

**Minutes of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC**  
**Meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 9.30am**  
**in the Wurzburg Room, County Buildings, Station Road, Wicklow Town**

**Present:**  
Cllr. Tom Fortune – Chair (TF)  
Cllr. Peir Leonard (PL)  
Cllr. Ned Whelan (NW)  
Cllr. Louise Fenelon Gaskin (LFG)  
Cllr. Ian Neary (IN)  
Mr. T.J. Foley (TJF)  
Ms. Margaret Coughlan (MC)  
Mr. Huw O'Toole (HOT)

**In Attendance:**  
Ms. Helena Dennehy (HD)  
Ms. Susan Nichols (SN)  
Ms. Vibeke Delahunt (VD)  
Mr. John Powderly (JP)  
Ms. Caroline Cullimore (CC)  
Mr. Fred Verdier (FV)  
Ms. Patrice O'Toole (PO'T)

**Apologies:**  
Cllr. Avril Cronin (AC)  
Mr. Killian McGreal (KMCG)  
Mr. Jonathan Donnelly (JD)  
Mr. Chris Fox (CF)  
Ms. Michelle Curley (MC)

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**ITEM 1: Minutes of meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support (EDES) SPC held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

The minutes of the EDES SPC which took place on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026 were proposed by Cllr. L. Fenlon Gaskin and seconded by Cllr. P. Leonard

**ITEM 2: Minutes of meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise Support (EDES) SPC held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

The minutes of the EDES SPC which took place on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026 were proposed by Cllr. N. Whelan and seconded by Cllr. P. Leonard

**ITEM 3: Matters arising from the Minutes.**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**ITEM 4: Updates from the working groups in respect of the multi-annual work plan.**

**Update from the Food/Craft Working Group:**

PL updated on behalf of the Food/Craft Working Group. The group talked about the great work already happening within Wicklow Naturally and Made in Wicklow, and the idea of bringing both brands together. The group plan to look at the Food and Beverage Strategy and the Craft Strategy to see how they align, and to consider whether a policy is needed around the meanwhile use of vacant commercial units.

It was highlighted that many artists are currently working from private studios and food producers are operating from their homes. The group felt this may be an opportunity to support these businesses to grow and take the next step by giving them access to empty units on a temporary basis by offering possible incentives such as reduced rates, short-term lets or small grants for fit-outs or shopfront improvements and at the same time contribute to town centre regeneration. PL said she would share information on a scheme run by Limerick County Council in this area.

The next steps would be to meet with Wicklow Naturally and the Made in Wicklow groups and identify other interested stakeholders e.g. producers and carry out a SCOT analysis of the policies which are already there. PL thanked CC for all the help she gave to the group.

**Update from the Tourism Working Group:**

H.O'T updated on behalf of the Tourism Working Group. The group held discussions around getting small farms to develop accommodation in the uplands. They reached out to the farming community and the

Uplands Council. Concerns which fed back from the Uplands Council focussed on insurance, strangers coming onto the farms, investment, planning and how it relates to developing existing buildings – (room in the CDP allows for reusing existing buildings and not new development).

The group suggested developing a pilot project—real or hypothetical—to explore how best to approach development in the uplands area. The aim would be to identify the criteria required, understand which policies apply, and use this to create a discussion document to help guide developers.

They requested access to a planner and an engineer particularly around wastewater. HD agreed to a planner and said she would check with Environment if an Engineer could be made available.

HD advised the importance of making submissions when the CDP is up for review. She advised that Wicklow has an existing Events Policy.

SN reiterated the importance of feedback and the making of submissions to bring about changes to the CDP.

#### **Update from the Enterprise Working Group**

T.J.F. updated on behalf of the Enterprise Working Group. The group focussed on economic land both WCC owned and private as well as whether a policy on AI is required to futureproof businesses. It was suggested that the wording in the CDP could be more flexible particularly around mixed-use development.

The group proposed getting advice externally in respect of AI.

#### **ITEM 5: Feedback from the CPG**

T.F. will report between the CPG and the SPC. He read the recent input given to the CPG on the MAWP and advised that the Executive was very happy with what was put forward. He reported on the three working groups and advised that arrangements are been made for the five Chairs of the SPC's to meet and share knowledge from each respective area.

#### **ITEM 6: Update on the County Wicklow Skills Strategy**

The members were advised that the Skills Taskforce continue to meet every six weeks and are currently agreeing amendments to the draft reporting template, which will be used to report at each SPC meeting.

The only visible barrier at present is the view of the educational providers on how soon skills will be needed.

#### **ITEM 7: Questions arising from updates circulated from the Economic Development Team, Head of Enterprise, Content Creation Hub and Wicklow County Campus and the Tourism Officer**

The reports issued were taken as read and TF invited any comments arising from them. On request, an update on the current number of licensees in the GRID was given to the members

#### **ITEM 8: Correspondence**

**SN advised the members of the following correspondence:**

Email dated 17<sup>th</sup> April 2026 from Corinna Harte of the IPA requested if the SPC would be willing to share a draft of their Multi Annual Work Plan with Limerick County Council Climate, Environment and Biodiversity SPC. It was agreed that the MAWP could be sent to Sinead Hourigan at Limerick County Council to be shared with the Climate, Environment and Biodiversity SPC.

#### **ITEM 9: AOB**

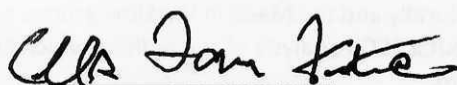
T.F. thanked each of the working groups for their input to date and encouraged the momentum continue for a more productive overall experience as an SPC.

The next meeting is to take place on 22nd June, 2026 at 9.30am in the Wurzburg Room, County Buildings.

#### **Actions arising from the meeting:**

1. PL to share vacant business premises incentive scheme.
2. HD to explore whether an Engineer can be made available to the Tourism Working Group.

Signed:



Cllr. Tom Fortune / Chair  
Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC

Date:

22/6/2026