

Minutes of Meeting of Planning & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee held on Tuesday 31st March 2015 at 10.00a.m. in Cashel-Tipperary Municipal District Offices, Rosanna Road, Tipperary Town.

Present: In the Chair - Cllr. Denis Leahy
Councillors – Micheál Anglim, John Carroll, Michael O’Meara, David Dunne, Martin Browne.

Tom Gallahue, Seamus Coffey, Lyn Mather.

In Attendance: Karl Cashen, Director of Services
Dave Carroll, Chief Fire Officer
Brian Clancy, Administrative Officer
Nuala O’Connell, Senior Executive Planner
Sonja Reidy, Senior Executive Planner
Caroline Conway, A/ Senior Executive Planner
Clare Lee, Executive Planner
Elizabeth McGrath, Staff Officer

Apologies: Cllr. Joe Bourke, Cllr. Ger Darcy, Brian Beck, Senior Planner,

1. Introductions

Cllr. Denis Leahy as Chairman and native of Tipperary Town welcomed everyone to the first Meeting of the Planning & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee in the new Cashel-Tipperary Municipal District Offices. All present introduced themselves and a copy of the Draft Standing Orders of the SPC was circulated. It was noted that a quorum for meetings of the Committee shall be five members three of whom shall be elected members of the County Council. Cllr. Denis Leahy proposed that the Cashel-Tipperary Municipal District Offices be included as a venue for meetings of the SPC. Any submissions on the Draft Standing Orders should be forwarded to the Meetings Administrator or to Corporate Services, Civic Offices, Emmet Street, Clonmel. Non-Councillor Members of the SPC present were circulated with notes on Part 15 of the Local Government Act 2001 including disclosure of interests requirements.

2. Role of SPC

Karl Cashen, Director of Services gave an outline on the role of the SPC. The Planning & Emergency Services SPC comprises 8 elected Councillors and 4 from the Sectoral Interests i.e. 1 from Agriculture & Farming, 1 representative from Development/Construction and 2 from the Public Participation Network (PPN). The main function of the SPC is to assist the Council in its policy making role. A Work Programme for 2015 will be put before the SPC and members will be kept informed of Planning & Emergency Services functions throughout the year.

3. Presentations

(i) Tipperary Fire and Rescue Service

Dave Carroll, Chief Fire Officer gave a presentation on the structure and operation of the Tipperary Fire and Rescue Service and replied to queries raised. Total expenditure in 2015 will be approx. €7 million. There are 133 retained operational personnel working from 12 Fire Stations using in excess of 50 vehicles making Tipperary the 2nd largest retained Fire Service in Ireland. The operational response is to 1400-1500 emergency calls annually.

Fire Prevention and Building Control includes work relating to assessment of Fire Safety Certificate Applications, licensing of premises, planning advice, Disability Access Certificates, Commencement Notices, During Performance Inspections, Dangerous Substances and Events.

Community Fire Safety functions include Fire Safety talks, Smoke detector scheme, Primary School Programme (3rd Class), Wildfire campaign, Engineers Week (Post Primary Schools), Fire Safety Week (open days) and Community events.

The Fire Service has an important role in Major Emergency Management including hazard analysis/risk assessment, mitigation, planning and preparedness, response and recovery.

The Service also has a strong Health & Safety culture and has achieved accreditation to the OHSAS (Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems) 18001 standard.

There is a major emphasis on pre-incident planning and on training with an annual training budget which provides for 27,000 annualised personnel training hours.

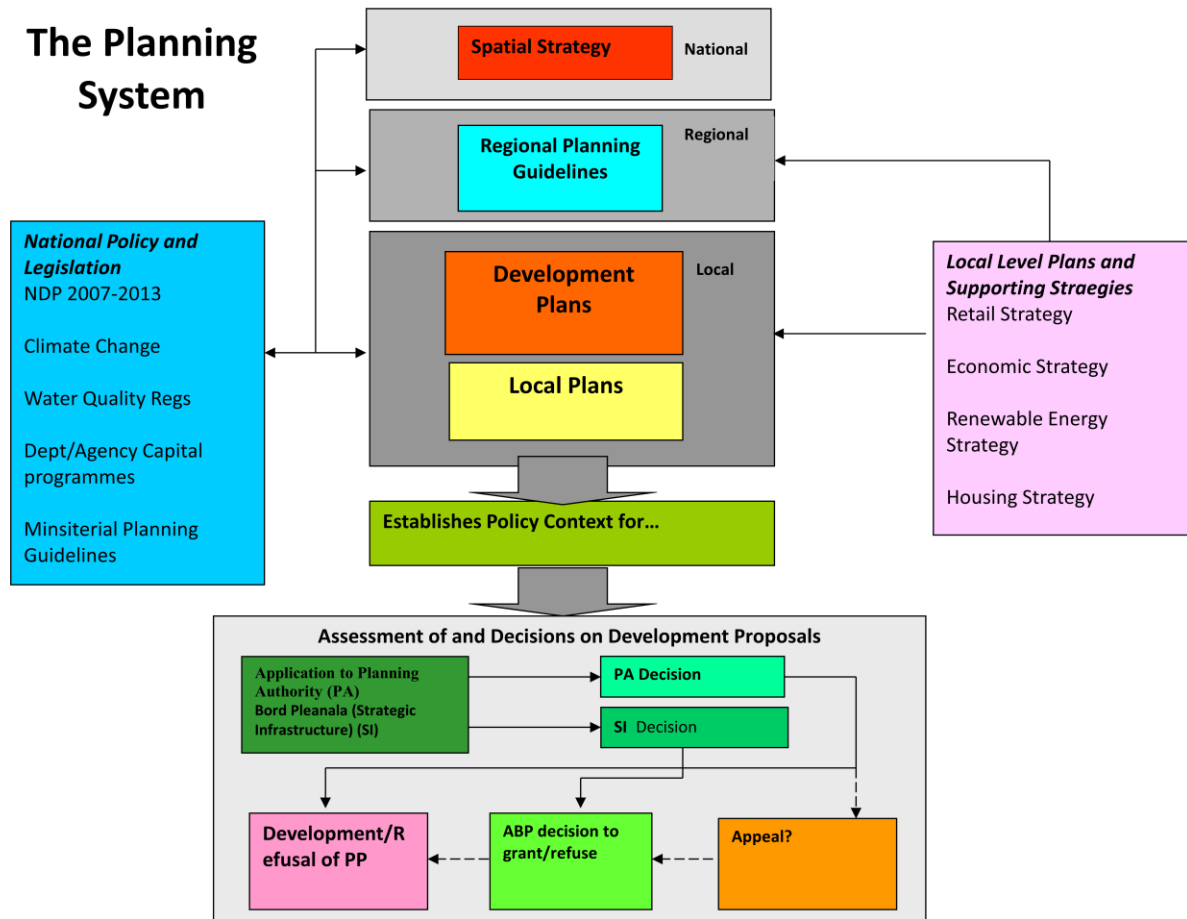
Under Section 26 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2005 a Fire & Emergency Operations Plan is being prepared which shall show the provision being made by Tipperary Fire and Rescue Service in respect of organisation, appliances, equipment, Fire Stations, water supplies and extinguishing agents, training, operational procedures and such other matters as may be relevant, and for dealing with operations of an emergency nature under Section 25.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Fire Officer for the presentation and commended the firefighters who put their lives at risk on a daily basis in the running of the service. In reply to Cllr. Dunne, Dave Carroll advised that carbon monoxide detectors will be required to be provided in buildings under the new Building Regulations. In response to Lyn Mather Dave Carroll stated that anyone carrying out controlled burning should notify the Regional Control Centre in Limerick. Hill fires which can be difficult to prevent and manage occur every year and Tipperary Fire and Rescue Service support the annual awareness campaign run by the Department of Agriculture and the IFA in this regard.

(ii) Introduction to Planning

Sonja Reidy, Senior Executive Planner gave a presentation on the work of Planning Section which covered the areas of Planning Management, Development Management, Enforcement and Planning Policy and Projects. The Planning System can be summarised in the following diagram:

The Planning System



Sonja outlined the role of the Planning SPC and the public in Planning and the prescribed bodies and the role of An Bord Pleanála. Planning legislation consists of the Planning Acts, Planning Regulations, Planning Guidelines and European Directives. She also outlined the Tipperary County Local Statutory Planning Framework as follows:

Hierarchical Tier	Tipperary Statutory Plans & Strategies
County Development Plans (2)	North and South Co. Development Plan
Town Development Plans (9)	Clonmel, Nenagh, Thurles, Tipperary Town, Cashel, Carrick on Suir, Templemore
Local Area Plans (6)	Roscrea, Cahir, Fethard, Newport, Marfield, Holycross
Supporting Strategies	Retail Strategy, Housing Strategy, Renewable Energy Strategy

There are now 3 Regional Assemblies in Ireland – Connaught/Ulster, Eastern & Midlands and the Southern Region. Tipperary County Council is located within the Southern Regional Assembly.

The Chairman thanked Sonja for the presentation. In response to Tom Gallahue Sonja advised that the bond figure for housing developments is calculated by Roads Section and was determined at €11,000 per house in Tipperary to cover the minimum cost of works required to complete the development in the event of default by the developer. Replying to Lyn Mather Sonja stated that it can be difficult to get public engagement in the planning process. In this regard Nuala O’Connell, S.E.P. indicated that the role of the Public Participation Network is a positive development and Elected Members also assist in getting the word out but this is an area where more needs to be done.

4. Renewable Energy Strategy – briefing by Nuala O’Connell, Senior Executive Planner

Nuala O’Connell, Senior Executive Planner gave a presentation on the Renewable Energy Strategy which is being prepared and which is defined as a Strategy for County Tipperary to realise the renewable energy potential of the county while preserving the cultural, natural and built environment of the county. The National Renewable Energy Action Plan, 2013-2020 includes an objective that local authorities facilitate the growth of renewable energy and includes a target of 16% consumption from renewable resources by 2020. A Renewable Energy Strategy can contribute in the following ways: decrease dependency on imported fossil fuels, maintain security of energy supply, reduce CO2 emissions, encourage employment and rural development, encourage local co-operation amongst suppliers of biomass feedstocks, processors, equipment suppliers, retailers and consumers etc, and meet the legislative requirements of EU Directives. Tipperary Co. Council has implemented the largest solar PV project in Ireland which has resulted in 11% savings in energy costs. The Renewable Energy Strategy (parent statement) will contain the following: Appendix 1: Wind Energy Strategy, Appendix 2: Landscape Character and Capacity Assessment, Appendix 3: Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appendix 4: Habitats Directive Assessment.

Ministerial Guidelines for Wind Energy Developments, 2006 require that Development Plans include objectives to support the development of wind energy in a manner that is consistent with proper planning and development. These Guidelines are being reviewed on a targeted basis (noise, proximity, shadow flicker). North & South Tipperary Co. Councils have in place Wind Energy Strategies which were underpinned by Landscape Character Assessments. The Wind Energy Strategy will comprise 3 steps – Step 1: Countywide Landscape Character Assessment (Low, High, Medium Sensitivity), Step 2: Countywide Capacity Assessment (Consideration of Cumulative Impacts to determine residual capacity) and Step 3: Preparation of Strategy which identifies countywide areas which are ‘open for consideration’, ‘preferred area’, ‘not suitable’.

There will be opportunities for Community Led Developments, promotion of micro generators and bio-energy (anaerobic digestion, energy crops to support biomass). The timeframe for the next steps is as follows - **April 2015**: Appointment of Consultants to prepare a Wind Energy Strategy and Landscape Character Assessment, **May 2015**: Presentation of Issues Paper to Tipperary County Council, **May-June 2015**: Public

Consultation on Issues Paper, **July 2015**: Report on Public Consultation Submissions to be presented to SPC, **July-Sept 2015**: Preparation of Draft Renewable Energy Strategy.

The Chairman thanked Nuala for the presentation. Replying to Cllr. Dunne Nuala stated that our current documents in this area are nearly 10 years old and the new Strategy will identify scenic and ecologically sensitive areas unsuitable for windfarms and will robustly analyse the capacity of the landscape for such developments. In reply to Cllr. Browne Nuala stated that monetary savings of €2.2m had been achieved in energy savings by this Council over 5 years. Cllr. Dunne stated that retrofitting of houses should be carefully considered to maximise savings. Cllr. Carroll stated that as we are at peak oil consumption it is important to get the message out to the public promoting the need for increased use of renewable energy. Nuala agreed and stated that it is intended to highlight this through press releases and a radio campaign. She emphasised the great work of Tipperary Energy Agency (TEA) in this area and referred to their excellent website www.tea.ie Sonja Reidy stated that TEA also provide an advice service to the public in this regard. Nuala stated that houses should be designed around energy efficiency and grants are available from Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI). Tom Gallahue stated that sustainable energy was a good idea but works such as geothermal energy projects could be costly and there may be only one supplier and the focus should be on insulation. Nuala stated that the more renewable energy is promoted the more people will come into the market which should promote best practice in this area.

5. Work Programme for 2015

The Planning & Emergency Services SPC Work Programme 2015 was circulated and includes:

- Presentations by staff on role & work of SPC, Planning & Emergency Services
- Presentation on Renewable Energy Strategy
- Commence preparation of Taking in Charge Policy
- Section 26 Plan for Fire Services
- Licensing of appliances (signs, advertising structures, tables etc) on public roads
- Variation No. 3 of North & South Tipperary County Development Plans:
Renewable Energy Strategy
- Update on National Planning Framework as available

Karl Cashen stated this is not an exhaustive list and suitable items could be added as required. Cllr. Carroll asked that updates be given on areas such as landscape & energy policy. Cllr. Browne requested and it was agreed to circulate in advance any items for discussion at future meetings.

6. Date of next Meeting

It was agreed to hold the next meeting of the Planning & Emergency Services SPC on Monday 25th May 2015 at 10.00a.m. in the Cashel-Tipperary Municipal District Offices, Rosanna Road, Tipperary Town.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

