



Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee

Minutes of meeting held at 3.00 p.m. on Thursday, 25 March 2021 via Video Conferencing.

Cathaoirleach: Councillor Ivan Keatley

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

Also Present: Eoghan Ryan, Director of Services; Sonya Kavanagh, Director of Services; Jacqui McNabb, Head of Enterprise; Caroline O'Donnell, A/Senior Planner; Mark McLoughlin, Administrative Officer. Bridget Loughlin, Heritage Officer.

1. 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 item was noted.

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 15 January 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2021 were proposed by Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor McEvoy and duly adopted.

3. To receive an update from the Director of Service, Economic, Community & Cultural Development



Ms. S. Kavanagh Director of Service gave an update in respect of Economic Development [See Appendix I]. She highlighted a number of areas of activity including:

- Shop County Kildare
- Green for Micro Funding
- Areas of strong focus such as Athy Model School and Climate Innovation Hub.
- Remote Working Strategy – hub network
- Equine Innovation hub
- MERITS – projected to open in September with 12+ clients lined up.

Councillor Moore suggested that the diaspora should be utilised to take full advantage of international links. Ms. McNabb advised the committee that she was working with the twinning group in this regard.

Ms. Boland asked that the remote working strategy should look in particular at geographical gaps in the system. Ms. McNabb advised that they were collaborating with Bord na Mona in Newbridge on remote working.

Councillor McEvoy said that a number of health checks were carried out on towns in the Clane-Maynooth municipal district which could be looked at countywide. He asked when will the review of the LECP be carried out.

Ms. McNabb advised the committee that the LECP will have all of the elements of the existing policy and will be aligned to the regional enterprise plan.

Councillor Keatley said that community facilities with broadband could be of use as remote hubs.

Mr. G. Prendergast advised that town centre locations should be used for hubs to help keep them vibrant.

Councillor Keatley asked if there was any flexibility on the shopfront scheme to assist with outdoor dining.

Ms. S. Kavanagh advised the committee that an announcement was expected shortly in respect of grants for outdoor dining facilities to help those businesses most affected. Applications would require a Section 254 licence to obtain a grant.



Planning

4. To receive an update from the Director of Service, Planning and Strategic Development

Mr. Eoghan Ryan, Director of Service update the Committee on a number of issues:

- Review of Kildare County Development Plan: Over 300 submissions were received the Chief Executive's Report to the members will issue in May.
- Athy Local Area Plan: 62 submissions received. Chief Executive report issued on 1 March. Meeting with members due on 19 April.
- Naas Local Area Plan: Closing date for submissions on draft plan - 21 April.
- Draft Kildare Town Transport Assessment was circulated to the members.
- €15.6 million allocated to Kildare under the Urban Regeneration Fund
 - Naas Town Renewal - €3.5 million
 - Maynooth - €1.9 million
 - Celbridge-Hazelhatch Road / bridge €10 million

Councillor Coleman welcomed the funding for the bridge in Celbridge.

Councillor Power noted that the members would be pushing for funding for a second bridge in Newbridge.

The report was noted.

5. To receive a briefing on the rural housing guidelines

Ms. Jane O'Reilly gave a briefing to the members on the draft rural housing guidelines [See Appendix 2]. She advised the committee members that it is intended to bring the guide back to the committee for approval once completed.

Councillor McEvoy said that it was important to have a checklist for applicants to ask their architects/agent prior to making a planning application to make the process easier.

Councillor Moore said that it was suggested previously to organise a briefing with planning agents to discuss the process.



Mr. E. Ryan said that the Department of Environment will be issuing guidelines on rural housing which will also be of assistance to all parties in the process.

6. Update on the Review of the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023

Mr. E. Ryan advised the members that he was seeking their feedback in respect of the economic aspects of the County Development Plan. It was agreed to organise a separate briefing with the committee members to discuss and get their input.

Action: Briefing to be arranged with members for 8 April to discuss the Economic chapters of the County Development Plan.

7. To receive a briefing on UNESCO Bid – Dún Ailinne/Royal Sites

Ms. Bridget Loughlin, Heritage Officer updated the members on the Royal Sites of Ireland project which related to the traditional royal inauguration sites at Cashel, Dún Ailinne, Hill of Uisneach, the Rathcroghan Complex, and Tara Complex. The Director of Service advised the members that a submission was being prepared to ensure that Dún Ailinne remained on the tentative candidate list for World Heritage Status as part of the Royal Sites of Ireland. He advised the committee that he was making contact with the landowners and was seeking the support of the Committee to bring the matter to the Corporate Policy Group. A website will shortly go live to support the project.

Action: Item to go to Corporate Policy Group for endorsement.

Referrals from Council Meetings

8. Full Council 32/0626

“That the council investigates and implement a system similar to the internationally recognised Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) scheme, ensuring that they involve all relevant stakeholders in its development including members of An Garda Síochána and the local community.”

The chair welcomed Councillor Pender to the meeting.

Councillor Pender advised the Committee that he had brought the motion to the MD meeting as he believed there were practical measures that could be made through



Planning. It was about reducing policing requirements and reducing crime hotspots where places are properly planned. He outlined examples of issues such as laneways and the simple changes that could improve and enhance areas i.e .hoarding of vacant sits, appropriate lighting, fencing, hedging, trees and landscaping.

Mr. E. Ryan said that good principles of urban design would help and that the joint policing forum might also be an appropriate forum.

Mr. G. Prendergast said that he was not in favour of permeability in housing developments for cars. Mr, Ryan said that the guidelines could be looked at in the review of the County Development Plan.

Councillor Pender said that he would like to see more in the County Development Plan in respect of the issue.

Action: Matter to be considered in the context of the Review of the County Development Plan.

9. Any Other Business

Councillor McEvoy raised the issue of the gap in legislation in respect of the removal of hedgerows and trees which fell between the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Local Authority. It was agreed that the matter could be looked, at the next meeting.

Action: Councillor McEvoy to revert back to the Committee

10.Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for 17 June 2021.

The meeting closed.

Councillor Ivan Keatley

Chairman





APPENDIX 1

Economic Development, Enterprise Update

ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT SERVICES

KCC Eco Dev & LEO Operating Full Services Remotely

In the interest of Public Health and Safety, KCC LEO must operate its services remotely however, **KCC LEO remains open and continues to offer supports** to the local business community. Brexit supports, business advice and e-commerce funding and training are just some of the supports available. Please advise your Colleagues that all business supports are available on our website at **localenterprise.ie/Kildare**. For all other queries

email **localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie** or call the office line on **045980838**. For continued updates please follow KCC LEO on social media.

Business advice and mentoring

Free of charge one to one business advice and mentoring are available from KCC LEO. Please advise Colleagues to email **localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie** to set up a one to one session with a business advisor. Specialised Brexit advisors are also available.

E-commerce Funding and Support for business During Lock

Current lockdown implications have seen many Kildare businesses close the doors of their businesses again, meaning that the ability to generate online sales is now critical. As with 2020, KCC LEO continue to provide extensive ecommerce support.

1. Online Trading Vouchers to the value of €2,500 are available to businesses to improve e-commerce capabilities are available. In 2020, KCC LEO invested €1.5M in these vouchers to support Kildare businesses in moving their businesses online.

Please advise Colleagues of this available funding.

The first step in applying is to attend an information seminar. The next seminar is taking place on 15th April. For more information and to secure a place, visit **<https://www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare/Training-Events/Online-Bookings/Trading-Online-Voucher-Seminar-15th-Apr.html>**



- 2. Practical workshops** designed to teach Kildare businesses how to maximise websites, improve digital marketing strategies and acquire the technical skills needed to increase online sales are taking place frequently over the coming months.

Free of charge one to one e-commerce mentoring is also available. Please advise Colleagues of these practical supports, available to book on our website here <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare/Training-Events/Online-Bookings/>

- 3. Shop County Kildare** was established by KCC to cater to needs of businesses throughout the pandemic. The dedicated local website provides Kildare businesses the opportunity to make the move to online sales in a free of charge, quick and user-friendly model. Following an extensive marketing campaign throughout November and December 2020, the website has generated significant traffic and has subsequently led to increased sales for Kildare businesses over the Christmas period.

While the website continues to operate, and remains open to Kildare businesses in need of an alternative route to generating sales.

www.shopcountykildare.ie has just under gone an Audit and future direction of it will be determined.

Green and sustainable Program for all Businesses

€100,000 Green for Micro' Funding Initiative

The Green for Micro programme was launched to help businesses across County Kildare to prepare for the low-carbon economy. This is a Local Enterprise Office initiative to increase awareness around sustainability and the low carbon future. Businesses in County Kildare are being offered a unique opportunity to cut harmful emissions and make significant energy, waste, water and other savings through this programme.



Please advise Colleagues that applications are open for the Green for Micro Programme: <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare/Financial-Supports/Green-for-Micro/>

Kildare County Council Food Strategy

In tandem with the Kildare Economic Strategy we have been going through a rigorous process with key stakeholders to develop A Kildare County Food Strategy. The draft strategy is undergoing final graphical updates. The publication date is the end of March 2021, in preparation for some sign of lifted restrictions in the economy in April.

Four-year Local Enterprise Development plan for Enterprise Ireland

On Friday 12th March, Kildare Head of Enterprise Jacqui McNabb completed and submitted the Local Enterprise Development Plan. The strategy sets out activity for the coming four years which Enterprise Ireland will use to determine budget allocations

County Kildare Diaspora Strategy

Facilitated by Sally Murphy of Murphy Communications, KCC are seeking to create linkages and networks that create and maintain relationships, share experiences, create opportunities and deliver on further investment and economic activity for our County. Consultation with 19 key stakeholder groups has begun.

Strategic Review of Website Kildare.ie

A strategic review of the website *Kildare.ie* is currently underway to clearly define a future roadmap for the platform facilitated by Fusion Marketing.

Tá Gnó Tábhachtach don Gheilleagar - Shopfront Grant

To celebrate Seachtain na Gaeilge (1st – 5th March), and to highlight the supports available to local business owners, KCC LEO launched the '*Comharthaíocht Campaign*'.

The objective of the campaign was to engage with local shop owners to encourage the promotion of the Irish language through the use of the KCC Shopfront Grant.



Please advise Colleagues that applications for the Shopfront Grant are now open. For more information, please visit: <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare/Enterprise-Development/Shop-Front-Improvement-Scheme/>

Establishment of the Kildare Remote Working Hub Network

Establishment of the Kildare Remote Working Hub Network took place on Thursday March 4th. 14 hub owners attended. A key objective of KCC's Economic Strategy 2025 was to Create and Support a network of connected Hubs in the County.

KCC LEO continue to work on the development of a draft Operating Proposal and mapping and classification exercise, ensuring adequate and quality space is distributed equally across the county. The next meeting is due to take place virtually on Thursday 8th April 2021

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – CAPITAL PROJECTS

MERITS – Innovation Hub

A revised construction programme has been developed with the key stakeholders. Once the site can reopen after COVID restrictions the main contractor (Duggan Lynch) has a further 2 months on site to complete their scope of works.

Due to the construction delays, the KCC Eco Dev department decided to press ahead with running its first programmes on a virtual basis. The programme for the first of these, aimed at existing digital businesses seeking to expand into export markets, was launched on Friday 5th March. 42 high Tech Entrepreneurs from across the county attended to express their interest in the first Global ambition programme commencing at the end of March and put their name down as potential tenants when the building opens in September 2021.

A second programme, aimed at digital Startups specifically with products/services to address Sustainability/Climate Action markets is being considered.

MERITS joined with a Maynooth University team to submit a bid to be designated a European Digital Innovation Hub – this highly competitive process will lead to one or



two such hubs being established in Ireland, with funding from the EU to support a 7-year programme of work.

Equine Tech Innovation Hub

Through the structure of CKCN, the Business unit of Kildare county Council plans the establishment of Equine Tech Innovation Ireland on the grounds of the Irish National Stud as a sectoral stimulus to develop an equine innovation hub of enterprise, innovation, applied research, commercialisation and learning. Uniquely, it will offer a single access source of equine technical and entrepreneurial innovation.

Following funding approval from Kildare LEADER of € 87,821.25, CKCN have appointed Glounthane Property Development to carry out the renovation. CKCN have appointed Vivian Cummins to work with the project team and a start date for construction of the 11th January was agreed with the contractors and the Irish National Stud. In light of Level 5 restrictions and the cessation of non-essential construction activity set out by the Government, the project will only proceed when construction activity is allowed to resume.

Athy Food, Drink & Skills Innovation Hub

CKCN/KCC was awarded €311,000 under RRDF Category 2 funding to support the appointment of an Architect-led Design Team to perform professional services for the delivery of Athy Food, Drink & Skills Innovation Hub.

Following the completion of the tendering process, a design team led by Bluett O'Donoghue has been appointed. The project team have hold weekly meetings with the design team and a programme schedule has been approved. Work has advanced considerably on the detailed design and Part 8 planning process following a pre planning meeting with the various departments in Kildare County Council. The project team have also briefed the Athy MD Councillors on the project. The Part 8 planning consultation process commenced on the 23rd February and will close to submissions on the 6th of April.



The team have also submitted a funding application for under RRDF Category 1 to the Department of Rural and Community Development to provide for construction works associated with the renovation of the hub and a decision is expected in Q2 2021.

Clentech Hub

KCC Chief Executive and Head of Enterprise presented a proposal to Bord na Mona on a collaboration development that would realise a Cleantech Innovation Hub in Newbridge County Kildare. Bord Na Mona are now reviewing this collaboration in the context of other projects tin hand. As one of KCC's Strategic Economic projects, this will continue to advance the Vision.

APPENDIX: COVID 19 BUSINESS SUPPORTS

Please advise your Colleagues of the following business supports available in response to COVID19.



