

Minutes of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC
Meeting held on Monday 12th December, 2022
Boardroom, Clermont Campus, Rathnew Co. Wicklow @ 10am.

Present: Cllr. Tom Fortune Chair (TF)
Cllr. Gerry Walsh (GW)
Cllr. Mary Kavanagh (MK)
Mr. Huw O'Toole (HO'T)
Mr. Christopher Fox (CFox)

In Attendance: Ms. Vibeke Delahunt (VD)
Ms. Christine Flood (CF)
Ms. Lorraine Gallagher (LG)
Ms. Deirdre Whitfield (DW)
Ms. Susan Nichols (SN)
Mr. John Powderly (JP)
Ms. Caroline Cullimore (CC)
Ms. Patriece O'Toole

Apologies: Cllr. Avril Cronin, Cllr. Pat Kennedy, Ms. Ruth Donnelly, Mr. Killian McGreal

ITEM 1

Minutes of meeting of the Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC held on Monday 19th September, 2022

The minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC held on Monday 19th September, 2022, as circulated were proposed by Cllr. Mary Kavanagh and seconded by Cllr. Tom Fortune and agreed.

ITEM 2

Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes

ITEM 3

Presentation by EMRA on the Socio Economic Monitor

This presentation did not take place, due to the unavailability of a staff member. CF to circulate a link to the members of the SPC so that they can view the type of data available on the monitor.

ITEM 4

To receive update on the preparation of a Local Economic and Community Plan and the Workshops held – A Report circulated prior to the meeting

DW delivered the report and answered any questions raised

5 High Level Goals have been identified incorporating Community, Economic Development and Climate Action. DW reported that 3 focussed workshops had taken place, i.e. Community, Environment and Enterprise and Economic Development. All the input and feedback from the workshops will be presented to the board when compiled. There was emphasis expressed in the following areas:

- environment and climate is thought should be front and centre of the plan and this came from all three workshops
- there is a huge mandate for Green Business and more sustainable practices in business
- that the plan be kept clear, focussed and achievable - 'less is more'
- there is currently a shortage of enterprise and economic development space in Wicklow
- Remote working opportunities – it was agreed that with so many people commuting to Dublin to work focus should be on keeping workers in the county
- Town Centre First was considered very important but concern was raised around rural areas and the fear that they may be neglected
- Identifiable gaps in infrastructure was a big concern
- It was agreed that there is a huge shortage of hotel and accommodation space across Wicklow

In response to a concern that private developers would be left to implement and drive the plan, CF advised that it is the role of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC to identify opportunities and encouraging investment in those areas. She went on to say that Wicklow County Council are aware that there is a need for enterprise space and are actively working on developing enterprise space in Greystones. Space has also been identified in Arklow which could be used as Marine Enterprise space. A Masterplan for the 23 acre site at County Campus is being developed along with an incubation hub on site. The plan is to invest in other opportunities on the site associated with the areas of the screen, food and renewables.

The Chair summed up by saying that a good discussion was had and that the Policy Group should highlight the 7/8 gaps which were identified and make recommendations to turn them around.

ITEM 5

To receive and consider update on

- **LECP: LCDC and Community Activities – A Report circulated prior to the meeting**

DW delivered the report and answered any questions raised:

- Goal 1 – Develop community capacity in disadvantaged communities and engage in urban regeneration and rural development

Town and Village Projects were applied for in July and no decision was given on the bulk of them at this stage. Funding which did come through straight away was used to buy the Bank of Ireland building in Carnew and a derelict site in Kiltegan.

A good year was had in the area of Outdoor Recreation Projects with some very strong projects submitted with a lot of funding behind them, most of which were in the West. There was no success under the RRDF funding scheme

- Goal 2 – Promote active citizenship and public participation to improve governance, participation and enrich decision making.

The three groups used (PPN, Comhairle na nÓg and Old Persons Council) ran some good events, i.e. the PPN had their online end of year event and they also ran an event 'Falling through the Cracks – Hidden Poverty in County Wicklow'. The Comhairle na nÓg ran a Youth Summit which was very well attended and the Old Persons Council held a Seminar.

- Goal 3 – Develop high quality integrated services available to all communities, in particular, disadvantage communities and vulnerable groups.

The Draft Food Poverty Report which was funded by the Children's and Young People Services and Wicklow County Council is to be ready by the end of 2022 and launched in 2023. The recommendations from the report are:

- A county wide coordination of community food provision is needed – groups seem to be working in isolation and are not aware of what each other are doing
- There is a need to improve and build on community food infrastructure with additional Meals on Wheels providers, community cafes , food banks and an emergency food voucher scheme

The report mapped community food provision which identified that most services are in the east and urban based. The report showed that people who find themselves in need don't know where to go to get help.

A €10 million fund for local community and voluntary groups to help with energy bills and other costs is administered by the Local Community Development Committee but groups apply themselves through Pobal.

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

CF delivered a report on the following and answered any questions raised:

- **Offshore Renewables** - €17.9 billion to be invested in Offshore Renewables. Companies will bid to operate a licence off the coast of Ireland with the majority operating between Dublin and Wexford. The outcome of the auction to be announced in Q2 of 2023. It is expected that 3 or 4 projects will get licensed. Additional resources including accommodation will then be required in the county.
- **Bray Central** – 2 restaurants and carpark are now operating
- **Town Teams Review** has been carried out. The Town Regeneration Officer is to be appointed early 2023 and will acquire clerical assistance. The Town Teams will be able to access funding that the Council cannot.
- **Tourism** – the Tourism Strategy is under review. Wicklow is being developed as a tourism hub.
- **Abbey Grounds** – it was reported that some archaeological find was made, therefore, the Architects have been asked to modify the design.
- **Masterplan for Glendalough** – Failte Ireland funding for the Masterplan will enhance the experience for the tourist and provide business opportunities in the area. Tourists need to be encouraged to stay in the area and only day trip to Dublin. It was confirmed that the Masterplan had not yet been finalised and that the consultation would end on the 18th January. It is hoped to have at least 2 more public consultations during the week of 9th January.
- **Bray Outdoor Performance Space** – considerable time has been spent on the design and it was expressed that the design must be fit for purpose. The Department has extended the application date to September
- **Urban & Rural Regeneration** – It was reported that the Blessington project is moving on. Unfortunately the RRDF application was unsuccessful this year. A review of the application will be made in time for resubmitting. URDF works have been completed in Arklow.
- **Bray Harbour** - €7 million funding to develop. Public engagement was a great success with lots of issues raised. EIA scoping report submitted to An Bord Pleanala. The new pier will allow potential for visiting boats.

- **Land Management** – HSE deal currently closing in respect of the site at Mill Road, Greystones. A claim was submitted in respect of the drawdown of funds approved for the purchase of the BOI building in Carnew. Wicklow County Council engaging with Cairn in respect of the acquisition of enterprise space in Greystones. A disposal notice and resolution signed in respect of the disposal of lands at Tinahely to Automatic Plastics. MOLA appointed to design a Masterplan in respect of 23 acres at Wicklow County Campus, Rathnew.
- **Food and Beverage Strategy** - The Food and Beverage Strategy was initiated by DW and it resulted in the development of Wicklow Naturally. Leader funding was awarded to develop the original strategy which resulted in the establishment of Wicklow Naturally. Wicklow Naturally applied for funding to employ co-ordinators to develop the network and to promote Wicklow produce.

ITEM 6

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

VD delivered the report and answered any questions which followed:

VD confirmed that there had been very strong demand on the LEO supports throughout the year with the advice clinics booked out, however there was less appetite for training. The number one challenge for businesses is recruitment. A core training programme has been put together for 2023 and it was reported that the take-up for the Springboard course in Wicklow was very low. Applications for the Spring/Summer 2023 schedule can be made through the online portal.

VD advised that Chris Fogarty would be leaving and also that the recent recruitment drive to appoint a Project Manager for the Food Incubation Hub had not been successful. A Part 8 application would need to be made in respect of the project and the next step would be to appoint an Architect Led Design Team to prepare detailed drawings.

VD confirmed that €300,000 approved funding for screen skills training courses and work placements has been secured by Clermont Enterprise Hub CLG.

VD also reported that Screen Ireland funding for 2023 had been approved to continue the work of the Crew Academy.

ITEM 7

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

JP delivered the report and answered any questions which followed

JP confirmed that the Screen Strategy for Wicklow was progressing well with one of the highest number of productions ever in the County (over 45 and that excluded those in Bray). There were 6 productions alone on campus.

A new Screen page has been added to the website.

A new Bio-fuel heating system (wood pellet system) is being installed and should be complete by the end of January 2023.

ITEM 8

Correspondence

There was no correspondence for discussion.

ITEM 9


Set date and time for next meeting

It was agreed and confirmed that the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC meetings would be held on the following dates during 2023

- 13th March, 2023
- 19th June, 2023
- 11th September, 2023
- 11th December, 2023

Cllr. Tom Fortune thanked everyone for attending and their contribution throughout the year and wished all a Happy Christmas and closed the meeting.

Signed:


Cllr. Tom Fortune *g-wahl*
Chair
Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC

Date:

27/2/2023