

Minutes of meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC meeting held on Monday 9th December, 2019 in the Board Room, Clermont House, Wicklow County Campus, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow.

Present : Councillor Gerry Walsh Chair
Councillor Mary Kavanagh
Councillor Tom Fortune
Mr. Michael Allen
Mr. Michael Ryan
Mr. Chris Fox
Councillor Avril Cronin
Councillor Pat Kennedy
Mr. Kilian McGreal

In Attendance: Mr. Tom Murphy, Director of Services
Ms. Lorraine Gallagher, Senior Executive Officer
Ms. Christine Flood, Senior Executive Officer
Ms. Vibeke Delahunt, Head of Enterprise
Ms. Susan Nichols, Administrative Officer
Ms. Deirdre Whitfield
Mr. Conor Sweeney, Programme Manager, Mid East Regional Action Plan

Apologies Mr. Huw O Toole
Councillor Irene Winters
Ms. Ruth Donnelly

Welcome

At the outset of the meeting the Chair welcomed Mr. Chris Fox to the meeting representing the IFA.

ITEM 1

Minutes of meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC held on Monday 21st October, 2019 (copy circulated).

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Walsh, seconded by Cllr. M. Kavanagh, the minutes of SPC meeting held on Monday the 21st October, 2019 as circulated were agreed.

ITEM2

Matters arising

There were no matters arising which would not be covered under the agenda.

Item 3

Update: Mid East Regional Enterprise Plan

Mr. Conor Sweeney, Programme Manager, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow gave the background to the establishment of the Mid East Regional Enterprise Plan, the strategic objectives contained therein and how the Plan translates national policy into local impact.

He presented to the committee outlining the work undertaken in the following areas:-

- Role of the Mid East Enterprise Plan Steering Committee
- Stakeholders
- Strategic Objectives – Mid East Regional Enterprise Action Plan 2020
- Highlights – 2019
- Developing the Mid-East as a hub for the screen content creation sector
- Developing a network of innovative co-working spaces
- Building an ecosystem framework to support the agri food sector in the Boyne Valley
- Ensuring the availability of skills and talent to realise the region's future economic potential and address upskilling requirements.

It was agreed to take item 9

Update: Wicklow County Campus: EI Funding

Ms. Vibeke Delahunt updated the Committee on the Council's application under the EI Fund for the development of a Content Creation Hub at the Courtyard and responded to the queries raised. The committee were advised that the Council has submitted an application for Regional Enterprise Development Funding for the Development of a Screen Content Enterprise Hub at Wicklow County Campus. This will feature refurbishment of part of the existing Courtyard buildings, a new 2 storey building, refurbishment of the 2nd floor of the main building into high end private office space refurbishment of the Chapel to provide high tech meeting/ conference/ sound recording and screening facility.

The proposed development of the Hub is in response to the demand for content creation arising out of the growth of streaming and new forms of media consumption. The Hub will develop the potential of entrepreneurs, emerging and established businesses. Support growth and internationalisation of established businesses. Liaise with the various colleges and training agencies to ensure a skilled workforce. A pitch was made to on the 22nd of October, last and the Chief Executive and officials were accompanied by industry experts Ms. Suin Ni Raghallaigh, Mr. Morgan O Sullivan. The total cost of the project is €3m including salaries and overheads for a 3 year period and grand aid of €1.9m is sought leaving a balance of some €1.1m. Ms. Delahunt advised that the statutory Planning consultation process had commenced and that the drawings are on public display. She advised that the funding announcement is expected on the 23rd of December next.

Rondo Food, Arklow: Prior to proceeding with the agenda the Chair advised that Mr. Michael Ryan, Union Representative on the SPC wanted to raise the issue of Rondo Foods Arklow. Mr. Ryan advised that Rondo Foods had announced that they were shutting down

operations with the resultant loss of 157 jobs in the Arklow Area and that the company had declined an invitation to proceed to the LRC. He asked if the SPC had further information in relation to this matter and if anything could be done. The committee was advised that the Chief Executive of the Council had contacted the CEO of the company and offered whatever supports the Council can offer, Ms. C. Flood had also reached out separately to the general manager of the company. Ms. V. Delahunt advised that the Department of Social Welfare were holding an information day on Monday the 16th of December, in the Arklow Bay and that the Local Enterprise Office would be there to give advice on supports that may be available to people who might want to start their own business.

Item 4: Update LECP Process

Mr. T. Murphy, Director of Services advised that the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) was adopted in 2016, that it contained 10 high level goals, 21 objectives and 142 local actions. He advised that the implementing and monitoring role was carried out by an advisory committee chaired jointly by the Chair of the LCDC Councillor Pat Kennedy and the Chair of the EDES SPC, Councillor Gerry Walsh. He advised that there was a lot of progress in rolling out the actions under Tourism, Maritime, Retail and Branding, which would be covered in the update on the CWETT.

In relation to the IDA lands in Greystones, Mr. T. Murphy advised that the Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council had met with the CEO of the IDA Mr. Martin Shanahan and that it was understood that the IDA are at an advanced stage of negotiations with a party in relation to the sale of the land bank and that a planning application may be lodged in early 2020. He advised that this land is adjacent to the Council 12 acre land back in Greystones incorporating the site of the old sewage treatment works and the park and ride, and civic offices which the Council hopes to put to the market in 2020 for development.

Item 5

County Wicklow Economic Think Tank (CWETT): Implementation Stage

Ms. C. Flood updated the committee the committee on the implementation of CWETT and circulated the following report:-

Report to the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC 9th December, 2019

FILM

Wicklow County Council has submitted an application for Regional Enterprise Development Funding for the Development of a Screen Content Enterprise Hub at Wicklow County Campus. This will feature refurbishment of part of the existing Courtyard buildings, a new 2 storey building, refurbishment of the 2nd floor of the main building into high end private office space refurbishment of the Chapel to provide high tech meeting/ conference/ sound recording and screening facility .

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The Council has appointed Bluett and O'Donohoe Architects to prepare the Part 8 application and to develop the plans for the Hub, this will be put before the elected members late 2019/early 2020.

RETAIL

Progression of the Florentine Project .

Work continues on the Florentine Site. Due to a number of factors; weather, complexity of the steelwork, and the façade, practical completion has been delayed. A revised timetable will be made available to the project team early in January. The developer is at an advanced stage of negotiation with the main anchor tenants and a number of the smaller tenants.

This directorate is working with the Town Teams to develop a retail event in Q2 2020 aimed at promoting retail in the County.

TOWN TEAMS

Arklow

- Flower baskets
- Town Centre Health Check
- Destination Town Audit
- Design and Development of Parade Ground/ business hub
- Ronnie Delaney Commemorative Statue
- Halloween spooktakular
- CCTV
- Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway
- Shop Front Painting Scheme
- Applying for charitable status
- Considering Purple Flag application

Blessington

The Town Team was built on the success in being selected as Leinster's Most Enterprising Town in 2017.

Collaboration between Blessington Forum and WCC Blessington MD "Health Check" which will lead to a Vision Statement and Action Plan.

Community CCTV

Working Groups

- Blessington Greenway and Tourism
- Public Realm and Tidy Towns
- Planning and Infrastructure
- Healthy Blessington
- Business

- Culture and Heritage

Bray

Built on the success of the Purple Flag Team achieving accreditation for Town Centres offering improved evening /night time environment -

Bray participated in an Age Friendly Business Recognition Programme

Produced a guide to doing business in Bray

Has applied for Failte Ireland Destination Town Funding

Working on a Town Centre Health Check

Greystones 2020

Greystones 2020 was Initiated by local business leaders

- Christmas Lights/Festival
- Greystones Train Station – plans to landscape the exterior and both platforms and to exhibit portraits of famous Greystones residents
- A New Website for Greystones
- Public Realm Plan

Wicklow

Established following the “Kickstart Wicklow”

- Improvement of public realm
- Town Centre Health Check
- Working to develop a Digital hub to attract start up businesses to Wicklow.
- Proposals to develop a Greenway/Blueway from Greystones to Wicklow.
- Development of a park and ride facility close to the M11 aimed at reducing commuting times.
- Development of a high quality heritage trail – Leader Funding secured
- Online retail survey /retail plan for the town
- Parking survey

Enterprising Towns

Ashford and Rathdrum entered in to the Bank of Ireland Enterprise Town Awards judging took place on 30th September. The communities of both towns got together and with the support of Wicklow County Council showcased their towns, their community, local businesses and the unique features of their areas. At the National Enterprise Town Awards in Kilkenny, Rathdrum was awarded Regional Runner up (Under 2,000 population)

URDF Funding

In 2018 Wicklow applied for funding for 9 projects under the Urban Regional Development Fund
The following projects were awarded funding in the first round

Arklow Historic Town Core	€1,645,000
Wicklow Library and Fitzwilliam Square	€1,626,000

Bray Public Transport Bridge

€3,450,000

Additional Funding has been awarded for the Wicklow Town project following submission of revised costings.

RRDF Funding

Applications were submitted for projects worth over €10 million for Glendalough, Baltinglass and Blessington Greenway

Wicklow County Council was successful in securing funding of €2.675million for Baltinglass, which will be match funded by Wicklow County Council to bring the overall fund to €3.5 million. Proposed works include public realm enhancements, traffic management measures, lighting and paving as well as the refurbishment of the Courthouse as a Library space, Digihub and Heritage Exhibition which will form the jumping off point for the development of Baltinglass as a Smart Town.

TOURISM

Wicklow Tourism and Bray Tourism Staff are now employed by Wicklow County Council. 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

Wicklow is awaiting a report on accommodation by Crowe Howarth commissioned by Failte Ireland.

MARITIME

The blue economy is an important pillar of Wicklow's economic development strategy. With this in mind WCC engaged Gavin Doherty Geosolutions to carry out a Maritime Strategic Review. The purpose of the review is to :

- Identify maritime issues which have a remit in spatial / land use planning to allow better planning and management of the coastal / maritime area.
- The Wicklow Maritime Strategic Review will help WCC integrate planning policy and strategy.
- Provide WCC 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.

Strategic recommendations include:

- Designate Offshore Wind Development as a key priority
- Investigate the feasibility of a new harbor at Wicklow
- Given the potential opportunities in aquaculture provision of soft and hard supports for aquaculture to be considered.
- Develop opportunities for marine tourism

Interest in the development of Offshore wind Farms is increasing there are potentially 4 offshore wind farms at various stages of planning off the Wicklow Coast starting with the Dublin Array (Bray), the Codling (Greystones) The Arklow Bank (Arklow) and Kilmichael

(North Wexford/Arklow) The Maritime Business Development Group has formed a sub committee to examine ways to ensure that Wicklow is well placed to benefit from these developments in terms of investment, training and jobs.

Aquaculture

The Maritime Business Development Group has formed an aquaculture sub group with a view to reinvigorating aquaculture off our coast. WCC has been awarded FLAG funding towards investigating the feasibility of redeveloping Wicklow’s oyster banks and is working with a local company in this regard.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE STRATEGY

Wicklow County Council in conjunction with County Wicklow Partnership successfully applied for Leader funding for the implementation of the Food and Beverage Strategy. Jonathan Birnie Associates have been appointed to work with the Food and Beverage Steering Group to implement the F&B Strategy. One of the key tasks under action 5 - Business Supports will be to develop a feasibility study for the development of a Food Hub.

The Food Strategy group have developed a new Food and beverage brand which will be launched early in the new year along with a dedicated website and supporting social media

Ms. Flood also circulated the Maritime Strategic Review for County Wicklow carried out by Gavin & Doherty Geosolutions which was noted by the committee.

Item 6

Update: Proposed Blessington Greenway Project

The committee noted that the Blessington Greenway has been approved grant aid of €5m, the balance to be match funded and that other avenues of grant aid will be explored. Mr. Killian McGreal advised that additional work will need to be carried out on the economic development of the greenway in terms of developing a strategy and that the Council as lead agency will need to keep the communication going with stakeholders.

It was agreed to take Item 7 and 8

Item 7: Update Local Community Development Committee

Item 8: Town and Village renewal scheme.

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

Goal 1: Develop community capacity in disadvantaged communities and engage in urban and rural regeneration

Rural Regeneration Development Fund 2019

Area	Overview of Proposal	Project Cost
Baltinglass	Restoration of the Courthouse reuse as a library/Heritage and Digi-hub with outdoor event space Public Realm enhancement, parking improvement, pedestrian	€3,566,968

	crossings, ramps, boardwalk and riverside fencing	
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Town & Village Scheme 2019

Area	Overview of Proposal	Funding awarded
FUNDED		
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 - Awaiting Decision on Measure 2 and 3

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	Maintenance and Upgrade	€20,000
Co. Wicklow	Knockananna Walking Loop	€7,840
Co. Wicklow	Baltinglass Cycling Trails	€8,800

Goal 2: Promote Active Citizenship and Public Participation to improve governance, participation and enrich decision making

Age Friendly:

On the 13th November Arklow became County Wicklow's first Age Friendly town. In order to achieve this status there was a commitment made to action items from the walkability survey which took place and these actions included new age friendly car spaces, extra pedestrian crossings and new benches installed were age friendly (with backs and arm rests).

Forty one businesses signed commitments to be more Age Friendly and each noted three actions which they would take to be more age friendly. A number of consultations took place with some of the older people and the results compiled into a report which was presented to the Arklow Municipal District Council meeting on the 13th November. Age friendly circus workshops took place in Arklow to mark the occasion and to show how it is never too late to learn a new skill. The journey

to an Age Friendly Wicklow has begun so here's to an exciting new chapter of Age Friendly in Wicklow.

Comhairle na nÓg:

Wicklow Comhairle na nÓg were well represented at Dáil na nÓg which took place at Leinster House on the 23rd November 2019. It was held in Leinster House as a tribute to mark 100 years of democracy. The topic for this year's incoming executive will be Climate Change.

Wicklow Comhairle na nÓg gave a presentation at the full Council on the 2nd December and they were very well received. The drugs awareness survey will be distributed around Wicklow and the aim is to have a survey of at least 1000 and the information returned will be collated and form a basis for any relevant stakeholders.

PPN:

Have raised awareness of:

- Climate Action Training
- The Review of the County Development Plan
- JPC public meeting
- Dept Transport Tourism & Sport public consultation on Sustainable Mobility Policy
- Review of the National Disability Strategy
- EPA Stop Food Waste Campaign

They recently held a seminar on 'Let's Talk About Housing' in the Taylor Centre in Bray.

The PPN are holding their end of Year Members Meeting on 4th December Brockagh

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

1. Healthy Wicklow Strategy

Round 3 of Programme submitted and awaiting approval. Recruitment of Co-ordinator underway

2. Co. Wicklow Food & Beverage Strategy.

The Branding process for County Wicklow is completed. The implementation partners for the strategy have been contracted. Subgroups have been established to begin the work of implementation.

3. Digital Strategy – has been adopted by Wicklow County Council

4. Migrant Integration Strategy

The procurement process is underway for a consultant to develop the Migrant Integration Strategy for the County.

Goal 4: Develop a vibrant and innovative community and social enterprise sector
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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. A funding scheme is running at present.

Nationally, supports have also been put in place through the Dormant Accounts Fund. Both County Wicklow Partnership and Bray Area Partnership have applied for funding to run training and mentoring programmes for social enterprises.

Ms. Whitfield also circulated an information sheet in relation to the LEADER/Rural Development Programme and the grants awarded.

Item 9:

Update: Wicklow County Campus: EI Funding Application.

Update on this item given under item 3 above.

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 9th of March, 2020 at 10.00 a.m. in Wicklow County Campus

Signed:

Cllr. Gerry Walsh
Chair
Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC

Date
