**Environment & Planning Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 5th October 2017 at 9.30am, Old Reference Library, Council Offices, Farnham Street, Cavan**

**Present:** Cllr. W. Bennett, Cllr. F. Curtin, Cllr. V. Smith, Cllr. M. Argue. T. Cooney (Agricultural Pillar), P. Connaughton, (A/Director of Service) C. O’Callaghan (A/Sen. Engineer), N O’Kane (Sen. Planner), C. Craven (AO), C. Boylan (LMO), P. Gaynor (SEE)

**Apologies:** Cllr. D. Brady (Chairperson)

In the absence of Cllr. Damien Brady, Chairperson, Cllr. Winston Bennett chaired the meeting.

A minutes silence was observed as a mark of respect for Aidan Brady RIP (brother of Cllr. Damien Brady).

Minutes of previous meeting were proposed by Cllr. F. Curtin and seconded by Cllr. V Smith.

1. **Taking in Charge of Housing Estates**

Pat Gaynor referred to the fact that in 2006 all planning authorities were requested to establish a policy on taking in charge of housing estates which should be approved by the members of the authority, and reported on to those members on a regular basis and at least annually. Under this policy developers are required to complete residential developments to a standard that is in compliance with the planning permission granted.

Pat explained that in 2016 the Government launched a €10m pilot scheme to speed up the taking in charge process to improve co-ordination between local authorities, Irish Water and other stakeholders. Cavan County Council received €155,000 under this scheme and we issued a list of 23 estates (on the basis that these estates required less than €10,000 to complete works).

A survey conducted by the local authority in 2010 identified 147 unfinished estates. Pat outlined that this had decreased to 52 unfinished estates, in 2016, 33 by January 2017, and currently there are 13 unfinished estates.

He advised the members that a number of estates will be considered for inclusion as part of the Council’s Taking in Charge Policy by December. Mr. Gaynor circulated a handout which included details of the 24 housing estates and location maps of each estate. He advised that there is a set timeline in legislation for completion of this process. He summarised this process as follows:

* An advertisement will be placed in the Anglo Celt Newspaper on 9th October
* The proposal will be on public display from 16th October for a 4 week period
* Submissions will be accepted and a 2 week period will be given for consideration of submissions

The proposal to adopt a further 24 unfinished estates will be formally considered at the Council meeting in December.

**Recommendation:**

On the proposal of Cllr. Fergal Curtin and Seconded by Cllr. Madeleine Argue that the policy to take in charge the designated housing estates was unanimously agreed by the members and recommended for approval at the December Council Meeting.

**2.Prioritise areas for investigation under the River Basin Management Plan**

Colm O’Callaghan, Environment Section gave a presentation outlining plans under the 2nd Cycle River Basin Management Plan. He advised that Ireland is broken down into 46 water catchments of which there are 583 sub catchments and 4,829 water bodies.

Gretta McCarron, explained that LAWCO[[1]](#endnote-1) was established to drive public participation and engagement in relation to improving water quality in Ireland and further enhance engagement with stakeholders at a local level. She advised that 5 different catchment areas cover County Cavan. The primary aim is to protect the quality of waters that are in good condition (in order to maintain their blue status), and improve the quality of waters that have yellow, brown and red status. Gretta explained that LAWCO will work in partnership with local authorities. 53 people will work on the ground with 7 people in the Border Region. All will be in place in early 2018.

She stated that public consultation meetings were recently undertaken by LAWCO and Cavan County Council in respect of the RBMP in the following areas: Cavan, Ballyjamesduff and Bailieborough.

She presented a summary of the concerns raised by the public:

* Water quality – problems are caused by intensive farming in some parts of the County
* Different solutions are required to address problems with water quality
* People don’t value water
* More education/awareness is required in respect of water conservation

Thomas Cooney, IFA stated that he is a member of the National Water Forum and pointed out that agriculture plays a positive role in the improvement of waterways and schemes such as Glas and Reps incorporate water quality initiatives. Moreover he also stated that intensive farmers are very compliant and are stringently assessed.

In response Ms. McCarron acknowledged the points raised by Mr. Cooney and that they will work with the IFA and other such stakeholders locally to imrove water quality level.

1. **Stop Food Waste Challenge**

Conor Craven gave an update on the recent Stop Food Waste Challenge which took place in September in Cavan Town and Bailieborough. All participants had increased their knowledge of waste prevention, recycling and had developed measures to reduce food waste in their own households. Cllr. M. Argue stated that she found the programme to be very informative and worthwhile. Conor stated that further waste prevention programmes

will take place in other locations across the County in 2018.

1. **Litter Management Plan**

The Administrative Officer provided a progress report on current Litter Management Plan and highlighted the actions taken to date and future projects that will be undertaken during the lifetime of the Plan.

Cllr. Argue brought up the issue of dog fouling as a major problem, especially in Cavan Town. She also highlighted that the Bring Centre in the Main Street, Carpark lost points in the most recent IBAL results.

Cllr. Curtin enquired about the roll out of CCTV and how many cameras were being used at the moment. Cllr. Bennett added that the Council should publicise the amount of litter fines that have been issued in the local paper and inform the public of the negative impact illegal dumping and fly tipping is causing the County and show that the Council are taking action against those found to be littering.

The Administrative Officer addressed the points raised by the members and advised that further roll out of CCTV and actions to combat dog fouling are ongoing.

1. **National Planning Framework**

Nicholas O’Kane gave an update on the National Planning Framework. He advised that the Council had made a previous submission in respect of the National Planning Framework earlier in the year. He gave an undertaking that local companies will be invited to make submissions as well to the National Planning Framework.

Cllr. Curtin enquired how many planning applications were made this year. Mr. O’Kane advised that there has been an increase year on year in the last few years. He advised that per capita Cavan County Council has one of the lowest staffing levels and they need to look to address this issue.

Cllr. Bennett enquired what type of application has increased. Mr. O’Kane that it has increased across the board and there has been an increase in housing estates in the East of Cavan, with pre planning meetings held for the Virginia/Cavan areas.

Mr. Cooney advised that he was a member of the Advisory Group for National Planning Framework and he stated there was a need for more one off houses in rural areas to enable farmers and business owners to be able to live within the area where they work.

**AOB**

Cllr. Curtin enquired about derelict sites. Mr. O’Kane advised that the Council will look at each case individually. He advised that CCC will be focusing more time on it, however it will have a significant financial implication on the Council.

Paddy Connaughton advised that the derelict sites act is not the most beneficial act and that progress is slow. Cllr. Bennett stated that he was aware of a derelict property in a town which has been vacant for 13 years and the local Tidy Towns Group spent €1,400 painting and refurbishing the exterior of the property to improve the visual impact of their Town.

Cllr. Argue highlighted Mon’s Terrace on the Dublin Road, Cavan. Mr. O’Kane advised that a revitalisation plan for Town Centres will look at derelict sites and will come up with a series of improvements and will allow for public consultation on each project.

**Close of meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting will take place on 7th December 2017 at 9.30AM in the Old Reference Library.

1. LAWCO – Local Authority Waters and Community Office. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)