

**Minutes of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC
Meeting held on Monday 11th September, 2023
Boardroom, Clermont Campus, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow @ 10am.**

Present: Cllr. Tom Fortune (TF)
Cllr. Avril Cronin (AC)
Cllr. Mary Kavanagh (MK)
Cllr. Gerry Walsh (GW)
Cllr. Irene Winters (IW)
Mr. Huw O'Toole (HO'T)

In Attendance: Ms. Lorraine Gallagher (LG)
Ms. Vibeke Delahunt (VD)
Ms. Susan Nichols (SN)
Mr. John Powderly (JP)
Ms. Deirdre Whitfield (DW)
Ms. Margaret Cullen (MC)
Ms. Patrice O'Toole (P.O'T)

From KPMG: Dr. Cristina Bucur

Apologies: Cllr. Pat Kennedy (PK)
Mr. Jim Wood (JW)
Mr. Killian McGreal (K.McG)
Mr. Christopher Fox (CF)
Ms. Emer O'Gorman (E.O'G)
Ms. Caroline Cullimore (CC)

ITEM 1

Update by KPMG on the Draft Wicklow Skills Strategy 2023-2030 – In Person (Presentation circulated prior to the meeting)

Cllr. Fortune welcomed Dr. Bucur from KPMG who gave an update on the Draft Wicklow Skills Strategy. Dr. Bucur started with a project overview and work stages and answered questions asked.

She advised that the aim of the project is to ensure that there will be adequate supply of skilled labour available in Wicklow over the coming years to maximise potential growth in the key areas of film, food and renewable energy.

Dr. Bucur further advised that stakeholder engagement was sought from the Business Community, the Workforce and the Education Providers and included an Online Survey, Roundtable discussions and Interviews. The results of the 63 businesses surveyed represented half of the four economic sectors and more than ¾ of the companies reported skills shortages in their workforce. Some of the factors driving skills shortages were a lack of experienced workers with key required skills, a lack of education or training opportunities to up-skill in key areas and a lack of information available on the opportunities and benefits of a career within the sector.

It is anticipated that a draft of the plan will be available in October and a final strategy submitted by the end of the year with a launch of the Skills Strategy expected to take place in early 2024.

Cllr. Cronin agreed to send contact details for the West Wicklow Business Network so that they can contribute to the Strategy.

Before finishing Dr. Bucur advised that she would deal with any questions emailed to her and update at the next meeting. She thanked the SPC Members for all their feedback.

ITEM 2

Minutes of meeting of the Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC held on Monday 19th June, 2023

The minutes of the EDES SPC which took place on Monday 19th June, 2023 were proposed by Cllr. Cronin and seconded by Huw O'Toole.

ITEM 3

Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes

ITEM 4

Receive an update on the preparation of the Local Economic and Community Plan (Report circulated prior to the meeting)

DW delivered an update on the preparation of the Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2029 and answered all questions. She advised that the Plan has been adopted by the Eastern Midland Assembly with a number of recommendations. The Plan is currently at the implementation stage and still a work-in-progress. The Implementation Plan will be reviewed every 2 years.

TF said that the report which circulated prior to the meeting could be taken as read and invited members to ask questions.

ITEM 5

To receive and consider update on – Reports circulated prior to the meeting)

- **LECP: LCDC and Community Activities**
- **LECP: Economic Activities**

The reports which had been circulated in advance of the meeting were taken as read.

DW gave the following updates from the Town Regeneration Office:

- **Town Teams:**
 - Work has begun on the establishment of a Town Team in Bray and a consultant has been engaged;
 - A Networking Event for the Town Teams is due to take place on 23rd September, 2023 in the Brockagh Centre, Laragh covering Public Realm, Place making etc.
 - Updates were given in respect to the activities undertaken by the Wicklow, Arklow and Greystones Town Team;
- **Blessington Town Plan** – consultants have been engaged to develop a plan taking in the public realm, place making etc. It is envisaged the plan will be complete in Q4 of 2023. A survey is underway for feedback on what Blessington see and want for their town. A soft launch took place on Thursday 7th in Blessington;
- **Town and Village funding announcement** – the minimum grant available is €20,000 and the maximum is €500,000 (for one application) and €250,000 (for 4 applications);
- **The closing date for expressions of interest under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme is Monday 2nd October, 2023;**
- **URDF (population over 10,000)** - Two properties in Wicklow and two properties in Arklow have been selected to go forward under the URDF funding;

- **RRDF** (population under 10,000) – DW gave an update on the Baltinglass Courthouse and the Newtownmountkennedy projects.

SN gave the following updates from the Economic Development Office:

- **Tourism** – a recent meeting took place with Failte Ireland in respect of the Destination Experience Development Plan for County Wicklow. The next big event taking place in Wicklow is the Eco-Trail which attracts runners from all over the world.
- **Abbey Grounds** – it is expected that work on the Abbey Grounds will commence this month.
- **Glendalough** – a meeting is taking place this month. The project team are exploring options for partnership in the delivery of the masterplan for Glendalough.
- **Wicklow County Campus** – MOLA Architects are working closely with the project team and expect to have a Masterplan in place before the end of the year.
- **Special Projects:**
 - The Enterprise Centre in Greystones is currently been transferred from Cairn to Wicklow County Council.
 - The Closing date for the Request for Quotations in respect of the former Bank of Ireland building in Carnew has been extended.
 - The issue with the title of lands to be transferred to the HSE for a Primary Care Centre is been handled by the Registration Authority.
 - A Request for Quotation has issued in respect of a Remote Working Strategic Marketing Plan for County Wicklow and will close on the 20th September, 2023.
- **Offshore Renewable Energy** – continued engagement is taking place with the Offshore Renewable Energy companies.
- **Skills Strategy** – KPMG have been awarded the contract and the public consultation stage is nearing an end seeking employer, employees and education providers views on what skills and / or skills shortages exist in County Wicklow. KPMG are updating the SPC on an ongoing basis.
- **Food and Beverage** – An Action Plan has been drafted and will be brought to the next Wicklow Naturally meeting for feedback.
- **Regional Enterprise Innovation Scoping Scheme** – A suitable location for the food hub to be identified.

SN gave a brief update on the three Greenway projects – Blessington eGreenway, Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway and the Wicklow to Greystones Greenway.

ITEM 6

Report of Head of Enterprise, LEO supports – (Report circulated prior to the meeting)

VD highlighted the following items from her report:

- VD report a very busy summer dealing with funding and budgets;
- The Student Enterprise Programme will commence in September;
- Future courses to include Business IT Training Programme, Start Your Own Business , Digital Marketing Clinics, Costing and Pricing Strategy;
- A visit from a business delegation from Dublin, California who are twinned with Bray MD;
- Guest speakers at the National Women’s Enterprise Day are Elaine Geraghty, MD of Ardmore Studios and Anna Daly, award-winning TV presenter;
- Objective 1 (development of an agri-food hub) – The recruitment to appoint a Project Manager to oversee the priming of a Food Incubation and Innovation Centre failed. The funding came from the Regional Enterprise Innovation Scoping Scheme. It is hoped that the Campus Masterplan will identify a suitable location for the Food Hub.
- Objective 2 (development of a content creation enterprise hub) - the hub is 99% finished and 99% full, with two long term tenants and two production companies in situ. Minister

Coveney will officially open the hub on the 26th October. Eoin will be promoting/marketing the building during Q4 of 2023.

ITEM 7

Wicklow County Campus, Content Creation Hub update – (Report circulated prior to the meeting)

JP highlighted the following items from his report:

- 40 productions have taken place to-date with some large productions due to take place during the Autumn;
- Screen Wicklow has now added to the website;
- John is working closely with the Arts Office to organise a Film Bursary;
- Discussions are underway for the potential of developing an ETB Wind Turbine Technician Training Centre at Clermont;
- Masterplan for Clermont – MOLA are expected to deliver stage 3 of the plan in the next few weeks;
- Access spurs from the inner relief road have been agreed and Ardale Development are to incorporate these into the planning application;
- The Conservation Plan for Clermont is complete. The repair work to the roof is top priority.
- The biofuel heating system has been installed and commissioning is expected in the coming weeks;

ITEM 8

Correspondence

There was no correspondence for discussion.

AOB:

Staffing in Wicklow County Council

TF asked if there was staffing shortages in Wicklow County Council. LG explained the recruitment process and outlined how it can be difficult to fill temporary contracts. All recruitment competitions are advertised in newspapers, on the Website and Social Media.

EDES SPC Board Meetings


TF raised a question whether the EDES SPC Board met frequently enough. The Strategic Policy Committee Scheme advises that meetings should generally be held 4 times a year. The EDES SPC operates in line with this guidance.

ITEM 9

Set date and time for next meeting

TF confirmed the next meeting scheduled for 11th December, 2023 at 10 am.

Signed:



Cllr. Tom Fortune

Chair

Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC

Date.

11th Dec 2023