

Minutes of meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC meeting held on Monday 9th March, 2020 in the Seminole Room, County Buildings, Wicklow County Council

Present: Councillor Gerry Walsh Chair
Councillor Mary Kavanagh
Councillor Tom Fortune
Mr. Michael Allen
Mr. Michael Ryan
Mr. Huw O' Toole
Ms. Ruth Donnelly
Councillor Avril Cronin

In Attendance: Ms. Lorraine Gallagher, Acting Director of Services
Ms. Christine Flood, Senior Executive Officer
Ms. Vibeke Delahunt, Head of Enterprise
Ms. Deirdre Whitfield, Administrative Officer
Mr. Derek Cullen, Acting Staff Officer

Apologies: Councillor Irene Winters
Councillor Pat Kennedy
Mr. Killian McGreal

ITEM 1

Minutes of meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC held on Monday 2nd December 2019 (copy circulated).

On the proposal of Mr. Michael Allen, seconded by Ms. Vibeke Delahunt, the minutes of SPC meeting held on Monday the 2nd December 2019 as circulated were agreed.

ITEM2

Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

It was agreed to take Item 4

To consider the Maritime Strategic Review (previously circulated): *Presentation by Paul Doherty, Gavin & Doherty Geosolutions*

Mr. Paul Doherty presented the Maritime Strategic Review to the committee outlining the following:-

- The scope of the review covers Aquaculture, shipping, fishing, renewable energy and marine tourism and leisure.
- Recommendations of the review including general recommendations, strategic recommendations and location specific recommendations that detailed Bray Harbour, Greystones Harbour, Wicklow Port and Arklow Harbour.
- The opportunity for Wicklow to become an off-shore 'powerhouse'.
- Identifying maritime issues which have a remit in spatial / land use planning to allow better planning and management of the coastal / maritime area.
- To help Wicklow County Council integrate planning policy and strategy.
- To provide Wicklow County Council with a clear picture of its maritime area so that it is in a position to respond and / or provide input to higher level policy where / when necessary.
- Identify and focus stakeholders by engaging with them in an **iterative** process.
- Identify ways the economic base of County Wicklow could be strengthened through its ports and harbours.

Following the presentation the following questions and points were raised:

- Is there any timetable on when the government will issue licences?
- There is currently a site with approximately 30 acres for sale on the harbour in Arklow. This committee should encourage the Council to look at this as a strategic site for a new harbour development.
- The Maritime Museum relocated to the Bridgewater Centre approximately ten years ago and has seen increased visitors since the move. Wary if it was to be relocated again.
- How is the economic benefit for Wicklow calculated? How is the income generated, apart from employment etc?
- Some members of this committee visited Wick in Scotland in 2018 and the benefits that the wind farm has brought to Wick was amazing.
- Who has the responsibility for ensuring that Wicklow gets the benefit from the project? National Government or Local Government?

Mr. Paul Doherty responded outlining the following:-

- There are a few different sources of potential income streams but they are not 'set in stone' as yet. The exact amount that could be generated is unknown at this point.
- The main wind farm will bypass local authority as it is off shore but the on shore would be responsibility of Wicklow County Council.

Ms. Christine Flood also informed the meeting of the following:-

- The Maritime Business Development committee are currently looking at regularising the harbour rates charges. There is a very strong limit on ships allowed into Arklow in any event because of the security rating of the harbour. Arklow is limited to 12 ships per year whereas Wicklow has no issues with the security rating.

At the conclusion of the discussion the committee recommended that the Maritime Strategic Review be presented to full Council

It was then agreed to take item 3.

Presentation: Update on County Wicklow Food Strategy (Mr. Jonathan Birnie of JBA Consultants attended for this item)

Mr. Jonathan Birnie gave a presentation on the County Wicklow Food Strategy, covering the following areas:

- What the Wicklow Naturally brand is designed to do and how it will be delivered.
- The Key Actions of the Food Strategy.
- The definition of Wicklow Food.
- Definition of membership for Food and Beverage businesses in the County.

Following the presentation the following questions and points were raised :

- Do members need to have any kind of accreditation and what is the process?
- Is there any referencing to where the food is produced? The Green Image of Ireland is very important going forward. There is massive potential in this area.
- What scale will the food incubation hub be set up?

Mr. Jonathan Birnie answered with the following:

- When people sign up, details can be authenticated.
- There is no member fee this year. There is a responsibility with members also.
- This initiative is very important to the County.
- We are currently working on a sustainability statement because we want every business to improve.
- We are slightly ahead of schedule regarding the food hub. There will be a few options in this area.

- This initiative is very important to Wicklow as a county.

Vibeke Delahunt referred to the question asked about accreditation and stated that the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) works with a lot of food producers in Wicklow and has a lot of background knowledge on food producers. She added that if a bogus food producer were to sign up it would be flagged.

It was then agreed to take ITEMS 5 & 6 together.

ITEM 5

UPDATE: (a) LECP Process

A report on the LECP process was circulated to the members and Christine Flood gave an update on same.

LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN (LECP)

Vision

Our Vision is for a County which provides a high quality of life and well-being for all; values socially inclusive urban and rural communities; is driven by a dynamic and innovative economy; promotes and prioritises sustainable development and protects and enhances the County's unique and rich natural and cultural heritage

Ten High Level Goals

1. Develop community capacity in disadvantaged communities and engage in urban regeneration and rural development
2. Promote active citizenship and public participation to improve governance, participation and enrich decision making
3. Develop high quality integrated services available to all communities, in particular, disadvantaged communities and vulnerable groups
4. Develop a vibrant and Innovative Community and Social Enterprise Sector
5. Address access to education and training to increase life opportunities for all
6. Develop infrastructure and measures that are positive and supportive to investment, enterprise, innovation and knowledge creation in strategic locations
7. Sustain existing enterprise and develop quality employment and income opportunities for the wide range of employment needs in the County, with possibilities for reversing commuting patterns
8. Capitalise on Wicklow's unique attributes and proximity to the Dublin market, excellent quality of life, human capital, tourism, landscape, marine, agricultural and forestry resources

9. Support a shift towards low carbon and climate change resilient economic activity, reducing energy dependence, promoting the sustainable use of resources and leading in the Smart Green Economy
10. Harness efficiently the full resources of the County and promote interagency collaboration

The Economic Development and Enterprise Support team are primarily engaged in the delivery of goals 6 to 8 and are working with our colleagues Community Cultural and Social Development on some of the other objectives e.g Goal 1 urban and rural regeneration. Many of the economic actions in the LECP are from the County Wicklow Economic Think Tank Action Plan (CWETT)

There is quite a lot of cross over and collaboration on projects such as urban and rural regeneration, the food and beverage strategy, tourism related activities such as greenways and trails and outdoor recreation

There are over 100 actions listed in the LECP to date we have finalised 34 of these, 41 are ongoing and 27 are outstanding.

Deirdre Whitfield added that the LECP review was due to take place half way through the 2016 – 2022 plan but because we were awaiting for the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy to come on line it was too late to carry out a review then. She added that once guidelines have been issued this can commence within a couple of months. She also stated that the information will be based on the 2016 census data because the next census will not be done in time for the new plan.

UPDATE: (b) RRDF and URDF applications being prepared.

RURAL AND URBAN REGENERATION DEVELOPMENT FUND GRANT APPLICATIONS

RRDF Category 2 applications have been submitted in respect of:

- Blessington – urban regeneration centred around development of the square and linkages to the proposed inner relief road and the greenway.
- Newtownmountkennedy to develop design solutions for the regeneration of Newtownmountkennedy, enhancing its public realm and infrastructure provision and to drive increased footfall thus regenerating business in the town.

- Rathdrum development of a community enterprise centre, regeneration of the town core bringing underused town centre land into productive use

Climate Action

Applications have been submitted in respect of Wicklow and Arklow Harbours aimed at ensuring that both harbours can benefit from development of the offshore wind energy industry.

Urban Regeneration

Projects will be submitted in respect of:

- Bray harbour and link to the Dart /public transport bridge
- Regeneration of Wicklow Harbour
- Arklow – Regeneration of Arklow Harbour and Development of the Pottery Museum.

ITEM 6

County Wicklow Economic Think Tank (CWETT): Implementation stage

Development of the Florentine Centre (Bray Town Centre)

Practical completion on the Bray Town Centre development was anticipated in June 2020 and it is anticipated that it will open in autumn 2020. The developers are currently working with the property agents, Savills, and there are a number of tenants of whom they are at legal stages with. A website on the new Bray Town Centre development will be launched very soon and when it is the link will be circulated.

Ms. Ruth Donnelly expressed concern in relation to any proposal that would be in competition with existing bowling/leisure Centre.

TOURISM

Wicklow Tourism Alliance has been established and a number of working groups have been formed to roll out Wicklow's Tourism Strategy and Marketing Plan.

- Accommodation
- Towns as Visitor Hubs
- Thematic Experiences
- Marketing /Developing a common narrative
- Glendalough

Accommodation

Failte Ireland had engaged Crowe Consultants to examine accommodation availability and demand across a number of Counties – this will be used as the basis of a toolkit aimed at attracting investment into Wicklow. There is an undersupply of approximately 200 hotel rooms in the County.

Glendalough

Wicklow County Council is also working with Failte Ireland, the OPW and the NPWS to develop Visitor Experience & Orientation Masterplan for Glendalough and Wicklow Mountains National Park and a Visitor Orientation Plan for County Wicklow.

Tender documents are being prepared with a view to engaging suitably qualified consultants. This project is funded by Failte Ireland.

Tracks and Trails

Wicklow engaged the producers of Tracks and Trails to redevelop some of the existing programmes for use on the website and social media and to develop to shorter tracks and trails aimed at internet viewers, airlines as well as traditional media. The new trails include the Bray Head to Sugarloaf Trail and the Tinahely Looped Walk the presented is Pól O' Conghaile.

The videos will be launched on 2nd April 2020 at Belmont Demesne.

Maritime

The Strategic Review is at the core of the applications for climate action and URDF funding. Wicklow County Council has also supported applications for Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) Funding in respect of the NORRI and in respect of a Wreck Fishing Proposal

Native Oyster Reef Restoration Ireland (NORRI)

Background

Work on the Native Oyster Reef Restoration Ireland (NORRI) project continued through the second half of 2019. Background literature research on issues concerning site assessment selection, hydrodynamic factors, data processing and modeling, and other factors concerning European flat oyster (*Ostreae edulis*) and habitat restoration efforts were ongoing, largely as part of the academic work of the key project personnel.

Research and Literature Review

Although low-level research has been ongoing, this work has now been stepped up, largely focusing on the practical issues of site selection, seed supply disease control and substrate type that will be the primary focus of the upcoming workshop (see below). The workshop will be an extremely important gathering discussing the science and best practice of oyster and related marine habitat restoration as it applies to the specific conditions of Wicklow's coastal waters, and it is important not to duplicate work that has already been done by NORA and other oyster and marine ecological restoration research and projects. Therefore, at the core of the research to date is the identification of specific and practical questions that need to be answered for the successful implementation of the Phase 2 pilot project and research.

In addition, two particular areas of interest that have been identified are (1) the importance of kelp forest restoration as part of the overall oyster habitat restoration, and (2) the potential use of electromagnetic technology in disease control.

Workshop/Conference Organisation

The workshop/conference will be held in the Arklow Bay Hotel on March 30th and 31st, 2020. The conference facilities, delegate accommodation and catering have been booked and the event will include a social welcoming evening on March 29th, followed by a full day of presentations and discussions on March 30th and a half day on March 31st. While the workshop/conference will be for invited delegates only, a public event will be held on the evening of March 30th

The detailed agenda for the workshop / conference, informed by the research described above, will be finalised over the next week or two.

Food and Beverage Strategy

A report the Food Strategy was presented earlier by Jonathan Birnie.

The following questions were asked in response to the reports read out by Ms. Christine Flood:

- Regarding tourism and the undersupply of 200 hotel rooms, have any sites been identified where decent sized hotels could be built and is the Council actively looking for investors?
- Is Air B&B accommodation also taken into consideration as part of the undersupply of 200 rooms?
- Is there a timeline for all of this?

- Can the land that is available in Greystones on the Mill Road be fast tracked for hotel use?

ITEM 7

Update: Proposed Blessington Greenway Project

Ms. Deirdre Whitfield advised of the up to date position on relation to the Blessington Greenway and that she would have a more detailed report for the next SPC.

ITEM 8

Update: Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

Ms. Deirdre Whitfield, CCSD, updated the committee in the following areas and circulated supporting report set out below:-

The Annual Report for 2019 for the LCDC is being prepared at present. The key points are:

Meetings

Eight LCDC meetings took place in 2019: 20/02/2019; 20/03/2019; 17/04/2019; 15/05/2019; 03/07/2019; 24/07/2019; 16/10/2019; 10/12/2019

Progress of the LCDC in 2019

The LCDC work plan consisted of four key areas in 2019. Progress in these areas is outlined below.

Goal 1: Develop community capacity in Disadvantaged Communities and engage in urban and rural regeneration and rural development

- **Build capacity and social capital across all communities**
- **Maximise opportunities for urban regeneration and rural development**

A number of programmes contribute to the achievement of this goal. The LEADER and SICAP Programmes are central to this – see separate reports on both. In addition a number of funding schemes were announced by the Department of Rural and Community Development:

- Town & Village Scheme
- CLAR
- Outdoor Recreation Scheme

- Urban Regeneration & Development Fund
- Rural Regeneration & Development Fund
- Community Enhancement Scheme

Rural Regeneration and Development Fund 2019

Area	Overview of Proposal	Funding Awarded
Baltinglass	Restoration of the Courthouse reuse as a library/Heritage and Digi-hub with outdoor event space Public Realm enhancement, parking improvement, pedestrian crossings, ramps, boardwalk and riverside fencing	€2.7mn (total cost €3,566,968)

This project is ongoing. The tenders have been received and assessed for the design phase.

Rural Regeneration and Development Fund 2020

Applications submitted to RRDF Category 2 – Funding for Design Stage and land purchase costs to bring projects to the stage where they are ‘shovel ready’.

Area	Overview of Proposal
Newtownmountkennedy	Public realm works and community amenities
Blessington	Public realm works and e-hub
Rathdrum	Public realm works and community amenities

Town & Village Scheme 2019

Area	Overview of Proposal	Funding awarded
Redcross	Streetscape works	€80,000
Aughrim	Recreational amenity	€95,600
Dunlavin	Healthcheck plus public realm works	€20,973
Coolkenno	Public lights and rails	€24,000
Delgany	Community plan	€29,600

CLAR 2019 - The following three projects were approved for funding by DRCD

Area	Overview of Proposal	Funding awarded
Knockananna	Footpaths	€50,000
Knockananna	Sensory Garden	€34,000
Rathcoyle	Multi-Use Games Area	€50,000

Outdoor Recreation 2019

Area	Overview	Funding Sought
Measure 1		
Funded		
Co. Wicklow	Long distance Walks Video	€14,720
Co. Wicklow	Donard Glens Walking Trail	€7,200
Co. Wicklow	Wicklow Way Infrastructure Upgrade	€20,000
Co. Wicklow	Knockananna Walking Loop	€7,840
Co. Wicklow	Baltinglass Cycling Trails	€8,800
Measure 2		
North Wicklow	North Wicklow Trails Network Development	€190,700

The implementation of the 2018 Schemes continued

Funding Schemes 2018	Funding Received 2018
Town & Village Scheme	€518,005
CLAR	€130,590
Outdoor Recreation Scheme	€438,000
Urban Regeneration & Development Fund	€6,700,000
Community Enhancement Scheme	€250,530
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Men's Shed Scheme 	€17,391
Total	€8,054,516

Workshops will be held in the county to promote the funding schemes among communities.

Goal 2

Goal 2: Promote active citizenship underpinned by good governance and participation in decision making

- **Develop strong representative for a in the county**

Continued support both staff time and financial to the major civic for a:

- Comhairle na nÓg
- Older Persons Council
- PPN – Public Participation Network

Goal 3: Develop high quality integrated services, available to all communities, in particular, disadvantaged communities and vulnerable groups

- **The LCDC will provide the strategic direction for the integration of existing services**
- **The LCDC will provide representation for additional services and resources where gaps are identified or where new issues arise**

2019 / 2020 Priorities

Strategy	Status
Healthy Wicklow Strategy	The Healthy Wicklow Strategy was launched on 4 th March 2019. It is being implemented through the Healthy Wicklow Programme 2019 – 2021.
County Wicklow Food & Beverage Strategy	The County Wicklow Food and Beverage Strategy was launched at a food showcase event, the ‘Feast from the East’. The Wicklow Brand has been developed. Company contracted to implement the strategy.
County Wicklow Migrant Integration Strategy	Consultant has recently been appointed to develop this strategy.

The Healthy Wicklow Strategy 2018 – 2021

The Healthy Wicklow Strategy was launched in March 2019, outlining the strategic priorities that will guide the agencies in County Wicklow in achieving a healthier population.

Goal 1: Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life

Goal 2: Reduce health inequalities

Goal 3: Protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing

Goal 4: Create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland

Healthy Wicklow Programme 2019 – 2021

- HI Coordinator
- Healthy Town Initiative
- Social Prescribing – Bray Area Partnership
- Meet and Eat

- Fostering Health and Wellbeing for Families
- Supporting Traveller Males to engage in Sporting activities
- Community Kitchen – Healthy Families Programme (Travelling Community)
- Health & Wellbeing programme – Bray area DEIS schools
- Physical Activity 4 All (Disadvantaged and Marginalised Communities)
- Teenage and Young people Urban Outdoor Recreation Initiative
- Community engagement
- Mental Health Programmes

Goal 4

Goal 4: A vibrant and innovative community and social enterprise sector

The National Social Enterprise Strategy was launched by DRCD in July 2019. It focuses on

- Building awareness
- Growing and strengthening social enterprises
- Achieving better policy alignment

This reflects the themes that emerged in the County Wicklow Social Enterprise Strategy, following which, supports for social enterprises in the county have been put in place. The County Wicklow Social Enterprise Strategy was launched by County Wicklow Partnership in 2019.

This concluded Ms. Whitfield’s report.

The following questions were then raised:

- Is County Wicklow Partnership’s funding complete as of last December and then is it a 4 year programme again?
- Arklow Municipal District was seeking funding to repair the Sea Walk in Arklow because it was badly damaged during a storm. They were refused funding but we would consider that a tourism area. Is there anywhere else that funding could be sourced?

Deirdre Whitfield addressed the questions raised:

- County Wicklow Partnership's still have funding, with the programme running until the end of 2020. Then there will be a consolidation year, a year to prepare a new plan and then a new programme.
- The Outdoor Recreation Scheme 2020 should be coming up soon. Funding for the Sea Walk in Arklow could be resubmitted under this.

Item 9:

Update: Wicklow County Campus: EI Funding Application.

Ms. Vibeke Delahunt informed the meeting that funding was granted for €1.4m in January by EI and we are now awaiting the Letter of Offer. She added that the Part 8 planning was granted on 3rd February 2020 with the next steps to be the publication of the Site Clearance Tender and the construction tender, to follow later.

Update: Film Actions

Ms. Vibeke Delahunt informed the meeting that Wicklow County Council are ready to circulate a request for quotation for a Film Development Strategy which includes a feasibility study for the Enterprise Hub, attracting FDI, supports for the indigenous sector, development of screen induced tourism and strategy of developmental supports of local screen creators as art practitioners.

Item 10

Correspondence

No correspondence received noted by the committee.

Next meeting: It was agreed that the next meeting of the EDES SPC will take place on Monday the 22nd June, 2020 at 10.00 a.m.

Due to the ongoing refurbishment work being carried out in County Buildings a venue will be decided at a later date and all members will be notified accordingly.

Signed:

Cllr. Gerry Walsh
Chair
Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC

Date
