



## **Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee**

**Minutes of meeting held at 10.00 a.m. on Thursday, 9 July in Áras Chill Dara,  
Naas.**

Cathaoirleach: Councillor Ivan Keatley

Present: Cllr. Pádraig McEvoy, Cllr. Seamie Moore, Cllr Rob Power, Cllr. Peggy O'Dwyer, Mr. Gerry Prendergast, Ms. Majella O'Keefe, Ms. Evonne Boland

Also Present: Eoghan Ryan, Director of Services; Sonya Kavanagh, Director of Services; Jacqui McNabb, Head of Enterprise; Michael Kenny, Senior Planner; Mairead Hunt, Senior Executive Officer, Mark McLoughlin, Administrative Officer.

Apologies: Cllr. Kevin Duffy, Cllr Michael Coleman

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### **1. To approve Standing Orders**

The Standing Orders for Strategic Policy Committees were proposed by Councillor P. McEvoy, seconded by Councillor R. Power, and duly approved.

### **2. Conflict of Interest Declarations**

The Cathaoirleach advised the members that it was a requirement at all strategic policy committee meetings for members to declare any potential conflicts of interest for items under discussion at the meeting. The members were advised that if that had any doubts about an issue, they should contact the meetings administrator, Mr. M.McLoughlin before the meeting to discuss.

### **3. To receive an update from the Head of Enterprise**

Ms. Sonya Kavanagh, Director of Economic Development gave an update in respect of economic development [see Appendix 1]. She outlined the different areas of activity and noted that training programmes have gone on line as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The following areas of work were highlighted:

- LECP
- Economic Forum
- Mid-East Region Enterprise Action Plan 2019-2020
- Kildare Diaspora Strategy
- Age Friendly policy
- Food Strategy
- Barrow Blueway Economic Development Plan
- MERITS
- Equine Tech Innovation Hub
- Athy Food, Drink & Skills Innovation Hub
- Just Transition Fund (JTF) - Allenwood Business Centre
- Shop Front Grant Scheme
- Shop local campaign - going live in July

Ms. Jacqui McNabb, Head of Enterprise said that these were unprecedented times for businesses with issues relating to landlords, rent payments and loan restructuring but the Enterprise Office was working with businesses to assist. She said that it is intended to carry out an employment survey in October/November.

- Business Advice/Mentoring
- Training
- COVID-19 Business Continuity Voucher
- Trading Online Voucher: Jan – July 2020

Councillor McEvoy acknowledged the work of the Enterprise Office and said that the Eastern Regional Assembly was working with European agencies and that climate action was now a major focus and that business should focus in that direction.

Councillor O'Dwyer asked whether businesses now working with LEO were existing clients or new clients since the pandemic.

Ms. McNabb advised that the majority were new contacts. The remit of LEO was for business with less than 10 employees however they were now working with everyone who made contact.

Councillor Keatley asked if the shop front grant will be fully utilised in 2020 and if Trading on-line vouchers were still available.

Ms. McNabb advised that there were 26 applications initially the focus for many businesses was on liquidity and stock at the present time. In respect of on-line trading vouchers, there were 60 initially but LEO had received an extra 100. There were circa 20 vouchers remaining.

There was a discussion on Section 254 licences process for tables and chairs on the public footpath – the fee for applications was waived until 30 September and the potential for expanding the shop front scheme for other purposes.

#### **4. To receive an update from the Director of Planning and Strategic Development.**

The Director of Service, Mr. E Ryan gave an update on the work of the Planning and Public Realm Department [see Appendix 2].

He outlined the challenges and pressures facing the County and the hierarchy of the planning system i.e. National Planning Framework, Eastern Regional Midlands Assembly, the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan, Kildare County Development Plan and numerous local area plans.

He highlighted the work being carried out by the Planning Department in respect of issues papers on social infrastructure audits, open space and retail strategies, rural housing policy, wind energy strategy. He noted that the planning applications this year were now returning to normal levels after the slow down caused by the pandemic with planning permission granted for residential developments in the first quarter of 2020 the same as for all of 2019.

Ms. M. Hunt gave an update in respect of the Public Realm team. She advised that the remit of the team which was established in April 2019 was to work with communities to develop projects for social and economic wellbeing. She highlighted a number of projects the team were working on at present:

- Barrow Blueway
- Grand Canal Greenway
- Curragh with Department of Defence on land management and interpretation
- Kildare town – works on Market Square and Academy Street

Ms. Majella O’Keefe asked that the team examine the feasibility of bins and benches in the country having the same theme.

Ms. Hunt advised that the team were looking at Maynooth at the moment and that street furniture would be similar but exactly the same in each town.

Councillor McEvoy said that it was important to look at the change from car focus to pedestrians and cyclists.

Ms. E. Boland said that it was important to educate the community into changing their preceptions.

Ms. Hunt advised that there were a number of forthcoming public consultations on line and that a number of projects were progressing to Part 8 in the very near future.

### **5. To consider a Work Programme**

Mr. E. Ryan advised the members to consider the draft work programme that was circulated with a view to agreeing a Programme at the next meeting.

Cllr McEvoy requested that all documents be circulated in advance to improve the efficiency of meetings.

### **6. Any Other Business**

Mr. Kenny advised that the report of the Historic Monuments Advisory Committee would be presented to the members at the next meeting. In order to expediate the formation of this committee, it was agreed to seek approval for two elected members at the next full Council meeting and that the members would nominate one of these members today for approval by Council.

Councillor Moore was nominated to the Historic Monuments Advisory Committee on the proposal of Councillor Power and seconded by Mr. G. Prendergast.

### **7. Next Meeting**

The next meeting was schedule for 3 September 2020. The meeting administrator agreed to gauge the opinion of the members on the most suitable time for future meetings and would contact the members.

**The meeting closed.**

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**Councillor Ivan Keatley**

**Chairman**

## APPENDIX 1

Report from Ms. Sonya Kavanagh, Director of Economic Development

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### Contents

1. Economic Development Policy
2. Economic Development Capital projects
3. Economic Development Initiatives
4. Local Enterprise Office: Training, Mentoring & Financial Grants

### 1. Economic Development Policy:

#### 1.1 LECP

Kildare Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) was established in 2014 and thereafter produced a Local Economic and Community Plan (2016 – 2021). Regular reviews of the economic actions in the LECP will be part of this SPC's work programme. Further information relating to the LCDC and the LECP can be found by following this link;

<http://www.kildarelcdc.ie/>

#### 1.2 Economic Forum

Arrangements are being made to re-engage with the Economic Forum so that the draft Economic Development strategy can be finalised and sent on to the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC for consideration. Due to the current economic challenges the draft will be amended to take into account the Economic Recovery Campaign (Kildare Open for Business).

A communications Strategy to restart the County Kildare economy post the coronavirus crisis will be aligned with the National Roadmap for Recovery.

#### 1.3 Mid-East Region Enterprise Action Plan 2019-2020

The Mid-East Region Enterprise Action Plan to 2020 launched in Feb 2019 and has been progressed through the work of the Steering and Working Groups. The targeted actions are being progressed and will be delivered or amended during the lifecycle of the plan.

#### 1.4 Kildare Diaspora Strategy

Kildare County Council awarded a contract early this year for the development of a diaspora strategy for the County. Whilst this strategy has been delayed due to the current C19 crisis once complete later this year KCC will be well positioned and equipped to integrate a diaspora strategy into existing high-level economic, social and cultural plans for the County.

The Kildare Diaspora strategy will focus on further developing the potential of four key areas:

1. Foreign Direct Investment
2. Indigenous Enterprise
3. Arts and Culture

## 4. Tourism and Heritage

### 1.5 Age Friendly policy

Currently through the business unit we are developing areas of co-operation, and working with KCC'S Age Friendly Co-ordinator to roll out the national Age Friendly Ireland Programme

The Business Recognition Programme encourages businesses all over Ireland to appoint an Age Friendly Champion; consult with their colleagues and older customers; implement three simple low-cost or no-cost changes; achieve their Age Friendly Charter and see a clear ROI in increased spend from a loyal, motivated, solvent and growing consumer base.

As the country re-opens, Failte Ireland has identified the older age group as key to the tourism economy and will be investing heavily in encouraging business of every kind to participate in making our towns, amenities and premises safe and welcoming for older people post COVID.

### 1.6 Food Strategy

KCC are finalizing details and preparing to launch a County Kildare Food Strategy which was developed by our food sector and facilitated by James Burke and Associates. Prior to showing a draft we need to review again through the lens of Covid prior to finalizing later this year.

### 1.7 Barrow Blueway Economic Development Plan

County Kildare Leader Partnership are progressing an in-house project (in partnership with KCC) to develop a Barrow Blueway Economic Development Plan. Considering the impact of C19 on our tourism industry this plan is very positive and should provide guidance to prospective businesses along the Blueway.

## 2 Economic Development - Capital Projects

### 2.1 MERITS

The completion of the MERITS (Mid East Region Innovation Think Space) building in Naas will realise a vision to serve the emerging technology sector by connecting organisations and people and acting as a centre of excellence in supporting innovative companies across the county and wider region.

Construction on the site commenced in November 2019 and is expected to be substantially complete by December 2020. This development is being funded by KCC and Enterprise Ireland.

### 2.2 Equine Tech Innovation Hub

Plans are well progressed to develop an Equine Tech Innovation Hub as a sectoral

stimulus to develop an equine innovation hub of enterprise, innovation, applied research, commercialization and learning. Uniquely, it will offer a single access source of equine technical and entrepreneurial innovation. The hub will be located in the Irish National Stud. A leader grant has been secured for this project.

### **2.3 Athy Food, Drink & Skills Innovation Hub –**

In 2019 Coca Cola made a contribution of €500,000 towards the development of the old Model School in Athy into a Food, Drink & Skills Innovation Hub. Further funding of circa €476,000 has been secured under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. This funding will allow for this project to be brought through planning and detailed design.

### **2.4 Just Transition Fund (JTF) - Allenwood Business Centre**

A fund of €11 million has been made available under this fund for projects focusing on retraining workers and proposals to generate sustainable employment in green enterprise in the region; and supporting communities to transition to a low carbon economy.

The Business Unit are currently preparing an application to support the development of Allenwood Business Centre and associated grounds

## **3.Economic Development Initiatives**

### **3.1 Shop Front Grant Scheme**

Kildare County Council has established the Shop Front Improvement, Accessibility and Age Friendly Grant Scheme to financially assist and support independent business owners to improve the appearance of their shop fronts or commercial properties. Particular emphasis should be on works to enhance accessibility and/or add age friendly elements to the premises. This funding is provided in recognition of the fact that a building's facade makes a big impact on our town centres.

Grants are available up to a maximum of €5,000 or

- (i) Up to 50% of eligible costs for painting / repairs (*however, if you include an accessibility or age friendly element the grant offer can be increased up to 75% of eligible costs*).
- (ii) Up to 75% of eligible costs for accessibility improvements
- (iii) Up to 75% of eligible costs for age friendly improvements

### **3.2 #Shoplocalcampaign    ShopcountyKildare.ie**

To cater for a changing need of businesses retailers (in particular during the COVID-19 pandemic) KCC in association with the Kildare Chamber of Commerce has created 'Shop

County Kildare' an online ecommerce platform providing Kildare businesses the opportunity to make the move to online sales in a free of charge, quick and user-friendly way. KCC is now calling on Kildare businesses to register for the website as it will go live for consumers at the end of July

We will also be encouraging the public to #ShopLocal with an ad campaign on bus shelters, digi-panels and on social media. This aim of this campaign is to champion small, local businesses that have been allowed to open in recent phases and to encourage people across the county to support them. The campaign runs from 24th – July through to Sept 2020

## **4 Local Enterprise Office - Training, Mentoring & Financial Grants**

### **4.1 Business Advice/Mentoring**

In the period January to June 30<sup>th</sup> 422 businesses have accessed this service. Under the Local Enterprise Office Mentor Programme clients work with an experienced mentor to identify solutions to areas of exposure within their business. With advice and guidance from their mentor, clients develop strategies that are more robust which address issues and maximise potential opportunities when the COVID-19 crisis comes to an end. As a response to the impact of Covid-19 on the business sector this service is now free of charge and provided remotely.

### **4.2 Training**

In the period January to June 30<sup>th</sup> 1791 businesses have accessed this service. County Kildare Local Enterprise Office has moved its training programmes, workshops and networking meet-ups online and has adapted its programme to reflect business requirements in response to C19. Participation levels and feedback to date has been positive. Places can be booked online through the County Kildare Local Enterprise Office website.

<https://www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare/Training-Events/Online-Bookings/>

### **4.3 COVID-19 Business Continuity Voucher**

The Business Continuity Voucher designed for businesses that employ up to 50 people provides funding of up to €2,500 in the form of third party consultancy costs (at no cost to the company) that can be used to develop short-term and long-term strategies to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. By the closing date (Friday May 15th) LEO County Kildare had received 723 applications

### **4.5 Trading Online Voucher: Jan – July 2020**

The Trading Online Voucher Scheme offers small businesses the opportunity to develop their website or digital marketing strategy by availing of vouchers of up to €2,500 or 90% of eligible expenditure. 268 Vouchers (value €670,000) have been approved to date.



## APPENDIX 2

Report from Mr. Eoghan Ryan, Director of Planning and Public Realm

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### 1.1 National Planning Framework

The NPF was adopted in 2018 and provides the over-arching framework for the coordination of national and regional planning and development in Ireland. It sets the vision and the development strategy to shape national, regional and local spatial development in economic, social and environmental terms and provides an approach for investment by Government (Project Ireland 2040).

### 1.2 Eastern Midland Regional Assembly – Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy

EMRA adopted the RSES in 2019 and it sets the regional planning strategy for the Counties in the East and Midlands. It identifies Maynooth and Naas as the Key Towns for growth in the County.

### 1.3 Dublin Metropolitan Area Spatial Plan

The MASP is the metropolitan area that extends south to Bray, north to Swords and west to Kilcock (encompassing Maynooth, Leixlip and Celbridge in County Kildare).

Policy Objective (NPO) 68 of the National Planning Framework states:

A Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan may enable up to 20% of the phased population growth targeted in the principal city and suburban area, to be accommodated in the wider metropolitan area i.e. outside the city and suburbs or contiguous zoned area, in addition to growth identified for the Metropolitan area. This will be subject to:

- any relocated growth being in the form of compact development, such as infill or a sustainable urban extension;
- any relocated growth being served by high capacity public transport and/or related to significant employment provision; and
- National Policy Objective 9, as set out in Chapter 4.

NPO 9 refers to settlements identified for significant rates of growth in the RSES including the Metropolitan Key Towns of Bray, Maynooth and Swords.

A 'Briefing Note - Transitional Population Projections in the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)', indicates that the NPO 68 Allocation is proposed as an allocation of an additional 11,000 population to Maynooth and Environs, 10,000 of which is allocated to that part of Maynooth in County Kildare and a further 1,000 allocated to environs of

Maynooth in County Meath (the figures originally proposed were 9,500 for Kildare and 500 persons for Meath).

#### **1.4 County Development Plan**

Variation No. 1 of KCDP adopted by Council following Special meeting of Council held on 8 and 9 June in Newbridge Town Hall. The Variation came into immediate effect on 9 June. SEA review currently taking place. This variation amended the population targets for Kildare County Council in line with the Regional Spatial Economic Strategy.

#### **1.5 Statutory Local Area Plans**

**Athy** - Preparation of Draft LAP underway with Regeneration Strategy & Area Based Transport Assessment being developed in-house to inform the LAP.

**Kildare** - Preparation of Draft LAP underway. Pre-plan public consultation in relation to Kildare Transport Strategy underway with a deadline of 16/07/20.

**Maynooth** - RSES RPO 4.35 requires a Joint LAP between Meath & Kildare Local Authorities.

**Naas** – Comments on the Draft Naas & Sallins Transport Strategy being evaluated before that document is finalised. Other background work is well underway in relation to Naas Draft LAP.

#### **Other Forward Planning Issues**

##### **1.6 Rural Housing Policy & Rural House Design Guide**

A draft Rural Design Guide is under preparation and will be brought to the SPC for review and input. A subsection on cluster type development has also been included in the design guide.

##### **1.7 Social Infrastructure Audits**

A meeting was held on 16 June to review comments recently received from the Forward Planning Team and to finalise the Social Infrastructure Assessment (SIA) for Naas. A Procedures Manual has also been prepared so that staff members can follow a similar methodology in the preparation of other SIA's for emerging LAPs.

##### **1.8 Open Space Strategy**

Mapping of the county's open space and recreational resources is underway to form a baseline for the Open Space Strategy. Project team includes representatives from Planning,

Parks and Sports Partnership. Resources being mapped include those of the Council, sports organisations, Waterways Ireland, Bord na Mona, Coillte, etc. A proposed work programme/methodology has been agreed. Details of a public engagement strategy and stakeholder engagements will be worked out shortly.

### **1.9 Wind Energy Strategy**

While a proposed methodology has been drafted having regard to draft Ministerial Guidelines, this project has now paused pending the finalisation of Ministerial Guidelines.

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