

Minutes of the Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee Held on 6th December 2022 at 10.30am in Thurles MD Civic Offices and by Zoom.

Members of Council in Attendance	Sectoral Interests in Attendance	Staff in Attendance:
Cllr. Imelda Goldsboro Chairperson	Pat Carroll, Farming Pillar	Brian Beck, Director of Services (Zoom)
Cllr. Siobhan Ambrose (Zoom)	Laura Jones, Business Pillar	Anthony Fitzgerald, Head of Enterprise and Economic Development
Cllr Peggy Ryan (Zoom)	Clare Cashman, PPN	Kathleen Prendergast, Economic Development Officer
Cllr. Joe Hannigan (Zoom)	Mary Spillane, PPN (Zoom)	Shane Creamer, LEO Business Advisor
Cllr Mairín McGrath (Zoom)		Donough Leahy, Clerical Officer
Cllr. Phyll Bugler (Zoom)		
Cllr. John Crosse (Zoom)		
Cllr. Seamus Morris (Zoom)		
Guest Speakers in Attendance: Maria Taylor (TUS) via Zoom.		

Apologies: Cllr. Mary Hanna Hourigan, Cllr. Seamus Hanafin, Seamus Hoyne and Tom McGrath, Business Pillar

Absent: Cllr John Fitzgerald, Cllr Tony Black and Michelle Kavanagh.

1. Welcome

Cllr. Imelda Goldsboro (Chairperson), opened the meeting by welcoming all present. Cllr. Goldsboro congratulated and welcomed Brian Beck to his new role as the new Director of Service in Community and Enterprise.

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

The Minutes of the last meeting were considered. Clare Cashman proposed the adoption of the minutes and Mary Spillane seconded this item.

There were no matters arising.

3. Tipperary Food Network Presentation

Shane Creamer, Business advisor with the Tipperary Local Enterprise Office gave a presentation on the Tipperary Food Producers Network and provided an insight to the background, workings and activities of the Food Producers Network.

The Network started off at a dinner event in the Apple Farm in Cahir in 2007 where a group of food businesses in South Tipperary created a dinner event called 'The Taste of Tipperary' and used the produce of food businesses in the county for the meal. This led the group to realising that this could be done at a larger scale where they could showcase the high quality of food products from County of Tipperary. A Committee was then formed and in 2009 the Tipperary Food Producers were established. The objectives of the Network include;

- Mission to create a network of expertise and comradery amongst small food producers in Tipperary.
- Promote the best food Tipperary has to offer.
- Raise awareness of Tipperary's food & drink producers & their importance to the local economy.
- Maximise PR & Media exposure/Targeted campaigns.
- Food Education/Sustainability

Minutes of the Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee Held on 6th December 2022 at 10.30am in Thurles MD Civic Offices and by Zoom.

The Network is made up of food producing businesses from all corners of County Tipperary, ranging from small operations with 1-2 employees to larger manufacturing industries with 60/70 employees working in their operation. As the Network continued to grow, a part-time coordinator was required which was resourced through the Local Enterprise Office Tipperary County Council Community & Enterprise Department and that role is filled by Máire Hennessy and she has been in place for the past 5 years. A Strategic Plan is being developed in conjunction with a Board Bia consultant and will provide a strategy for the next 5 years and it will be launched in 2023. Milestones to the success of the Network include:

- Growing Membership- originally 14, currently 39.
- Inclusion of hospitality & tourism ambassadors (developing food tours and getting collaboration between production and Tourism provision).
- Strong Employers across Tipperary- 400+ employees.
- Contribution to local economy- >€12 million in salaries per annum.

Chairperson Councillor Imelda Goldsboro thanked Shane for the presentation, which was a very in-depth insight into the working of the Tipperary Food Producers and then opened to the floor for questions.

Anthony Fitzgerald, Head of Enterprise and Economic Development highlighted that the Local Enterprise Office has provided €150,000 in 2022 to Food Producer Members, largely through business expansion grants and in 2021 that figure was €210,000 which equates to 15%-20% of the total business expansion grants annual budget. Anthony also thanked Máire Hennessy for her for all her work over the last 5 years in the role of coordinator and he noted that she was leaving this role shortly.

Councillor Crosse noted Tipperary is a very strong county in relation to food and it is a very important area to continue to promote. He noted that Pat Whelan had returned as the Chairperson of the Food Producers Network.

Councillor Mairín McGrath queried if, as we continue to support and promote Shop Local in the lead up to Christmas, there be availability of a hamper of food from all the network producers. Shane Creamer advised that each year they do produce a Tipperary Food Producers hamper and this year it will also be available but the service had been outsourced and now can be purchased directly from the food producer's website. Also, The individual producers who have a retail aspect to their business will also sell the hampers directly.

Councillor Siobhan Ambrose acknowledged that the Apple Farm in Cahir provide hampers for purchase and she wished the Tipperary Food Producers Network continued success.

Councillor Mairín McGrath asked if other counties in Ireland have Food Producer Networks or if Tipperary is unique? Shane Creamer advised that the Tipperary Network was one of the pioneers of those types of networks and seen as one of the best in class in Ireland with others trying to replicate what we have in Tipperary. He mentioned there is Networks in other parts of the country with a very prominent Network in the Boyle Valley and the Burren Food trail. Other Networks are now trying to grow in different areas throughout the Country.

Councillor Peggy Ryan asked if the Network had a collective strategy that they use around food wastage or is it down to the individual business? Shane advised that it is something that is set out in the Strategic plan to continue with the sustainability to which food wastage is included in. Shane also advised that a lot of the producers would base their business around traceability and quality so they would ensure that industry standards are surpassed. As a Network, they are always trying to innovate new learnings and procedures to improve in areas such as food wastage.



Minutes of the Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee Held on 6th December 2022 at 10.30am in Thurles MD Civic Offices and by Zoom.

4. Social Enterprise

Dr. Marie Taylor of The Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS) gave a presentation on Social Enterprise in the University which includes two campus's in Tipperary (Clonmel & Thurles).

Marie discussed the Research, Development and Innovation vision is to deliver excellence in multidisciplinary research practice and encourage collaboration between researchers and strategic European and global partners in industry and academia.

Marie mentioned that she is based in the Development Unit in TUS under the leadership of Padraic O'Reilly. There are a number of areas they focus on such as climate action, energy, construction, technology, education, sustainable development, community development, tourism, heritage and social enterprise which they have a number of projects both nationally and internationally.

TUS engages in Social Enterprise by being members of Social Economy Research Network of Ireland (SERNI) and Department of Rural and Community Development Higher Education Institutes Social Enterprise Network. Other areas of Social Involvement include;

- Ongoing development of Modules in the area of Social Enterprise through EU projects
- TUS Thurles – Sustainable Development Research Institute
- Paul Partnership – Development of Social Impact Measurement
- Development of SE Social Impact Measurement Toolkit in addition to other toolkits developed for SE projects
- Links with other projects in rural development and community enterprise.

TUS is also a SocialB Partner which is a collaboration between 8 partners from the social enterprise, training and Higher Education sectors in 4 different countries – Ireland, Greece, Italy and Slovenia. SocialB explores and addresses the skills gaps and training needs in current educational/training programs in Social Enterprise by designing, developing and piloting an accessible suite of learning resources to support individual and organisational learning in the field of social enterprise. Marie then discussed the Learning resources available at TUS which are presented in the framework of blended learning materials in 24 Learning Units (6 modules) and focus on the development, sustainability and expansion of the Social Enterprise sector by integrating a learner-centred approach oriented to real, problem-based learning and skills acquisition in the field of social entrepreneurship. (EQF Level: 5 and 6).

Marie Taylor discussed "Empowering Women from ethnic minorities through Social Enterprise" (EMWOSE) which is aimed at increasing the employment of women from ethnic minorities by providing them with the knowledge and practical skills necessary for engaging in the social enterprise world. She also referred to the challenges in this area. Some key points here included;

- Empowering women from ethnic minorities requires both improving their knowledge and skills and having them overcome their fear of failure.
- Mentoring women from ethnic minorities with female role models of their ethnicity can help them become courageous and move forward in their careers.
- Establishing networks for female social entrepreneurs from ethnic minorities can be an important strategy.

Chairperson Imelda Goldsboro thanked Marie Taylor for her comprehensive report and opened to any questions.

Clare Cashman asked if a copy of the slides could be circulated after the meeting which was confirmed.

Minutes of the Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee Held on 6th December 2022 at 10.30am in Thurles MD Civic Offices and by Zoom.

5. Update on Commercial Vacancy Incentive Scheme considerations of the Retail Sub-Group regarding Hotels

Kathleen Prendergast, Economic Development Officer gave a presentation regarding a query received from a Member of the SPC in relation to a.) Providing more incentive to closed Hotels to reopen and b.) Why the Commercial Vacancy Incentive Scheme rate is set at a maximum of €5,000 grant per annum.

Kathleen advised that a meeting of the sub-committee was held and they considered the matter in full and had identified that;

- In choosing the sum of up to 5,000 it was identified that 85% of rates customers fall into this bracket and could avail of the scheme -and noted that this grouping contributes 20% of the total income from the rates income to the council.
- There are 32 Hotel Premises in the county of which 27 are rated and 5 removed from the rates collection list over the past decade. Providing targeted sectoral support would be distortionary and may end up with the council attempting to "pick winners".
- Further incentivising properties to stay unlet could be a retrospective move and contrary to the overall aims of the Commercial Vacancy Incentive Scheme
- It would not be prudent to make any changes that would impact on the current stability offered under the current scheme without due considerations and consultation.
- The scheme is in place for a relatively short period Since May 2021 and will be reviewed again in May 2024 and such considerations can be included in the review.

Chairperson Councillor Imelda Goldsboro thanked Kathleen for the presentation and opened the floor for questions.

Councillor Siobhan Ambrose asked if the management team were involved in the preparation of the recommendation being considered and who else participated in same. Kathleen advised it was the members of the Retail sub-group, that were appointed by this SPC committee, who had reviewed the matter at the request of the SPC. It was this sub-group of the SPC that were making the recommendation on the subject. Kathleen listed the members of the sub-group - Laura Jones, Mary Spillane, Councillor Seamus Hanafin, Councillor Mary Hanna Hourigan and Councillor John Crosse.

Councillor Joe Hannigan thanked Kathleen for her work on this subject matter and stated that it was a comprehensive paper and various aspects of the topic were well covered in the presentation. He acknowledged the reason behind leaving the amount at €5,000 for Hotels which was very logical.

Clare Cashman wanted to clarify that the recommendation is to leave the scheme it as it is currently and return to it when the scheme was being reviewed in 2024. Kathleen confirmed that this was the case. Cllr Joe Hannigan proposed this recommendation be accepted and this was seconded by Cllr Crosse and agreed by the meeting.

6. Christmas Retail Support Programme

Kathleen Prendergast provide the Committee with an update on the Christmas Retail Support Scheme for 2022. Kathleen confirmed there was a huge up-take on the scheme with 38 applicants from 40 receiving funding.

Clare Cashman asked if it was envisaged that the funding would be paid out in this financial year. Kathleen confirmed that as soon as all the information is received from each applicant



Minutes of the Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee Held on 6th December 2022 at 10.30am in Thurles MD Civic Offices and by Zoom.

the funding is being released and once all the event are completed, an evaluation will be carried out where we will get the details and receipts of the spend.

7. Update on the LECP

Kathleen Prendergast made a presentation and provided an update on Local & Economic Community Plan Process. The agency consultation has now taken place and now the focus is moving onto the public consultation side of the process. Kathleen then advised the group of the following update in relation to this;

- Working with the LECP Advisory group on re-wording some of the goals/objectives to make them more strategic. These will be brought back to the LCDC and Economic SPC for sign off.
- Socio-Economic Statement has been drafted in-house and is almost complete.
- Welcome for the launch of Ireland's first Regional Development Monitor (RDM) which will give access to excellent data, and we await updated CSO data.
- The Regional Assemblies in Ireland, AIRO at Maynooth University and Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) are collaborating to create a highly visual and interactive dashboard, or data hub, that provides users with a range of socio-economic and environmental indicators for regional and local authorities.
- The next LECP Advisory Group meeting will be held on Monday 12th December.

Clare Cashman asked when the public consultation will take place, which Kathleen Prendergast confirmed that it would take place in the first two quarters of 2023. The arrangements are being made in partnership with the PPN who will be assisting in the delivery of the consultations process.

8. Review of 2022 SPC Activity including attendance

Kathleen Prendergast provided the Committee with the details of the attendance for 2022 which was very well turned out during the year both by Zoom and in person. Kathleen then spoke about the wide range of topics covered throughout the meetings in 2022, which included items such as; agriculture, broadband, BCP's, bio-economy, climate, digital areas, social enterprise, tourism, food, LECP, retail sector, the draft remote working strategy and the two new relevant regional enterprise plans.

Kathleen updated on the items which were not covered in 2022 as follows:

- *Tipperary, the time, the place Marketing campaign*, as there was no new update on that for 2022 but it will be provided in 2023.
- The Local Enterprise Office Reports are being considered for removal from the Annual Plan.
- The County Development Plan will be looked at again in 2023.

9. Planning for Agenda Topics for 2023 Schedule

Kathleen Prendergast provided the Committee with a range of topics to consider for 2023 and asked for any additional topics that the meeting wished to be considered. Following the proposal by Councillor John Crosse on the listed topics for 2023 as presented and seconded by Pat Carroll, the meeting agreed.

Laura Jones asked if it was possible to circulate the list of topics which Kathleen confirmed she will.

Clare Cashman asked if was possible to add Brexit as a topic for 2023, which Kathleen confirmed that she would and she include early in 2023.



Minutes of the Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee Held on 6th December 2022 at 10.30am in Thurles MD Civic Offices and by Zoom.

10. Set the dates for 2023 Meetings

Kathleen Prendergast proposed the following dates for the next years Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee; February 14th, May 30th, September 5th and December 5th which were agreed by all.

11. Close of Business

Following the last meeting of 2022, Chairperson Councillor Imelda Goldsboro thanked everybody on the Committee for their contribution and she wished everybody a Happy Christmas.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: Imelda Goldsboro Date: 14/12/23 Chairperson