**Planning & Building Control SPC**

**Minutes of Meeting of 15th November, 2018**

**In the Chair:** Cllr Jim Moore

**Present: :** Cllr Oisin O’Connell,Cllr. Willie Fitzharris Cllr. Robert Ireton, Mr. Danny Forde, Mr. Edward Lyng, Mr. Tony Larkin, Mr. Diarmuid Houston, Mr. Tony Nolan,

Mr. Peadar Mc Donald , Mr. Enda Waters, Ms. Helen Frayne

**Apologies:** Cllr. Anthony Donohoe, Cllr. Tony Dempsey, Mr.Anthony Neville,

Minutes and Matters Arising

On the proposal of Cllr. Willie Fitzharris, seconded by Cllr. Robert Ireton the minutes of the SPC meeting held on 6th September, 2018 were approved.

Building Control

The Executive Engineer, Building Control, outlined contents of the report circulated to the members.

* Inspection rates increased from 27 % in 2017 to 44% in 2018. This is a significant increase on the 12-15% inspections required.
* In responce to media reports of defects identified in School Building Projects in Dublin, the Dept. of Housing, Planning & Local Goverment issued guidance to Building Control Authorities. The Building Control Section were available to provide assistance to the Dept. Of Education & Skills if required. Following inspection of St oseph’s School, Gorey by the Dept. of Education & Skills . no issues were observed.

A Discussion took place where the members raised queries regarding the staffing of the Building Control unit to deal with housing development activity and issues around the self certification system. In response members were advised that a new Engineer is to be appointed to the Section. The members were further advised that any decisions regarding the BCMS system must be made at a national level. WCC will take whatever sanctions available.

The Chairman welcomed the level of activity and thanked the Executive Engineer for his presentation.

Planning Enforcement

The Senior Staff Officer , Planning gave an outline of the activity in Planning Enforcement. There are currently 357 live cases , this fluctuates with 150/200 new cases each year. It is the objective to close cases as quickly as possible. All cases are prioritised but there is no control over the court process.

The Director of Service also confirmed that there is a high focus on enforcement within the Planning Dept. with good progress being made. Cases are reported in the monthly report but names cannot be included. In response to queries raised by members it was confirmed that the process is progressive, starting with a warning letter, the text of which is legal text. It was noted that there has been an increase in enforcement in relation to non payment of bonds

It was suggested by the Senior Planner that training on issues like enforcement should be provided for new elected members.

The Chairman thanks the Senior Staff Officer for his presentation.

Update on R.S.E.S

The Senior Planner advised the members that whilst there has been no official update, following numerous meetings there has been improvements in relation to Co. Wexford –

 Continuation of the Belfast – Rosslare Route

Small towns appeared as key towns in some areas. A bid was made to have Wexford towns included - Gorey now included.

Rosslare Hbr plan is strong

Once the RSES is adopted, key services will change their priorities to key Towns.

The Senior Planner advised that the draft plan was expected by the end of November. There will be a 10 week public consultation stage and the process would be completed prior to the local elections.

It was suggested that the SPC meet following the publication of the draft RSES.

EIA Directive

The meeting were advised that the transposing into Irish Law of an EIA Directive will introduce significant changes in the Planning Dept. The Planning & Development Act contains many of these changes.

All Planning applications must now be screened a process which involves a number of steps.

There is a 2 Stage Preliminary Screening . Stage 3 may require and EIA – in these cases we cannot accept an application for retention – these must go to An Bord Pleanala

Demolition may require an EIA, if an EIA was required to develop.

The Director of Service noted that a culture change was required and that there were huge fees involved in EIA scoping.

Following questions from the members , it was noted that as Wexford has a lot of SAC`s we do already screen but an extra layer is now required. It is difficult to show areas on a map as it depends on the application. Good quality preplanning advice is the best solution.

A.O.B

The Administrative Officer, Planning, provided an update of the E- Planning Project :

* APAS has been upgraded to Build 79
* Standardisation of Document Type has been completed
* Project has been renamed ‘National Planning Portal’

There has been a slippage of timeframe at a national level but progess in Wexford is on schedule.

Cllr O’Connell raised a query regarding Road Building Grant for Forestry Tracks. The Senior Planner advised that this was a matter for Forward Planning and confirmed that he would revert to Cllr. O’ Connell on the issue.

In reponse to a question if pyrite is a problem in Wexford, the Director of Service advised that the problem results in the use of stone from particular areas. No blockmakers in Wexford use this stone.

Members were advised that issues with Estates already taken in charge was a matter for the Local Area Engineer.

It was agreed that members would be briefed on the Planning & Development (Amendment) Act 2018 at the next meeting.

It was also agreed that the timing of the next meeting would align with the public consultation on the RSES. The committee members can make recommendations to the Council, who will make a submission.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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