

Minutes of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC
Meeting held on Monday 27th February, 2023
Wurzburg Room, County Buildings, Wicklow @ 10am

Present: Cllr. Gerry Walsh (GW)
Mr. Huw O'Toole (HO'T)
Cllr. Irene Winters (IW)
Mr. Killian McGreal (KMcG)
Mr. Jim Wood (JW)

In Attendance: Ms. Vibeke Delahunt (VD)
Ms. Christine Flood (CF)
Ms. Lorraine Gallagher (LG)
Ms. Deirdre Whitfield (DW)
Mr. John Powderly (JP)
Dr. Kathy Walsh (KW)
Ms. Patrice O'Toole

Apologies: Cllr. Tom Fortune, Cllr. Avril Cronin, Cllr. Pat Kennedy, Mr. Christopher Fox, Cllr. Mary Kavanagh

In the absence of Cllr. Tom Fortune – Chair, Mr. Huw O'Toole proposed and Cllr. Winters seconded that Cllr. Gerry Walsh would Chair the meeting.

Cllr. Walsh welcomed everyone and started by sending condolences to Cllr. Fortune and his family on the sad passing of his wife Ann R.I.P.

Cllr. Walsh also extended condolences to Cllr. Kavanagh and her family on the death of her brother Myles R.I.P.

Cllr. Walsh welcomed Mr. Jim Wood to the board. Mr. Wood represents the Construction Industry Federation on the Board.

Finally, Cllr. Walsh welcomed Dr. Kathy Walsh from People and Place who was present to give a presentation on the preparation of the Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2029 (LECP).

ITEM 1

Minutes of meeting of the Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC held on Monday 12th December, 2022

The minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC held on Monday 12th December, 2022, as circulated were proposed by Cllr. Walsh and seconded by Mr. Huw O'Toole and agreed.

ITEM 2

Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes

ITEM 3

To receive update on the preparation of a Local Economic and Community, Plan and the Workshops held

KW attended with DW to give a presentation and update in respect of the preparation of the Local Economic and Community Plan and answered any questions raised.

The plan is for 6 years, 2023-2029 and includes 5 High Level Goals as follows:

- Health, Resilience and Well-Being
- Enterprise, Innovation and Creativity
- Climate Change
- A connected County and Equality
- Diversity and Just Transition

It was agreed that 'Climate Change' should become 'Climate Action' and that climate action should underpin all other goals.

Kathy outlined the elements of the LECP, i.e. Socio Economic Profile, Consultations and Policy Context – Connections with National, Regional and County Level Policies and Programmes. She went on to summarise the Wicklow Socio-Demographic Profile 2022 which includes:

1. Current Population and Population Change
2. Current Age Cohorts
3. Population Projections
4. Nationality and Diversity
5. Education – Attainment, Services and Costs
6. Economy – Employment and Unemployment levels, Business and Job Creation
7. Incomes – Household Disposable Income
8. Social Disadvantage – Pobal HP, EU SILC
9. Housing – Existing Stock, Tenure and Completions, Housing Affordability – Sales and Rental Prices
10. Health – General Health and Disability
11. Environment and Climate Action

The Socio-Demographic Profile 2022 is based on the 2016 census and the monitor is updated every three months by People and Place on behalf of Wicklow County Council. The profile contains very important data and shows how Wicklow compares to other counties. Kathy dealt with the SCOT (Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis facing County Wicklow. LG pointed out that not all strengths were included e.g. film, offshore energy etc. and advised that they all should be highlighted. Kathy agreed to circulate the SCOT analysis and would welcome any feedback and advice on items to be included.

Kathy further reported that a number of consultations had taken place both in person and online across a wide range of groups and the MD's. All relevant aspects of the National Policy Context

National and Regional Policy Context and County and Local Policy and Strategy had been considered and the following LECP Vision was developed

“Our vision is for a vibrant and sustainable County which provides a high quality of life and well-being for all; which values socially inclusive urban and rural communities; is driven by a dynamic and innovative economy’ promotes sustainable development and the rights of all; building on the County’s unique and rich natural and cultural heritage”

In short “A Vibrant and Sustainable Environment”.

At the end of the presentation KW said that she would welcome any feedback in respect of the Draft presented and it was expected that it would be ready for presentation to the council members on the 8th May.

KW and DW left the meeting to work on the LECP and the Chairman continued with the Agenda before the Board.

ITEM 4

To receive and consider update on

- **LECP: LCDC and Community Activities – This matter was dealt with at Item No. 3 above.**

- **LECP: Economic Activities – A Report circulated prior to the meeting**

CF delivered an update on the economic activities and answered any questions raised

- **Bray Central** – The transfer of title has taken place and an announcement was made that Penneys will be the Anchor Tenant.
- **Town Teams** – CF informed the Board that Deirdre Whitfield had been appointed as the Town Regeneration Officer and she gave a summary of events from the different Town Teams over the past number of months. CF confirmed that the €100,000 funding received from the Department of Community & Rural Development will be used to develop Masterplans for Blessington and Baltinglass. This will be supplemented by funding from WCC Procurement is hopeful in the next number of weeks. After the Blessington and Baltinglass Masterplans are developed, Newtownmountkennedy and then Rathdrum will follow. €1.1 million funding has been awarded by the Department in respect of developing Blessington in line with the RRDF proposal.
- **Tourism** – CF advised that a tender will publish soon to develop a new Tourism Strategy and Marketing Plan. She also summarised the activities of Wicklow Tourism over the last number of months and advised that Fred Verdier is engaging with Tourism Ireland to promote the Eco Trail and the prospect of introducing a new 8km route.
- **Glendalough Masterplan** – extensive periods of consultation had taken place between November 2022 and January 2023 which were very well attended and the consultants are dealing with the feedback.
- **Bray Outdoor Performance** – LG advised that numerous meetings have taken place and that the site is a challenging site but it is hoped that a pre-part 8 will be presented to the elected members shortly.
- **Abbey Grounds** – CF reported that the purchase of the site is complete and that human remains were discovered during an archaeological dig on the site. A further redesign will have to take place and the National Monuments Service will be consulted.

- **Rural and Urban Regeneration Development Fund - €1.1 million** funding has been awarded for the regeneration of the Blessington Town Centre and making Blessington Greenway Ready. A revised funding application has been submitted to the DRCD as the costings for the Baltinglass Gateway to Southwest Wicklow project came in well over budget. The Council's consultants have prepared a revised plan.
- **Urban Regeneration Development Fund** – the two live URDF projects are Bray Harbour and Bray Public Transport Bridge. A third round of funding has been announced. Local Authorities can apply for funding to regenerate vacant and derelict town centre properties. The Council will be able to build up a revolving fund for the development of a rolling programme to address long term vacancy and dereliction. The call for funding for the more traditional URDF projects is expected later in the year.
- **Bray Harbour** – CF report that the tender process for a detailed design is underway at present.
- **Offshore Renewable Energy** – Christine advised of the timeline for the Offshore Renewable Energy Support Scheme auction which commenced on 8th January and the results are expected on 21st June. The three projects expected to be eligible for contracts are, SSE Arklow Bank, Codling Windpark and Dublin Array. She further reported that the Community Benefit Fund Rulebook has been published and that the Local Authority could stand to benefit in the region of €12 million annually. Wicklow County Council's role will be to create community awareness of the funding and the best advice that could be given is for groups to have big projects in mind and be ready to go once the funding becomes available.
- **Land Management** – the acquisition of enterprise space in Greystones from Cairn is progressing. Christine advised that there may be REDF funding available. She further reported that a tender published to find a property consultant to take the 4.7 acres of land on Mill Road, Greystones adjacent to the media site and primary care centre to market to include a hotel, some residential and possibly commercial space.
- **Wicklow County Campus** – MOLA has been awarded the tender for the development of a Masterplan for Wicklow County Campus and it is hopeful to have the plan in place in the next 6 months.
- **Food and Beverage Strategy** – an application has been made to the Department of Agriculture for funding to support October Feast. A practical suggestion has been made that Wicklow could co-fund a Food Development Officer with another Local Authority. It was advised that there is a plan to share resources between Wicklow Naturally and Wicklow Tourism and that there is funding in the budget to appoint a Grade IV to support both areas. There was also a suggestion that under food poverty lands in the ownership of Wicklow County Council could be used for the provision of allotments.
- **Skills Taskforce** – CF advised that the Skills Taskforce is up and running. The request for tender for a Skills Audit Strategy closed and the applications will now be evaluated and the tender awarded – the audit and strategy are expected to be finalised in Q4 of 2023.

ITEM 5

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

VD delivered the following updates on the LEO and answered any questions raised:

- The appointment of Eoin Naughton as the new Manager has taken place
- 131 jobs were created in 2022 through LEO supports
- Local Enterprise Week will run from 6th – 10th March, culminating with a 'Go Green' event which will be held in the Glendalough Hotel. Bookings for any of the events can be made through the website
- The Student Awards are due to take place on campus on Thursday 2nd March
- Film & TV Crew Academy East in collaboration with Screen Ireland hosted an Employability Network event on Saturday 25th February, 2023 at Clermont. The event was aimed at

aspiring new entrants, return to work crew, and existing crew, who want to gain networking tools, learn networking skills, and build a network – it was very successful and attended by over 100 people.

- The construction company are expected to pull out mid-March
- As soon as works are complete the Film & TV Crew Academy will move into the new build. The Academy has €400,000 funding available for 2023 and the recruitment of administrative staff has now to be addressed.
- Under the Mid-East Regional Enterprise Plan Wicklow are to develop a food incubation hub. The recruitment for a Project Manager to oversee the priming of the food hub was unsuccessful. It was suggested that MOLA, who have been awarded the tender for the development of the Masterplan, could advise on the best location on campus for the food hub.

ITEM 6

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

JP delivered the following updates on Wicklow County Campus and answered any questions raised:

- the new bio-fuel heating system (ran on wood pellets) was installed and should be up and running late February/early March
- the new electric van is to be delivered in the week and Lorraine advised that a press release should issue to show that Wicklow County Council are supporting green
- An application for funding of €15,000 has been applied for under the Heritage Investment Scheme
- John is working with the Heritage Officer to apply for funding for the regeneration of the pond
- A licence has been drafted for the storage at Clermont of a collection of costumes which have built up over the years
- The Conservation Plan is to feed into the Clermont Masterplan – both consultants are in touch with each other in respect of works to be done
- A decision is to be made soon on the inner relief road running through Clermont to the Tinakilly housing development
- John is in discussions with Kieran McCarthy in respect of office accommodation which will be made available for a number of Housing staff
- Recording at Lough Tay is currently underway for the Eurovision Postcard
- The movie Cocaine Bear which was largely shot in Wicklow is due to release during the week

Lorraine advised that John should do a press release on all that is happening at Clermont

ITEM 7

Correspondence

There was no correspondence for discussion.

ITEM 8

Update on Ethics Declaration as per Circular LG 2-2015

CF delivered the following update on the Ethics Declaration as per Circular LG 2-2015:

While the non-elected members are not required to fill out an ethics declaration form they are bound by the Act and our code of conduct for Councillors.

If they or a connected person have a pecuniary or other beneficial interest to any matter proposed or otherwise, arises at a meeting of the committee or other body either as a result of any of its functions or as regards the performance of any of its functions, they must disclose the nature of their interest and withdraw fully from the meeting for as long as this matter is being discussed or considered.

The minutes of the meeting must refer to the disclosure(s) made and withdrawal(s) from the meeting.

ITEM 9

Set date and time for next meeting

As already agreed the next meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC meetings will be held on 19th June, 2023.

Signed:



Cllr. Tom Fortune
Chair
Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC

Date:

19th July 2023

19th June 2023.