

Minutes of the Meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee, held on 04 September 2018 at 10.00 am in Room 1, Thurles Municipal District Civic Offices, Castle Avenue, Thurles.

In Attendance:

Members of Council	Sectoral Interests	Staff
Cllr John Crosse - Chairman	Noel Byrne - PPN	Pat Slattery, Director of Services
Cllr. Phyll Bugler	Seamus Hoyne - LIT	Attracta Lyons, Economic Development Officer
Cllr Seamus Hanafin	Mary Spillane - PPN	Steven Cummins, Clerical Officer
Cllr Joe Hannigan		
Cllr Kieran Bourke		
Cllr John Hogan		
Cllr Martin Browne		

Apologies: Cllr. Siobhan Ambrose, Laura Jones, Imelda Walsh, Rita Guinan, Kathleen Prendergast.

Absent: Shane O’Sullivan, Edel Grace, Cllr. Tom Wood, Cllr. John Fahey, TJ Kinsella.

1. Welcome

Cllr. Crosse opened the meeting and welcomed all concerned and in particular Mary Spillane, a new member representing the PPN. Cllr. Crosse noted that owing to Kathleen Prendergast’s absence, Attracta Lyons is servicing this meeting.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on the 26th June 2018 were agreed and there were no matters arising. Adoption of the Minutes was proposed by Cllr. Hanafin and seconded by Cllr. Hogan.

3. Social Enterprise Projects in LIT

Seamus Hoyne presented on the ongoing Social Enterprise R&D EU Projects in LIT, highlighting in particular the SESBA (Social Enterprise Skills for Business Advisers) and SEDETT (Social Enterprise Development, Education and Training Tools) projects. S. Hoyne identified the role of the LIT Development Unit and its ongoing research in Social Enterprise, one of the four core areas of focus within the unit - along with Sustainable Energy, Sustainable Development and Rural Development. S. Hoyne went on to identify the key challenges and opportunities facing Social Enterprise and gave examples of current successful Social Enterprise projects such as CareBright in Croom, Co. Limerick, and The Cottage Tea Rooms, Loughmore, Co. Tipperary. S. Hoyne summarised that Social Enterprises can be crucial to providing services and employment opportunities within rural communities where, for example, private enterprises are no longer viable, services are required to meet social needs and/or measures to address high levels of unemployment are required.

Cllr. J. Crosse thanked Seamus Hoyne for delivering an excellent and in depth presentation and opened the floor to any questions and comments. Cllr. John Hogan wished to thank Seamus Hoyne also and stated that this is a very exciting initiative as many small communities are unaware of how to go about setting up a small community led enterprise and the type of supports that are available.

Cllr. Joe Hannigan was concerned over the closure of small rural businesses such as pubs and shops along with the closure of rural Post Offices. He is concerned that this shift towards social enterprises may come in direct competition with private enterprises or businesses as they no longer seem to be sustainable. S. Hoyne advised that Social Enterprises tend to emerge from areas where private businesses struggle/have failed or there is a lack of state supports for particular services – in such cases social enterprises could be identified as viable alternatives.

Cllr. Crosse added that he felt there was an onus on local councillors to support revitalization of local communities and social enterprise could be a mechanism for same.

Cllr. Bugler thanked S. Hoyne for his presentation and added that tourism and in particular Air B&B was a means of revitalizing rural areas. Cllr. Bugler also felt the development of a greenway in the Lough Derg area would further assist with rural development of the locality. Cllr. Bugler also considered the co-operative model has merit in local development.

Pat Slattery expressed concern about the lack of supports for social enterprises – he cited reliance on DSP supports which are not necessarily always suitable for social enterprises. He also advised it was important to agree an approach to promote co-ops without undermining private businesses.

There was general agreement that a national policy on social enterprise development and support is required.

Attracta Lyons advised that Social Enterprises have an important role to play in rural regeneration but are only one element that contributes to rural and local development. Spread from tourism product development also contributes significantly as can be seen by various tourism products developed throughout the country such as greenways and blueways etc.

It was agreed that further discussion on the topic of rural regeneration was warranted at an SPC meeting and that it would be useful to have a speaker from the Centre for Co-operative Studies, UCC, present on the current Co-operative movement in Ireland.

4. LECP 2015 – 2020

4.1 Summary Update of Progress on 2018 Economic Action Plan

Attracta Lyons circulated a summary of progress on the 2018 Economic Action Plan to date and provided an update under the following headings:

- Economic Development & Infrastructure
- Food
- Tourism
- Improve Sustainability of County's Energy Use
- Address Infrastructural Deficits Restricting Economic Development
- Identify and Address Skills Deficit and Vulnerable Sectors
- Enterprise Support and Innovation
- Maximise Attractiveness of County as a Place to Invest.

A. Lyons also noted under the above the development of the new tourism proposition 'Ireland's Hidden Heartlands' by Fáilte Ireland which includes the Lough Derg area. This was welcomed by members. Cllr. Martin Browne queried promotion of the Glen of Aherlow and Tipperary Town. Pat Slattery advised that the Glen of Aherlow was incorporated under the Munster Vales proposition's marketing initiatives. The extension of funding to continue marketing efforts under this brand was being actively pursued.

Noel Byrne informed members of work being done by the Dombane and Templederry communities in the whole area of sustainable energy e.g. significant retrofitting of homes by Drombane over the past number of years and the work by Templederry Wind Farm Co. to generate renewable energy.

In terms of infrastructural deficits all agreed the need for high speed broadband in rural areas was critical as was the continued maintenance of rural roads. Cllr. Kieran Burke also felt any funding proposals submitted by the council should take into consideration ongoing maintenance costs. Local authorities are not in a financial position to meet such costs and support is required from Government to address increasing costs.

Pat Slattery recognised shortcomings associated with infrastructural development as outlined. In terms of greenway development funding is high for rail preservation in Tipperary yet there is limited use of

services in some cases. It may be time to consider redistributing funds from rail services to bolster bus routes and road infrastructure. It was decided that this item should be discussed in more detail at a future meeting and Pat Slattery agreed to undertake some analysis of same for discussion.

4.2 To Agree Recommendation for Review of LECP 2015 - 2020

A. Lyons advised on Department requirement for review of LECP 2015 – 2020 during its 6 year cycle. The LECP Advisory Group at its meeting on 12 July 2018 recommended the following approach for consideration and agreement by the SPC:

- Prepare Summary LECP Progress Report for LECP Advisory Group Meeting in December 2018
- Review Socio-Economic Profile of the County being prepared by Regional Assembly and identify any issues arising in terms of 2019 and 2020 Local Economic and Community Action Plans
- Identify any information gaps in the Socio-Economic Profile of the county and procure consultant to compile data as required
- Identify if any amendments or additions are required to LECP 2015 – 2020 and, if required, make recommendation as appropriate
- Review implementation and reporting process and make recommendations.

Recommendation as presented was proposed by Cllr. Phyll Bugler and seconded by Noel Byrne.

5. Tipperary LEO Update

Attracta Lyons circulated a Local Enterprise Office progress report from Jan – July 31st 2018. The report provided the following information for the period:

- Measure 1 Grant Approvals and Funding Allocations
- Employment Approved
- Trading Online Voucher Approvals to date
- Microfinance Applications and Approvals
- Entrepreneurial and Capability Development to 31/07/2018
- Measure 2 Funding Allocations and Number of Participants
- Management Development Programme numbers
- Marketing, Network & Events
- Enterprise Awareness Initiatives
- Student Enterprise Initiative.

Attracta Lyons also informed the committee of Tipperary's involvement in this year's Bank of Ireland Enterprise Town initiative being led by the Municipal Districts. 5 towns/villages have entered this year - Cashel, Clonmel, Nenagh, Thurles and Cloughjordan. Cllr. Crosse spoke for the entire group and wished all involved the best of luck. Adjudication will take place Monday 12th – Wednesday 14th September.

6. Tipperary Marketing Plan Update

A. Lyons provided the group with an update Tipperary - The Place The Time/ www.tipperary.ie.

In order to boost brand awareness TCC has contracted Connelly Partners Dublin to carry out a Pilot Social & Performance Media Campaign. Campaign messaging will focus on Co. Tipperary as a location for investment highlighting available talent pool, international access, infrastructure, and quality of life. The campaign will incorporate social media posts aligned to messaging, testimonials from personnel in Large & SMEs in the county, targeted advertising and creation of website blogs. It is also planned to develop testimonials from sub-suppliers to FDI companies in the county. Engagement with stakeholders has taken place and organisations such as EI, IDA, ETB, TCC, LEO, LIT, TEA have all agreed to engage with the campaign.

7. Rural & Urban Regeneration and Development Funds

Documentation on the Urban and Rural Development Funds was circulated to the committee by A. Lyons. Both funds are competitive national funds with significant budgets.

Closing dates for schemes are the end of September and projects are being prepared for submission under the first call. Projects are divided into 2 categories. Category A relates to capital projects that are in a position to draw down funding and that can be initiated in 2019. Category B relates to proposals that will require further development (e.g. design, planning etc.) prior to being initiated and which may be approved in principle, thereby enabling proposal development to progress in 2019. Nenagh, Clonmel and Thurles qualify as eligible areas under the Urban Funding Call. Projects eligible under both calls can only access support from one fund.

A. Lyons also advised that additional funding calls are the Disruptive Technologies Fund to drive collaboration between research institutions and industry; and also the Climate Action Fund for which applications are also being considered.

Cllr. Hannigan stated that timelines are very short and are not ideal as opportunities may be overlooked or missed out on as a result. A. Lyons stated that a strategic focus is in place to identify opportunities to be progressed under current calls and to develop a pipeline of projects for future calls in 2019 and beyond.

8. Update on Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) and Regional Action plan for Jobs (RAPJs)

A draft of the Southern RSES should be available at the end of the month. This will then go to public consultation with adoption anticipated in early 2019.

The RAPJs are currently undergoing a 'Refresh and Refocus' approach to align with the RSES and a new iteration is being developed for the 2019-2020 period. The RAPJs 2018-2020 has a core ambition to identify 5-10 'SMART' Strategic Objectives in each region e.g. an economic opportunity for a region, addressing a barrier to investment, mitigating a regional vulnerability etc. There will be updates on progress at future meetings.

Cllr. Bugler stated that the focus needs to stay on job promotion, whether it be up-skilling, re-skilling or job creation. Cllr. Kiernan Burke drew attention to difficulty of businesses raising finance from banks – he cited the need for full planning permission being granted for loan approval.

9. A.O.B

S. Hoyne stated that the Tipperary Energy Agency (TEA) is celebrating its 20 year anniversary in the Hotel Minella, Clonmel, on the 12th of September. All members commended the work of TEA.

10. Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at 10.00am on Tuesday, 20 November in Templemore Thurles Municipal District Civic Offices, Castle Avenue, Thurles. The meeting then concluded.

Signed: John Hogg Date: 30-4-19

Chairperson