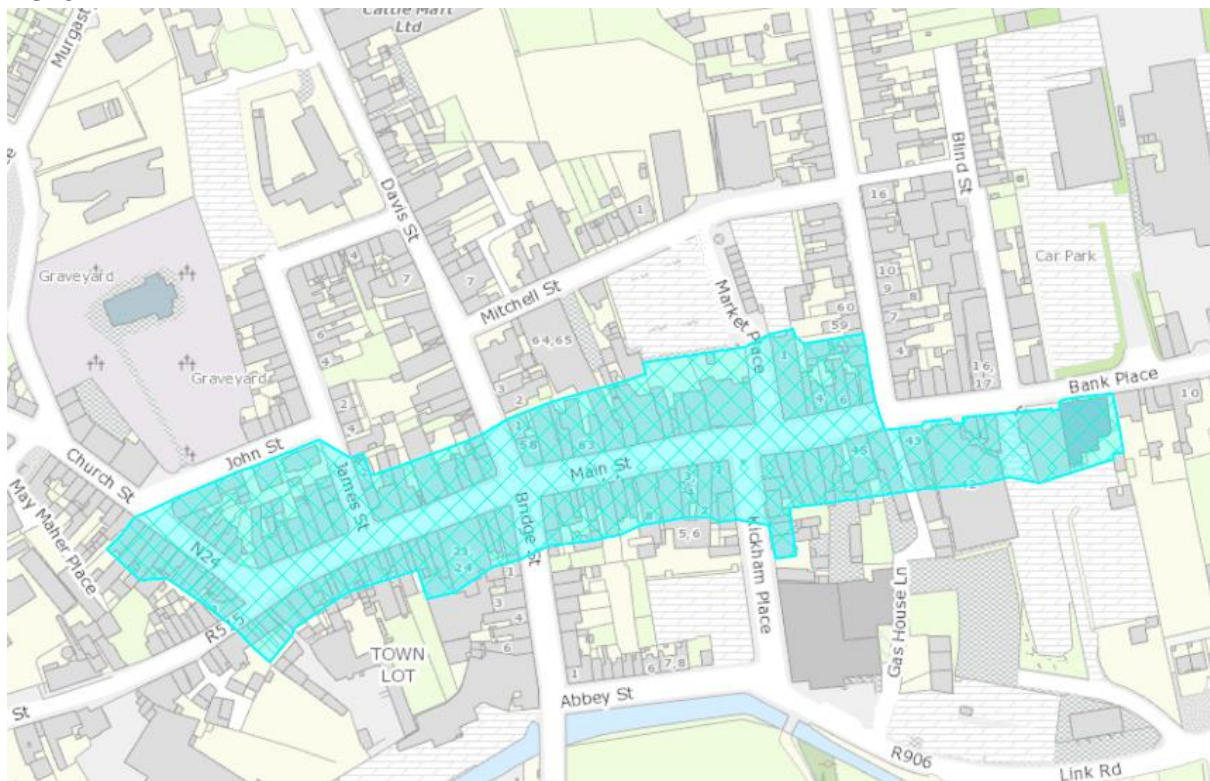
RPS Process to date

- ▶ Develop a comprehensive record of built heritage
- ▶ Surveys of all structures on current RPS
- ▶ Report on each structure including condition and recommendation to retain, remove or add structures from the Record
- ▶ Individual file for each protected structure with survey report, planning history and grant details
- ▶ Identification of owners and occupiers based on land registry, planning history and details collected on site visits

Example Structure recommended for deletion



ACAs



Example Structure Recommended for addition – Church, Ardfinnan



Status as a Protected Structure

- ▶ Where a structure is protected the protection includes the structure, its interior and the land within its curtilage and other structures within that curtilage (including their interiors) and all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of all these structures.
- ▶ Works which are normally exempt from the requirement of planning permission are not exempt development where they would affect the character of a protected structure or any element of it which contributes to its special interest.
- ▶ A declaration requested under Section 57 of the Planning & Development Act 2000-2007 sets out the type of works the authority considers would or would not materially affect the character of the protected structure
- ▶ Conservation Grants to carry out restoration/conservation works
- ▶ Built Heritage Investment Scheme
- ▶ Historic Structures Fund

Example – Restoration and development of a Protected Structure



RPS Review

- ▶ The RPS Review procedure is set out under Section 12 of the Planning & Development Act 2000-2007. The addition/deletion of structures to/from the RPS is a **reserved function** and can only be carried out by the Elected Members of a Planning Authority.
- ▶ Procedure – RPS to form part of the Development Plan
 - ▶ First public consultation period ended November 16th – 29 RPS submissions
 - ▶ Draft
 - ▶ Public Display (10 weeks)
 - ▶ Notification
 - ▶ Submissions
 - ▶ CE Report – RPS Report
 - ▶ Workshops
 - ▶ Final RPS

Strategy for Built Heritage

- ▶ Programme of education on built heritage:
 - ▶ Highlighting the wealth of built heritage in Tipperary and the importance of protecting it;
 - ▶ Ensuring people are aware of their structure's inclusion in the RPS and ACA;
 - ▶ Informing people of their responsibilities to maintain protected structures;
 - ▶ Educating people on the planning process associated with structures on the RPS and in ACAs;
 - ▶ Sharing best practice restoration and redevelopment practices for protected structures;
 - ▶ Making people aware of the grants available for maintaining protected structures;
 - ▶ Heritage led regeneration projects e.g Cahir Town Centre

Cahir Town Centre – Four Pillar Regeneration Plan



Tipperary County Council seek to deliver a multi-faceted regeneration plan for Cahir in partnership with the community and through the support of national, regional and local bodies.

This application seeks funding for Pillars 1 and 2 of our pathway to regeneration which focus on the re-establishment of the historic Square as a living-working quarter of the town.



Cllr. M. Fitzgerald stated that while he was conscious of the importance of preserving our heritage some buildings had become derelict and to remove them from the RPS would in some cases free up a site for expansion. Cllr. G. Darcy stated that we cannot for financial and other reasons save all listed buildings. Cllr. J. Carroll stated we should not put heritage before people, the Council should work with the planning applicant and his/her agent and currently there is an excess of private houses on the list. Patti O'Neill stated the biggest problem is segregation, everything is intrinsically connected but the laws aren't always implemented and creative and lateral thinking is required with less 'red tape.' Engineers should work with architects and where demolition was necessary recycling of stone, for example, should be done. Cllr. J. Hannigan stated that listing/delisting is a Reserved Function of the elected members and a common sense approach was needed. Cllr. M. O'Meara stated that this was an important opportunity and while it is vital to preserve the built heritage we need to be practical and he felt too many buildings were listed at

the last review and this should be rectified. In relation to clusters he added that it was a good idea in theory but in practice it wasn't working. Sadbh Hanley stated there was a fine line between listing and delisting and there is a need to promote how buildings can be restored and to make people aware of the grant schemes that are available which are currently advertised on our website. Nuala O'Connell stated there is a lack of suitable qualified tradespeople to carry out conservation works. There will be an opportunity to make submissions on the RPS next Summer when the draft County Development Plan is published. Owners will be informed. It is important to remember that while listing/delisting is a Reserved Function in order to delist a building it must be demonstrated to have lost its architectural value and planning staff would be happy to advise if there are any queries in this regard.

4. Date of next Meeting

It was agreed to hold the next meeting in the New Year, date to be decided in consultation with the Chair of the SPC

This concluded the business of the meeting.