

Minutes of the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee

Held on 7 June 2022 at 10.30am in Thurles MD Civic Offices and by Zoom.

Members of Council	Sectoral Interests	Staff in Attendance:
Cllr. John Crosse - Chairman	Baden Powell – Farming Pillar	Kathleen Prendergast, Economic Development Officer
Cllr. Seamus Hanafin	Clare Cashman - PPN	Pat Slattery, Director of Services
Cllr Peggy Ryan	Laura Jones, Business Pillar	Marie Phelan, Tourism Development Officer
Cllr. John Fitzgerald (Zoom)	Michelle Kavanagh, Development Construction Pillar	Donough Leahy, Clerical Officer
Cllr. Imelda Goldsboro (Zoom)		
Cllr. Phyll Bugler (Zoom)		
Guest Speaker: Paraic Rattigan, Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan Program Manager		

Apologies: Cllr. Mary Hanna Hourigan; Cllr Mairín McGrath; Cllr Siobhan Ambrose; Seamus Hoyne, TUS; Noel Byrne, PPN; Mary Spillane, PPN; Tom McGrath, Business Pillar and Anthony Fitzgerald, Head of Enterprise.

Absent: Cllr Tony Black; Cllr Joe Hannigan and Cllr. Seamus Morris.

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

Cllr. John Crosse, Chairman, opened the meeting and welcomed Baden Powell representing the Farming Pillar and Michelle Kavanagh representing the Development Construction Pillar to the Committee. The attendees via Zoom were noted along with the apologies received.

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

The minutes of the last meeting were considered. Cllr. Peggy Ryan proposed the adoption of the minutes and Cllr. Seamus Hanafin seconded this item. There were no matters arising.

3. Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024

Paraic Rattigan, Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan Programme Manager gave a presentation on the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024.

Paraic informed the Committee that the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan provided an opportunity for regional stakeholders, both the public and private sector, to work together and bring forward initiatives that build on the region's unique strengths. This is all with a view to enhance the enterprise and job creation potential in the region. The main objectives of the plan include:

- Enabling a Digital and Innovative Economy
- Achieving a Low Carbon, Sustainable Economy
- Enabling Enterprise growth in regional towns and rural areas
- Delivering initiatives to support SMEs, Microbusiness and Start Ups
- Supporting Job Creation for areas of high unemployment and Social Enterprise.

These specific objectives are accompanied by the aim of increasing Regional Capacity Building and a focus on Education and Training.

The Tipperary highlights in the new plan were defined as:

1. Renewable Energy
2. Bioeconomy
3. Film
4. Enterprise and Digital Hubs
5. Food Hubs
6. Equine Enterprise/Tourism
7. Tourism visibility
8. Industry Clusters
9. SMEs / Start up Supports
10. Social Enterprise
11. Taskforce lead – Regeneration in Tipperary Town.

The Chairman Cllr. John Crosse thanked Paraic Rattigan for his informative and interesting presentation.

Cllr Seamus Hanafin referred to Enterprise/Digital Hubs and the challenge of them being sustainable. He also enquired about the New Frontiers program from TUS for start-ups and entrepreneurs within the County.

In response Paraic Rattigan advised that data is currently being gathered on the demand, capacity and the uptake of the various Enterprise/Digital Hubs and that information will be available early in 2023. He pointed to the opportunity for Enterprise/Digital Hubs in County Tipperary as a second-site location for businesses who wished to host a portion of staff off-site from the main business location.

In relation to a New Frontiers programme Paraic stated that this is offered by TUS and usually entrepreneurs register their interest on the TUS website. He also advised that the services of the Local Enterprise Office are available to new start-ups.

Paraic agreed to establish what supports can be delivered at a more localised level and advise the Meeting Administrator who will share the information with the SPC members.

Kathleen Prendergast noted that the Manager of the Stable Lane/Town House Digital Hub had reported on the impact that is being felt locally in regard to the economic benefits of the Digital Hub in Carrick-on-Suir. She stated that it has been very beneficial as it allows people to work in their own town; with no commute; creating a larger footfall in the town with local food and retail businesses benefiting.

Cllr. Seamus Hanafin shared a concern for the future of Enterprise/Digital Hubs when their initial capital funding expires and the hubs need to generate enough income to be sustainable.

Pat Slattery, Director of Services, agreed that the Hot-Desk arrangements in Digital Hubs do not usually pay for themselves but when there is a commitment to fund the Manager in the initial start-up phase, such as that which has been provided by Enterprise Ireland in the Engine Project in Tipperary Town, there is a more likely opportunity for success. However, he advised that during the early part of the operation you may be able to have Hot Desks available on an hourly/weekly basis but as time goes on you need to fill the Centre on a more full-time committed basis to be sustainable.

Pat Slattery thanked Paraic for his presentation and for the support that was so forthcoming. He referred to the many benefits to Tipperary of networking within the Mid-West Region with counties Limerick and Clare. This is especially true regarding the access to Multi-national companies and the associated opportunities. He stated this is also the case with learning from the Regeneration Limerick group, where many similarities exist with the ongoing work in Tipperary Town Task Group. Pat stated that he was of the view that a strong Limerick is good for County Tipperary.

Cllr. Phyll Bugler enquired as to when would we see tangible results from the wind and wave energy actions in the Mid West Regional Enterprise Plan, especially given that with the energy prices are so high currently for businesses.

Paraic Rattigan advised that large capital investment is required for Wind and Wave projects to progress. He noted that presently the Government are prioritising the Eastern coast of Ireland, as the water is shallower and thus these projects are more feasible. Paraic advised that whilst there is a strong supply from wind energy in this region already, it would be some time before the final results to satisfy the demand will be met.

4. Tipperary Tourism Update

Marie Phelan, Tourism Development Officer gave a presentation on the work being carried out by Tipperary Tourism. She outlined the five "Momentum Projects" under the Tipperary Destination Resilience Plan 2021 / 2022 which include;

- Digital Destination Development
- Activate the Outdoors
- Packaging / Cross Selling and New Experiences
- Unlocking Tipperary Communities
- Events & Night Time Economy

Marie also updated the meeting on the marketing and business supports which Tipperary Tourism has provided over the last year. This included information on their social media interaction figures, a Brand 'refresh' and its new media plan for 2022 "All Eyes on Tipperary". Marie advised the SPC of the training sessions Tipperary Tourism have provided already and have scheduled for this year and she also informed the meeting of the planned Networking events for 2022.

Cllr. John Crosse thanked Marie for the presentation and commended the great work being done in Tourism. He opened it up to the floor for questioning.

Cllr. Phyll Bugler stated that additional signage is required on the Lough Derg Way - especially at the Millennium Cross, the Graves of the Leinster men and on the Looped Walks. She also noted that the new map is excellent and requested that it be available to the Bed and Breakfast Members of Tipperary Tourism. Cllr. Bugler requested an update on both the adventure event - Quest and on the Feasibility Study which was being carried out regarding the new walkway between Ballina and Dromineer.

Marie Phelan advising that the signage around the Lough Derg Way was under the remit of Nenagh Municipal District but she would get in contact with Rosemary Joyce, MDA, and make an enquiry about it and perhaps that this is something which could be explored for funding under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme [ORIS] next year.

In relation to the Map, it was noted that all Tipperary Tourism Members would be eligible to get the Map and additional brochures will be provided to them on request.

In relation to the adventure event, Quest, Marie advised that there is a meeting in relation to same shortly and she would provide a further update after that but she noted that there is great interest in the event with over one thousand people signed up already.

Finally, Marie advised that she did not have an update on the Ballina and Dromineer walkway as it is not being led out by the Tourism section, but she will enquire internally and get back to Cllr Bugler directly with an update.

Cllr. Peggy complimented Tipperary Tourism in relation to the signage in Thurles Train Station which really stands out, was very engaging and presented the County in a positive fashion.

5. Local Economic Community Plan: Strategic Economic High-Level Goals

Kathleen Prendergast, Economic Development Officer, on behalf of her colleague Elaine Cullinan, made a presentation on the High-Level Economic Goals for the proposed Local Economic Community Plan (LECP).

The purpose of the LECP, as provided for in the Local Government Reform Act 2014, is to set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the relevant Local Authority area, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders. Each goal had to dovetail with Sustainable Development Goals; the National Development Plan and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy:

The following are the proposed High Level Economic Goals Proposed:

- 1) Grow our economy through facilitating the growth and development of infrastructure that will attract Industry, Entrepreneurs and Innovators.
- 2) Further develop Tipperary's reputation as a green and sustainable environment through future proofing our businesses and communities to be energy efficient and climate change ready.
- 3) Collaborate with agencies and partners to position Tipperary as a location with excellent connectivity for investment, Digitalization and employment.
- 4) Support a diverse and skilled workforce to enhance and develop our County.
- 5) Through the LEO, support the future Economic growth of the County by offering integrated support services for micro and small business sectors.
- 6) Collaborative marketing of Tipperary as an attractive place to invest and establish a successful enterprise.
- 7) To significantly improve the visitor experience in the county, increase visitor revenue, visitor numbers, capacity, dwell time, bed nights and the overall county tourism economy.

Kathleen advised that research is ongoing on the Socio-Economic baseline of County Tipperary and if this research identified new information or revealed an area that has been overlooked in the above High-Level Goals then a new high-level goal would be created and this change would be presented [by email] to the SPC members for consideration.

These high-level goals are a specific requirement of the process for the plan development as the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee are required to adopt the High-Level Economic Goals that would be presented to the public for consultation. Kathleen was seeking input on the goals presented today before they were considered for adoption.

Clare Cashman requested that the Social and the Sustainability and Climate Change actions be circulated to the members of the SPC also. She highlighted the importance of ensuring that the various goals and actions were interlinked and that they dove-tailed with each other.

Clare Cashman stated that one of the key areas of challenge ahead, not just for Tipperary but internationally and globally, was that of 'Energy' and she would like to see an Economic High-Level Goal addressing this theme. Along with this, as Tipperary is a very rural county and transport infrastructure will dictate developments that take place in the county in the future, the theme of a Connected Local Transport Model should be considered for inclusion.

Pat Slattery, Director of Services, advised that all High-Level Goals will be integrated but the Economic High-Level Goals were only presented today as they specifically need to be signed off by this SPC Committee. He explained that the different sets of High-Level Goals [Economic, Social Inclusion and Sustainability & Climate Change] must be adopted by three different committees. The full set will be circulated and this final document will demonstrate how they all fit together in an integrated manner.

Cllr. Seamus Hanafin was pleased that energy was going to be considered by the public consultation as the high energy costs are currently a most serious issue for businesses. He

noted that whilst there are a range of energy conservation grants available, people are not applying for them as, they were working out too expensive using the recommended providers under the grant schemes.

Cllr. Seamus Hanafin also indicated that he was pleased that Retail was covered in one of the High-Level Goals. He stated that it has been great to see retailers getting support in recent time, including during the Covid Pandemic.

The adoption of the Strategic Economic High-Level Goals was then proposed by Cllr Seamus Hanafin and seconded by Cllr. Peggy Ryan.

6. Correspondence: Change of Representatives:

Cllr John Crosse suggested that a note of thanks be sent to the two out-going representatives, Imelda Walsh and Jim Sheehan as an acknowledgement of their contribution while serving on the committee. This was proposed by Seamus Hanafin and seconded by Baden Powell.

7. AOB

Cllr. Phyll Bugler asked that the Broadband Officer attend and provide an update on Broadband in County Tipperary. Pat Slattery confirmed this would be scheduled for September's meeting.

Cllr Seamus Hanafin asked if hybrid meetings will continue into the future – i.e. an option of Zoom and attending in person as this method of meeting was accepted as effective and efficient. The proposal was made to do so by Cllr. John Crosse and seconded by Cllr Seamus Hanafin.

Cllr Crosse confirmed this was his last meeting as Chairman and he thanked the committee for their time and support throughout his three years of involvement. He stated that he enjoyed his time as Chairman of the SPC.

Cllr Hanafin offered his appreciation for the stewardship Cllr Crosse gave while serving as Chairman over the last three years.

Cllr. Phyll Bugler also thanked Cllr Crosse for the work he has done.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 6th September 2022.

8. Close of Business

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: Imelda Goldstone Date: 06/09/2022
Chairperson.

