

Minutes of the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee

Held on 13 July 2021 at 10.30am in Tipperary MD Civic Offices and by Zoom.

Members of Council	Sectoral Interests	Staff in Attendance:
Cllr. John Crosse - Chairman	Imelda Walsh – Farming Pillar, Zoom	Kathleen Prendergast, Economic Development Officer
Cllr. Seamus Hanafin, Zoom	Mary Spillane - PPN, Zoom	Pat Slattery, Director of Services Zoom
Cllr. Mary Hanna Hourigan, Zoom	Tom McGrath – Business Pillar - Zoom	Aisling Kelly, Assistant Staff Officer, Zoom
Cllr Mairín McGrath, Zoom	Laura Jones – Business Pillar, Zoom	Mary Ryan, LEO, Zoom
Cllr Imelda Goldsboro, Zoom	Jim Sheehan – Development construction pillar, Zoom	Marie Phelan, Tourism, Zoom
Cllr. John Fitzgerald - Zoom	Claire Cashman - PPN	
Cllr. Joe Hannigan, Zoom	Seamus Hoyne - LIT	Guest Speaker: Stephen Napier
Cllr. Siobhan Ambrose, Zoom		

Apologies: Cllr Seamus Morris,

Absent: Noel Byrne, PPN, Cllr Peter Ryan, Cllr Dr. Phyll Bugler, Cllr Tony Black,

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

Cllr. John Crosse, Chairman, opened the meeting and welcomed all attending by Zoom. He noted the apologies received for this meeting.

2. Adoption of the minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were considered and Imelda Walsh proposed the adoption of the minutes and Tom McGrath seconded this item.

3. LIT and New Technological University:

Seamus Hoyne gave a presentation on LIT's evolution into a New Technological University and the focus now on the drive towards sustainability in the region, He covered the following:

- New Title: Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest [TUSMM].
- It was developed through an Athlone Institute of Technology and Limerick Institute of Technology consortium
- October 1st 2021 formal establishment day for TUSMM
- Multi Campus Shared values (Excellence and Quality, Professionalism, Innovation, Partnership, Supportiveness, Equity and Inclusiveness, Transparency and Integrity, Accessibility and Agility).
- Contributing to the Socio Economy of the region
- Students at the heart of all developments relating to TUSMM

- Delivering Regional Innovation and aims to secure new funding.
- Focus on: future proofing; being responsive to regional needs; and developing and furthering international connections.
- UN Sustainable development goals will guide the framework. These are:
 1. Clear direction and ambition,
 2. Identity, partnership and scale,
 3. Connect with history but build for the future, and
 4. Align with local and regional strategy.
- Future direction will focus on programme portfolio, research & development and engagement.
- New programmes to include Masters studies.
- DASBE – delivering on Green Skills.

The Chair Cllr John Crosse thanked Seamus for the presentation. He highlighted that new opportunities and economic benefits will accrue for County Tipperary over the coming years arising from this new development.

Cllr Siobhan Ambrose noted that Seamus was the Head of Centre for Thurles. She stated the importance of getting the up-to-date information on the Clonmel campus also and in particular the Kickham Barracks development.

Seamus Hoyne informed the meeting that James Greenslade and Michael Fitzpatrick were the responsible persons for the Clonmel Campus. There is a focus in Clonmel on Digital Education, Digital Animation and Diplomas on Visual Effects. The Clonmel Kickham Barracks Campus is a significant capital development and a strong connection between the Limerick school of Art and Design and Clonmel's campus would be core to achieving same.

Cllr Seamus Hanafin stated that LIT had a proven track record and great ambition in the past that has now achieved further success with this new status.

Cllr Mary Hanna Hourigan welcomed the new status of University and she noted the importance of enabling students to stay and study in their own county as there is a huge cost on student's families with accommodation and travelling when being educated at third level in other counties.

4. Local Enterprise Office – Mid Year Reports and Update

Mary Ryan gave a presentation to the meeting outlining the following:

- There are 7,620 companies registered in Tipperary.
- **2020 activity**
 - 56 applications approved totaling €1,191,580 grant support and creating 118 jobs.
 - 600 businesses received Covid support grants totaling €1,542,075.
 - 419 Trading Online Vouchers [TOV] were approved totaling €982,293.
 - 24 Micro Finance Ireland applications awarded totaling €379,000

- 4326 business/individuals received mentoring and training support.
- **2021 activity to June 2021 inclusive**
- 22 approved projects,
- 40 jobs created,
- 56 Trading Online Vouchers to date,
- Over 1,000 trained to date
- 15 MFI applications processed.
- There are various Covid19 grants available.
- Training programs available to businesses include:
 - Brexit support and training and workshops;
 - Green for Micro a green free programmes available to companies with up to 10 employees;
 - Google Digital Garage Training Series which assists businesses to ensure they are properly utilizing their websites.

Mary advised the meeting of the upcoming Look for Local National Campaign running up to the end of August that will be encouraging people to buy local.

The Chair Cllr John Crosse thanked Mary for the presentation and noted the importance of the Brexit supports and other supports been provided to the businesses. He sought further information regarding Brexit supports available to businesses.

Mary Ryan advised that there are two types of grants available these include the TAME grant and the TOV grant. Enterprise Ireland are providing supports to businesses, giving information on custom issues and custom obligations and one to one mentoring with customers and also provide information on the tariffs and VAT rates.

Mary Spillane asked what the criteria was in order to qualify for a green loan or is it 'green industry' specific.

Mary Ryan replied that the business could avail of the loan if they prepared a 'Green Plan' demonstrating how the business would be more sustainable and greener.

Cllr Seamus Hanafin noted the huge importance of the shop local campaign. Covid 19 had highlighted the need and importance more than ever of keeping business local. Cllr Hanafin felt from his experience that online shopping habits have changed - the consumers are now browsing online, selecting what they want online and shopping offline by walking into the shop locally to purchase their items. Cllr Hanafin also noted that the economic impact and fallout from Covid 19 was causing inflation of up to 3 times the previous costs in regard to delivery costs.

Cllr Joe Hannigan agreed that it is important to get the shop local message out there to support businesses.

Laura Jones thanked LEO for the Google Garage training event which she felt was excellent.

5. Lisheen and Bio-Economy Centre Agrichemway Project

Stephen Napier gave a presentation on the National Bioeconomy campus based in Lisheen which was established to promote the conversion of Ireland's natural land & sea resources to high value products through the development of a sustainable Bioeconomy that is globally competitive.

- Irish Bioeconomy Foundation are actively involved with the key stakeholders within the Irish Bioeconomy Network.
- Currently they are in the process of lodging a planning application to build a new Bioeconomy center of gravity for agri food, marine, forestry, energy and materials.
- Irish Bioeconomy Foundation's has an extensive and growing network in Ireland and across the EU.
- Appointment of a European Ambassador Filippo Giancarlo Martinelli to promote and support the planned growth.
- Working with the following EU projects:
 - Mpowerbio <https://mpowerbio.eu/about> - SME clusters to help SMEs to overcome the 'valley of death' (i.e. moving from concept to commercialisation and overcoming the various hurdles of resources, finance etc.).
 - BioeconomyVentures <https://www.bioeconomyventures.eu/> - Raising disruptive Bioeconomy ventures, startups and spin offs to the top this project started in May 2021 and runs to 2023.
 - BIOBEC – Preparing the creation of bio-based education centers to meet industry needs and boost the contribution of the Bio – Economy to societal challenges.
- Participant in Bio-Economy Ireland Week which aims to bring sustainability and innovation to the fore.
- Participant in Ireland's first ever Synthesis report on EU and Irish Policy – A policy and technology review.

Cllr Siobhan Ambrose asked if there was a timeframe for when the plant would be up and running and how many businesses will be facilitated in the facility. Mr Napier responded by stating that the Planning application will be lodged in the next 6 weeks and Phase 1 will be operational before the end 2021.

Cllr Seamus Hanafin recalled when this plant was a working mine and how it was of huge economic importance back then and now it is still of economic importance and significance to the local area. He suggested having a future SPC meeting out in the plant and availing of the opportunity to have a tour of the plant. The Chair Cllr John Crosse agreed to establish if a future meeting could be organized in the plant.

Mary Spillane enquired about the potential size of the work force and what was envisaged as the education requirements for the roles required in operating this plant.

Cllr Mary Hanna Hourigan noted the closure of the mines was a huge blow for the area when it was announced. She stated that it was great to see it being repurposed and also enquired as to roles available in the new business and what qualifications they would hold.

Mr Napier stated that there will be employment in research and development, maintenance and outreach. Roles at Level 6 entry point and up to level 10 posts will be available. There is also the potential for other jobs created through other agencies coming to site.

Mr Napier thanked everyone for the interaction and questions and comments. He noted the importance of the Bio-economy and the Circular economy. He agreed to forward links to two videos for distribution to the members which would explain the processes of the Bioeconomy in more detail. A) The Bioeconomy explained <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hx-jZmE-2 U> and B) The pilot scale approach which can optimistically deliver similarly in Lisheen. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKgZM2nlofY>

6. Correspondences

Cllr John Crosse, the Chair confirmed there was no correspondance received prior to the meeting.

7. Date of next meeting

The next proposed date was 14 September 2021 at 10.30am. Cllr Seamus Hanafin requested that this could be reconsidered due to the volume of meetings and workshops occurring at this time. The Chair Cllr John Crosse subsequently reviewed this and the next meeting will be held on November 9th 2021 at 10.30am.

8. Close of Business

Cllr. John Crosse, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and time.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: John Crosse M.C.C. Date: 9/11/21

Chairperson.

