

Minutes of the Meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee, Held on 12th December 2017 at 2.30pm in Meeting Room 1, Templemore-Thurles Municipal District Offices, Castle Avenue Thurles.

In Attendance:

Members of Council	Sectoral Interests	Staff
Cllr John Crosse Chair	T.J. Kinsella - County Tipperary Chamber	Kathleen Prendergast, Economic Development Officer
Cllr. Seamus Hanafin	Laura Jones - Business Pillar	Sinead Carr, Director of Services
Cllr Siobhan Ambrose	Seamus Hoyne - LIT	Anthony Fitzgerald
Cllr John Fahey	Noel Byrnes - PPN	Triona O' Mahoney
Cllr Martin Browne		Patricia Spillane, Clerical Officer
Cllr Joe Hannigan		
Cllr Kieran Bourke		

Apologies: Rita Guinan, Cllr John Hogan and Cllr. Tom Wood.

1. Welcome

Cllr Crosse proceeded to welcome all concerned to the meeting.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on the 12th September 2017 were agreed and there was no matters arising. Adoption of the Minutes was proposed by Cllr Seamus Hanafin and seconded by Cllr Martin Browne.

3. Update on Regional Enterprise Development Fund Application.

Lisheen Mines:

Anthony Fitzgerald informed the committee that the Lisheen Mine project would be receiving financial support through Enterprise Irelands' Regional Economic Development Fund for the establishment of a Bioeconomy innovation and piloting facility at Lisheen Co. Tipperary. The sum awarded was approximately €4,628,000 equating to about 80% of the cost of the project. The project application came first out of a total of 75 project applications. The Board for the Lisheen Mine project is made up of Tipperary County Council, Commercial Mushroom Producers (CMP), Glanbia, University College Dublin (UCD), Trinity College Dublin (TCD) and Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT).

This project has received funding from the REDZ which allowed them to set up the company, to create the design and layout of the company and to complete research behind the project to make the final application. In this regard Anthony Fitzgerald acknowledged the role that the REDZ funding, Tipperary County Council and LIT played in the success to date.

Food Centre of Excellence

Sinead Carr informed the committee that the Food Centre of Excellence would not be submitting a 'Stream 1' application in 2018. She is outlined that this is a work in

progress which needs collaboration with both third level education and a international company.

Thurles Chamber Enterprise Centre.

The Thurles Chamber Enterprise Centre (TCEC) was unsuccessful in this round of funding for an expansion on their current Centre. Cllr Seamus Hannifin advised the meeting that TCEC would continue to seek funds to deliver on their proposal.

4. Retail Supports Update.

Kathleen Prendergast gave an update on the retail Supports provided in 2017. This included the following:

Christmas Retail Support Grant

The objective of the Christmas Retail Support Grant to provide support and assistance to towns and villages of Tipperary over the festive period was launched in September 2017. 26 applications were received. All applicants were successful with a total amount of €27,980 distributed across the county including a fund of €3,100 from the Local Enterprise Office for Events, Markets and Exhibitions.

Town Centre Forum – Thurles

A retail town centre forum was established in Thurles in 2017. There has been direct support to the town to establish this working group to implement the actions identified for the Town Centre Plan developed in 2015. Access to funds has been made available to develop a website (Thurles.ie), support the development of a Tourism brand for the area surrounding Thurles which will have Thurles as the Hub (Tipperary Heartland). An additional project is ongoing with all the secondary schools to carryout market research for the town. In December 2017 collaboration with Mary Immaculate Marketing Faculty was established that will see a retail brand being developed for Thurles in 2018.

Commercial Incentive Scheme Promotion

A campaign to promote the scheme was carried out in 2017 by radio (Tipp Fm and Tipp Mid West Radio) Links here to [Link to Tipp FM Advert](#); to [Tipp Mid West Advert](#) and to [20 Minute promotion slot on TMW](#). There has been a notable interest in the scheme following the advertising campaign with a total of 43 formal enquiries received from all over County Tipperary in 2017.

Buy Local Campaign

A Buy Local Campaign was developed in conjunction with the Retail Sub-group of the SPC. The branding is developed and the Buy Local sticker has been distributed to businesses in towns and villages in County Tipperary. This is supported by a Buy Local Facebook Campaign "C'mon Tipp Buy Local" #cmontippbuylocal.



5. Branding and Marketing - Munster Peaks.

Triona O' Mahoney, Destination & Marketing Manager for Munster Vales since April 2017, was introduced to the committee and she gave a presentation on the progress of the Munster Vales to date.

Munster Vales which incorporates five mountain ranges Comeraghs, Knockmealdowns, Galtees, Nagles and Ballyhouras and it crosses four counties Tipperary, Limerick, Cork and Waterford. This tourism initiative was launched in early October 2017. The Munster Vales also lie at the heart of Ireland's Ancient East, Failte Ireland's initiative aiming to get visitors to stay longer in areas that they would traditionally pass through.

Munster Vales received almost €500,000 REDZ funding for:

- Tourism Marketing Coordinator
- Marketing actions, destination marketing plan implementation
- Feasibility study and concept design: Heritage Centre, Carrick on Suir, Knocklong Railway Heritage Park
- Infrastructural Projects: Glengarra Mountain Lodge, Buttevant Medieval trail, Lower Blackwater River access points

Munster Vales offer bundles which include activities and accommodation to choose from throughout the region. Triona referenced working with Laura Jones from Clonmel Park Hotel as an example in relation to these bundles.

Plans have been put in place for spring promotions 2018 on a National and International scale. Travel writers also visit Munster Vales and write reviews about their experiences which help to promote the areas. Munster Vales have achieved a remarkable following of 5,500 people online after only 6 months of promotional activity.

6. Digital Strategy Briefing/Consultation.

Kathleen Prendergast advised the meeting that work on a Digital Strategy for County Tipperary was proceeding along the agreed time-lines and should conclude in the first quarter of 2018. A draft report of the findings to date was prepared by John Gilsenan of Market Dynamics who has been working with Tipperary County Council to develop the Digital Strategy for the County. Mr. Gilsenan delivered a presentation on the development of the Digital Strategy for County Tipperary and the findings to date in areas of Enterprise, Education and Citizen. The presentation will be circulated to the SPC Members.

Mr. Gilsenan informed the meeting of the process and the extent of consultation involved in reaching the current findings which included 4 different targeted questionnaires to 1) Key Informants (i.e. selected individuals); 2) Business; 3) Citizens; and 4) the Community & Voluntary Sector. An evening workshop which was also held in Cashel targeting agencies including Councillors and NGO's.

Cllr John Crosse thanked John Gilsenan for the presentation. Cllr Crosse encouraged the SPC members to contact Kathleen Prendergast if they had any additional ideas for the Digital Strategy.

Cllr Kieran Bourke spoke about how frustrating the lack of mobile phone coverage is in certain areas in County Tipperary and asked should this be something that the strategy

should be looking into. Kathleen Prendergast advised that Simon Howe, the Broadband Officer, is focusing on the infrastructural aspects of Digital and Broadband. He is currently seeking the assistance of Councilors to identify any mobile phone black spots in County Tipperary. Cllr Bourke's concerns would be forwarded to him. Any other similar information about known black spots in the county would be welcomed by Simon Howe.

7. Review of the work of the SPC for 2017 and Plan for 2018.

Kathleen Prendergast circulated a report for the items covered during 2017 by the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee.

This included:

- Ongoing updates on REDZ Funding and Projects;
- Ongoing updates on all Retail initiatives:- Commercial Incentive Scheme, Buy Local, Town centre Fora activities, LEO supports, Retail Portal, and a range of Grants (Christmas / Painting and enhancement / Markets),
- Ongoing updates on Tourism initiatives:- Lough Derg, Tipperary Tourism Company, Tipperary Tourism Branding, Butler Trail, Fethard Tholsol, and Munster Peaks.
- Ongoing updates on Local Enterprise Office targets and impacts.
- Consultation on Development needs for firms which lead to the published Collaborative Study on Skills;
- Consultation on Branding for County Tipperary leading to the County Tipperary Business Brand 'The place; The time' and a County Tipperary Marketing Plan;
- Consultation on Lisheen Bio Economy application leading to the successful funding application for Lisheen Mines;
- Consultation on the Craft Sector leading to a County Tipperary Craft Strategy;
- Local Economic and Community Plan (2016 review, 2017 planning, and 2017 review)
- CEDRA Funding for Food Centre of Excellence
- Broadband and development of a Digital Strategy

Kathleen proposed that the plan for 2018 would continue to include the above projects and a number of additional areas of interest were proposed as follows: -

- Social Enterprise;
- Teagasc - a Briefing on County and National issues.
- Update on EU Projects that Tipperary County Council is involved in
- Briefing on all Enterprise/Innovation Workspace available in County of Tipperary.

It was agreed to follow up on the provision of presentations on these additional topics.

8. Replacement SPC representative for LECP Advisory Group.

Sinead Carr advised the group that the LECP advisory Group had a vacancy for the SPC representative. Councillor Siobhan Ambrose proposed T.J Kinsella for this position and it was seconded by Councillor John Fahey with all in favor.

9. Date for Meetings for 2018.

Tuesday 16th January
Tuesday 27th March
Tuesday 29th May
Tuesday 4th September
Tuesday 20th November

All meeting will take place in Thurles Municipal District Civic Offices at 10.00am (subject to availability)

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____



Chairperson

Date: _____



