



Minutes of the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee, Held on 17 November 2020 at 10.30am in Tipperary MD Civic Offices and by Zoom.

In Attendance:

Members of Council	Sectoral Interests	Staff
Cllr John Crosse - Chairman	Imelda Walsh – Farming Pillar Zoom	Kathleen Prendergast, Economic Development Officer
Cllr Seamus Hanafin, Zoom	Mary Spillane - PPN, Zoom	Sinead Callahan, Tourism Development Officer. Zoom
Cllr. Mary Hanna Hourigan	Tom McGrath – Business Pillar	Anthony Fitzgerald, LEO Head of Enterprise Zoom
Cllr Siobhan Ambrose, Zoom	Laura Jones – Business Pillar Zoom	Pat Slattery, Director of Services
Cllr. Imelda Goldsboro, Zoom	Jim Sheehan – Developmen Construction Pillar, Zoom	Aisling Kelly, Assistant Staff Officer, Zoom
Cllr. Peter Ryan, Zoom	Seamus Hoyne – LIT, Zoom	
Cllr. John Fitzgerald	Clare Cashman	Guest Speaker/Presenters
		Aine Barry, Lough Gur
		Marie Taylor, LIT

Apologies: Imelda Walsh, Elaine Cullinan, Cllr Máirín McGrath; Cllr Seamus Morris; Noel Byrne PPN; **Absent:** Cllr Tony Black; Cllr Dr Phyll Bugler; Cllr Joe Hannigan.

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

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

2. Adoption of the minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were considered and Cllr Mary Hanna Hourigan Proposed the adoption of the minutes and Cllr Peter Ryan seconded this item.

3. Infrastructure – Mid West Green Digital Basin

Pat Slattery gave a presentation and highlighted the following:

- Infrastructure and Ideas Emerging
- Atlantic Green Digital Basin
- Clean Energy
- Bio Economy Eco System
- Silvermines Hydro
- Holyford Wind Turbines
- Tipperary Co Co not fitting solar panels in Ballyvaney
- Regional Enterprise plan to 2020 mid west
- RSES document
- National planning framework
- Shannon Estuary and the Tipperary area
- Transport and Energy Hub in Shannon
- Connect Moneypoint into Lisheen
- Construction and Manufacturing
- Adapting Moneypoint to change over from been a fossil plant
- Hub of Excellence for Green and Digital Economy.

Cllr John Crosse, the Chair thanked Pat for the presentation and asked how the County would benefit from Moneypoint. Pat confirmed the economic benefits of the development of an off shore wind farm development at Silvermines and Lisheen to generate energy and Data centres require huge energy and water to operate. It will improve supply chains and small operations in the County and help to develop a centre of excellence and all of this would hopefully create 30,000 jobs over the next 10 years.

4. New Lough Derg Visitor Experience Development Plan

Sinead Callahan gave a presentation on this development plan for 2020-2024 and noted the importance of placing focus on the beauty of the Countryside and how the plan was developed. The four key areas of the plan include 1. Destination Management Action Area. 2. The Visitor Experience Action Area. 3. Destination and Innovation in the Area. 4. Destination marketing Action. Sinead noted the importance of visitors, Industry, County, Environment, selling points of outdoor activities and promoting food and angling as Tipperary is central to a lot of hub points. Nenagh has been successful in RREDF funding in the amount of €650,000. It's important to listen to the needs and wants of the visitors for future prospect and developments in the County.

Cllr John Crosse, The Chair thanked Sinead for the presentation and noted that there was a lot of work on going in the County in this area.

Pat Slattery also thanked Sinead for all the work done in this area. He highlighted that Tourism needs out support. The Munster vales strategy is launching on Thursday. It's important to support our towns and attract visitors.

5. Social Enterprises & Co-Operatives by Lough Gur's Aine Barry & Marie Taylor LIT

Marie Taylor from the LIT development unit introduced Aine Barry to give the presentation on Lough Gur and Social Enterprises. This development was only natural given that Limerick had a lake to develop. It also offered archaeology, wildlife and community. The new initiative began when it was taken over in 2011 from Shannon Heritage. This created the Lough Gur heritage centre which began by employing 4 on the Co. Employment scheme and 9 rural youths which was their first step in employment. Lough Gur was established in 1969 with the build and make it better campaign. In 1992 there was the development of the Co-operative structure. In 2020 the strategic advisory board was established. It consists of the lake, the shared road space, the solstice park playground, coffee kiosk and information point.

Cllr Seamus Hoyne said that it was a good social enterprise and that it had created employment and that it was a non profit organization that makes enough to keep afloat and also invests back into the County. He also acknowledged the challenges with funding, managing volunteers, committees and staff not directly employed by the organization.

Aine acknowledged that the success was down to the project having a full time manager the significant partnership it had with Limerick County Council, and a dedicated committee with strong governance and its marketing campaign.

Cllr John Crosse, the Chair thanked Aine Barry for the presentation.

Marie Taylor stated that their focus on the area of Social Enterprise forum in LIT is to support the development of Local Enterprise and empowering women from ethnic minorities. The Lough Gur's is an example of a County coming together and developing a hidden gem and engaging with Local Authorities and other supporting agencies. She noted the importance of the on going engagement with Local authorities.

Cllr John Crosse, The Chair thanked Marie Taylor for the presentation and offered any help or support to the LIT for the future.

6. Tipperary The Place the Time 2020 Marketing Campaign

This Presentation was deferred to the next meeting.

7. Town Centres and New County Development Plan

Pat Slattery gave a presentation on the Town Centres and New County Development Plan. He noted that each town in the County had a forum. There was a task team in Tipperary Town. Wi-Fi was been rolled out in each of the towns, it was important to consider how to re imagine use for vacant buildings in each town. The Economic development paper came out a few weeks ago. It was important to look at attractions for employers and there was not enough soft landing space Questum in Clonmel is currently at capacity. Phase 2 is now under development in Ballingarrane Business Park. There was a need to re look at some of the buildings in Gurtnafleur to allow for the setting up of businesses. The difficulty for companies investing in land is the delay it causes to

businesses getting up and running due to planning permissions and other delays which may take years to set up the business.

The development in Carrick on Suir of 10 spaces developed and currently 6 of these are occupied. County Working Digital Spaces are currently been developed in Tipperary, Roscrea and Nenagh. It was important to support County Rural businesses to move to urban locations. There was also a review of the Commercial incentive scheme underway. The LEO was continuing to provide businesses with support and training and development. There was a suggestion for policy changes to feed into the County Development plan and an opportunity for businesses to feed back to the planning section on any changes needed.

Cllr John Crosse, the Chair thanked Pat Slattery for the presentation.

Tom McGrath noted that businesses had suffered greatly in the Covid 19 crisis and that it was still looking bleak for businesses. He knew of some businesses that will remain closed. He noted the development of digital hubs. He noted the importance of re looking at town centres and development of vacant units.

Cllr Peter Ryan said he echoed Tom's concerns and noted the need for pop up digital hubs by product for businesses in vacant buildings. The need to take graduates for incubator hubs. He noted a lot of shopping centres located on the outskirts of the towns were taking business from the town centres. He noted that the rates and viability of the businesses needed to be looked at as there was no stimulus business otherwise. He suggested looking at the rates and new start up business supports.

Pat Slattery replied that the Commercial incentive scheme currently offered by Tipperary County Council currently offered start up businesses in towns 75% rebate of their rates year 1 and 50% year 2 and 25% year 3. He noted that this is currently been reviewed and was re looking at the areas that it was originally offered to. He takes the point regarding the pop up digital hubs but that there may be a long lead in time to using some vacant buildings for this purpose dependent on the current repair of the vacant building. It was also important to provide a safe space for young people to study or people who work from home but would prefer to leave the home to work remote in a safe space away from the family. Pat noted Toms concerns and highlighted the development of the digital hub in Nenagh and that there is now a focus on town centres and the importance of the developments of coffee shops and shops and how these outlets will support each other.

Cllr John Crosse, the Chair noted that he has observed that the towns are quieter in this lockdown and that some of the businesses although they are closed are offering an online shop and collect service. So they are still operating but from behind closed doors and you can call to the shop to collect your items. There is an online grant available to businesses to develop websites to be able to offer an online service. He suggested that maybe more could be done in relation to the offering of support to businesses offering the shop and collect service.

8. Retail Supports

Kathleen Prendergast gave a presentation on the retail supports in Tipperary. She informed the group that she had collaborated with the IT section and developed a new Shop.Local.Tipperary.ie for businesses selling online during Covid 19. It provides a platform for people to use to find whats available locally in their town highlighting the need to shop local support local and that it can be searched by town. There are 66 businesses registered on the site to date. Other supports include:

- Christmas Retail marketing grants. (Increased for 2020)
- Town Centre Initiatives.
- Commercial Incentive Scheme.
- Online Property Portal.
- Updating of the Casual Trading Bye laws.
- LEO's Retail start grant, Retail Sustain and Retail Growth.
- Early rates payment scheme.
- Commercial rates waiver of 75% 2020 re Covid 19.
- LEO and Enterprise Ireland grants and training.
- LEO's BCV grants and TOV grants.

Cllr John Crosse, the Chair thanked Kathleen for the presentation.

Cllr Siobhan Ambrose enquired if the shoplocaltipperary.ie is only for businesses with premises paying rates.

Kathleen advised that all businesses are encouraged to use it rates aren't a requirement to use this page it's to support local businesses.

Cllr Siobhan asked if the property portal is just for prime centre retail or are people working from home allowed on the portal.

Kathleen advised the portal was for everyone's use. Everyone is welcome that is the aim of the initiative.

9. Discussion paper from SPC sub group on the review of the Commercial Incentive Scheme

Kathleen Prendergast gave a presentation about the establishment of a sub group who were tasked with reviewing the current commercial incentive scheme which has been in place for 5 years. This review is now been presented to this SPC group for consideration and then if it's agreed it will proceed to the management group and then to the full Council for Consideration, approval and adoption it includes the following changes:

1. Changing to an online application process
2. Examine the locations that the scheme can be operated in i.e. different designated zones.
3. The amount of the grant offered.
4. The exclusion of certain businesses and the inclusion of charity shops and takeaways.
5. To support the economy by improving the attractiveness of the towns and village centres
6. To support new businesses by offering to off-set costs at initial start-up phase.

Kathleen noted in particular the need to look at the qualifying locations that are currently approved on the designated maps in town centres. She noted that there had been a move away from town centres in recent years and that there was a need to look at all vacant buildings in all towns. The following are the proposed changes:

Three categories locations are defined as follows:

Location 1- Prime Retail Area. To qualify for the Commercial Incentive Scheme, the subject unit must be located on lands zoned Prime Retail Area use within the administrative area of Tipperary County Council.

Location 2 – Town/Village Centre. To qualify for the Commercial Incentive Scheme, the subject unit must be located on lands zoned for Town Centre or Village Centre use within the administrative area of Tipperary County Council

Location 3 – Countywide. To qualify for the Commercial Incentive Scheme, the subject unit must be located on lands appropriately zoned for the proposed use within the administrative area of Tipperary County Council

Kathleen also highlighted proposed changes to qualifying use as follows:

The subject site for 'office based' businesses or services use must be:

1. An established and permitted ground floor office use in the Prime Retail Area on the date of the commencement of the scheme, or
2. An existing first floor unit located on lands zoned Prime Retail Area or town/village centre use, or
3. An established and permitted property in accordance with the zoning objectives of the County Development Plan/Local Area Plans or Town Development Plans

Grant Details Location 1 – Prime Retail Area

End of Year 1

Grant payable equivalent to 75% of rate paid for subject year

End of Year 2

Grant payable equivalent to 50% of rate paid for subject year

End of Year 3

Grant payable equivalent to 25% of rate paid for subject year

Grant Details Location 2 – Town/Village Centre.

End of Year 1

Grant payable equivalent to 50% of rate paid for subject year

End of Year 2

Grant payable equivalent to 35% of rate paid for subject year

End of Year 3

Grant payable equivalent to 20% of rate paid for subject year

Grant Details Location 3 – Countywide

End of Year 1

Grant payable equivalent to 40% of rate paid for subject year

End of Year 2

Grant payable equivalent to 30% of rate paid for subject year

End of Year 3

Grant payable equivalent to 20% of rate paid for subject year

Kathleen thanked all the staff and review group for all of their input in the review document and welcomed any comments.

Cllr John Crosse, the Chair thanked Kathleen for all her work and the presentation.

Cllr Siobhan Ambrose suggested looking at a max grant of €5,000. Small shops were limited to what can go into it and only have one shop open as there is no grant for a second business. For example the Clonmel Arms former hotel in Clonmel is closed at the moment and noted that there was no incentive for them to open and develop and yet they would be a strong employer employing up to 200 people. There was nothing in the scheme for these types of businesses. They are taking over a derelict building and yet there is no grant for them to avail of.

Clare Cashman thanked Kathleen for the very comprehensive presentation and noted her concerns allowing charity shops to be included in the scheme. Clare also asked if Coffee shops are eligible for the scheme.

Kathleen replied to Siobhan's comment that there are grants available to businesses opening a 2nd business premises as long as the other premises doesn't close down the first premises. These can apply. In terms of hotels the limit on who can apply has been amended and hotels are on the extended list. It is important to remember the income from Commercial rates is the Councils source of Income. So the limit of €5,000 is considered reasonable in this regard. It can be examined if need be to be increased on exceptional cases to €6,000 or €7,000 but the main limit would be applicable to all applicants unless there were exceptional circumstances i.e. the size of property and business and amount of rates paid.

Cllr Siobhan Ambrose asked if the €5,000 was at discretion of the Council finance team and may it be looked at once off for e.g. the Arms hotel.

Kathleen acknowledged Siobhan's point and said that she will feed it back to the management team and it was important to keep an economic balance.

Kathleen replied to Clare's comment in relation to charity shops and said that up to now they weren't included and since this legislation regarding charity shops have changed and they now have to pay commercial rates and therefore they are now like all other businesses and should be included like all other businesses.

Cllr John Crosse, the Chair thanked Kathleen.

Jim Sheehan Proposed the adoption of the draft and Cllr John Fitzgerald seconded the proposal.

10. Economic Co. Development Plan Economic Aspects

Anthony Fitzgerald gave a presentation on what should be considered in the Economic Plan and highlighted some projects:

- Fethard Town Park
- Project 2040
- Roscrea Enterprise centre
- Sports complex Clonmel
- Increase in Broadband services
- Ballingarrane master plan completed
- Phase 2 development of Ballingarrane Business park
- Lisbunny Site development in Nenagh
- RSES application for Nenagh currently been prepared
- Cashel Amneal
- Agrichemway project
- Facebook purchase of the wind farm at Lisheen
- Clongour Thurles

Cllr Siobhan Ambrose raised a query regarding the minutes of the last meeting in relation to Nenagh enterprise centre and queried where the money was funded from.

Anthony confirmed that Enterprise Ireland and Tipperary County Council and that it was approximately €150,000 for the feasibility phase and up to €250,000 for the building costs.

Cllr John Crosse, the Chair thanked Anthony for the presentation.

11. Planning the Agenda Topics for 2021

Kathleen set out the Agenda Topics for 2021. Its importance to continue with a list of different topics or any ideas emailed on for topics to be considered to be included next year and any thoughts or ideas would be welcomed to improve economic activity. Kathleen said anyone with suggestions should contact herself, Cllr John Crosse or Pat Slattery.

12. Correspondences/ Any other business

Cllr John Crosse, The Chair confirmed there was no correspondence received. He welcomed Cllr John Fitzgerald who was co-opted onto the SPC group.

Clare Cashman said she would like to raise a couple of comments, She asked if it was possible to circulate any presentations for the SPC before the meeting in the future as this would be helpful to allow time to read through them. She noted the email that she received with the four videos on the Tipperary the place the time were good but that the sound quality in video 4 was poor and would need to be reviewed. She commended Ann Barry on an excellent presentation on Community and Social enterprise. Clare noted the difficulties some businesses were experiencing when trying to contact ESB its difficult to get them on the phone and that perhaps Tipperary County Council could look into improving the communication of the ESB making it more accessible especially regarding vacant buildings and units.

Cllr John Crosse, the Chair thanked Clare and stated that he will arrange that the 4th video would be looked into and noted the concerns regarding the ESB.

13. Date of next meeting

12 January 2021 at 10.30am

14. 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: 12/1/21

Chairperson.