



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

### **Minutes of meeting held at 3.00 p.m. on Thursday, 23 September 2021 via Video Conferencing.**

Cathaoirleach: Councillor Ivan Keatley

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

Also Present: Eoghan Ryan, Director of Services; Marian Higgins, A/Director of Services; Mairead hunt, Senior Executive Officer, Jacqui McNabb, Head of Enterprise, Amy Granville, Senior Planner, Conor Sweeney, Mark McLoughlin, Administrative Officer.

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As the Cathaoirleach was unavoidably delayed, Councillor O'Dwyer opened the meeting as chairperson.

#### **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 17 June 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2021 were proposed by Councillor Duffy, seconded by Councillor Moore and duly adopted.

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

Ms. M. Higgins, Acting Director of Service gave the members an update [See Appendix 1] in respect of the following:

- Shopfront Grants
- Town Village Renewal - Street Enhancement Scheme - 3 completed
- Outdoor Seating and Accessories for Tourism and Hospitality Businesses - 97 businesses supported
- Upcoming Innovation Conference - Fueling Small Business Success through Innovation – webinar on 30 September
- Start Your Own Business on the Blueway course
- Food, Craft & Women in Business Cluster Groups Launched
- MERITS – Innovation & Incubation Centre opening in October
- Equine Tech Innovation Hub – complete in October
- Athy Food, Drink & Skills Innovation Hub
- K-Hub Network

The report was noted.

### **4. Kildare Local Economic and Community Plan**

Ms. Higgins advised the Committee that she expected that guidelines would be issued on this within the next few weeks and she would update the members at the next meeting.

### **5. To consider the Remote Working Hub Policy**

Ms. J. McNabb gave a presentation to the Committee in respect of the Kildare Hubs Strategy 2021-2025.

- Context for Kildare Hubs Strategy
- Policy towards Hubs
- Mapping Hub Infrastructure in Kildare
- Strategic Vision, Objectives & Themes
- Actions & Implementation

She noted that the Council have examining hubs since 2017 with MERITS being the prime example, however the change towards remote working in recent years had changed this.

Mr, G. Prendergast said that, in respect of the Equine Hub, it was important that we needed to ensure that Horse Racing Ireland remains in Kildare and that we should ensure the Department of Agriculture work with the Council on this.

Ms, McNabb said that the Council were working with Horse Racing Ireland with start your own business courses and developing skills for horse owners. They were now looking at expanding the space in the Irish National Stud even before it opened,

Councillor Power said that the demand for hubs was near capacity and that it was good to see that there was potential in the MERITS building for further expansion.

Councillor McEvoy said that the benefits of a potential 18,000 employees working remotely in the county with reduced greenhouse gases should be used as a selling point with a push towards hubs near transport links.

Councillor Duffy note the use of libraries and asked why all libraries were not included.

Ms. Higgins said that some libraries were not suitable but that there was capital investment, for example with Naas Library allowing for meeting spaces, printing etc.

Councillor Moore said that more information was required on the survey results on remote working while Councillor Duffy asked if there was work completed on the geographical spread and sphere of influence that a hub can have to as to what will make it attractive.

Ms. McNabb said that there was some analysis with public transport being a crucial element. She said that she expected to come back to the committee members at the next meeting.

## **Planning**

### **6. 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 [See Appendix II]:

Kildare County Development Pan:

- Work ongoing on a number of chapters / policy areas including SEA, AA, - SFRA; survey work on 56 small towns, villages etc completed
- Early stages of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) is also underway.
- The Rural Housing Design Guidance document is being finalised.
- The Open Space Strategy is being finalised.
- A 'Building Heights- Position Paper' and a 'Hedgerows, Treelines and their Protection' position paper to inform the policy context of the County Development Plan have been prepared and have issued to the elected members.

Athy Local Area Plan: In effect on 13 September 2021.

Naas Local Area Plan: Special Meeting of the Full Council on the 21 October to consider the Chief Executive's Report and Proposed Material Alterations.

Kildare Town Local Area Plan: Draft Kildare Town Transport Assessment complete

Maynooth Local Area Plan: Investigating joint Local Area Plan with Meath County Council

The report was noted.

## **7. To receive an update on the Rural Housing Guidelines**

Ms, Jane O'Reilly advised the Committee that the document was an update of the previous one presented to the members and would welcome any comments.

Councillor McEvoy said that it would be important that a few key points were highlighted in a format that would allow the public to understand and that the key considerations for site selection could be easily identified so that applicants could critique their own agents before planning applications are lodged.

Councillor Duffy said that the capacity of an area to absorb more one-off houses should be included and that there were cases where applicants were taking out hedgerows prior to applying for permission for one-off dwellings. Councillor Moore said that an agents meeting should be held to highlight the issues for them.

Ms. A. Granville said that the Council would look at putting together a presentation suitable for the public which could be put on the website/ social media to assist applicants.

As the meeting had reached two hours duration, in accordance with Standing Orders, on the proposal of Councillor Power, seconded by Councillor O'Dwyer, it was agreed that standing orders were suspended for fifteen minutes to allow for the completion of the agenda.

#### **8. To consider the methodology for the Kildare Wind Energy Strategy**

Ms. Jane O'Reilly, A/Senior Executive Planner advised the Committee that the Wind Energy Strategy would form part of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 and was being prepared in accordance with the draft guidelines issued by the Department and to comply with the Climate Action Plan.

Mr. Robert Brereton, Assistant Planner outlined the details of the Strategy including the policy context, locations of current applications and permissions, other considerations such as wind speed and areas of landscape sensitivity.

Councillor Power asked if there was any national policy in respect of community gain in this respect.

Councillor Duffy said that it was important that biodiversity particularly along the Barrow / Grand Canal were taken into account.

Ms. A. Granville, Senior Planner advised the Committee that the policy will form an appendix in the adopted County Development Plan

#### **9. To receive a report on Section 254 licensing (outdoor dining)**

Ms. M. Hunt, Senior Executive Officer outlined to the members the process in respect of applying for outdoor dining facilities under Section 254 of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

She outlined the changes in legislation that were introduced as a response to Covid-19, the processes involved and the challenges that the Council were facing in respect of outdoor dining. She advised the Committee that there was need for a new policy in this regard for 2022.

The Cathaoirleach advised the members to consider the issues involved and that the matter could be further considered at the next meeting in December.

**Any Other Business.**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be brought forward from the scheduled date of 16 December to a more suitable date. Mr M. McLoughlin agreed to liaise with the Cathaoirleach on the matter.

The meeting closed at 5.15 p.m.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Progress Report from Ms. Marian Higgins, A/Director of Economic Development and Enterprise

#### GRANT SCHEMES

*\*Shopfront Grant Budget Remaining*

<i>Kildare/Newbridge</i>	<i>€645</i>
<i>Athy</i>	<i>€14,922</i>
<i>Naas</i>	<i>€384</i>
<i>Clane Maynooth</i>	<i>€22,343</i>
<i>Celbridge Leixlip</i>	<i>€26,939</i>

#### **Town Village Renewal - Street Enhancement Scheme**

	<b>No.</b>	<b>Value</b>
<b>Completed Applications</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>€20,501</b>
<b>Draft Applications</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>€15,600</b>

#### **NEW Applications close for Outdoor Seating and Accessories for Tourism and Hospitality Businesses**

On Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September, the Outdoor Seating & Accessories Grant Scheme closed for NEW applications. The scheme provided support to **97** individual independent hospitality and tourism businesses in Kildare towards the cost of equipment to provide additional outdoor seating and facilitate these individual independent businesses to increase their outdoor dining capacity for the summer of 2021.

#### **Upcoming Innovation Conference - Fueling Small Business Success through Innovation**

On Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September (9:30am - 1pm), Kildare Local Enterprise Office will host the National Innovation Conference for the Local Enterprise Offices. Businesses all over the Country are being offered a unique opportunity to improve competitive edge with the online event.

The webinar comes as part of a wider initiative of Kildare Local Enterprise Office with support from Enterprise Ireland to help small businesses finance research and innovation projects. The initiative features Innovation Vouchers worth €5,000 to assist a companies in exploring new business opportunities with a registered knowledge provider.

Bookings can be made for the online event at:

<https://www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare/Training-Events/Online-Bookings/INNOVATION-WEBINAR-2021-.html>

### **Start Your Own Business on the Blueway**

On Monday 13th September, 12 new businesses began the 8-week '*Start Your Own Business on the Blueway*' course.

Following plans to upgrade the Barrow Canal towpath 46km Blueway as a major economic boom for local communities, Kildare Local Enterprise Office are providing the Start Your Own Business on the Blueway programme to potential new businesses in the tourism, recreation and hospitality sectors. This is the third series of this course.

### **Food, Craft & Women in Business Cluster Groups Launched**

On Monday 6th September, Kildare Local Enterprise Office launched networking cluster groups in craft, food, and female entrepreneurship to harness the power of the collective and provide a space for collaboration, development and business opportunities.

The series features sector-specific monthly networking meetups with a focus on upskilling.

Opportunity here: <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare/News/Kildare-Clusters-Craft-Food-and-Women-in-Business.html>

### **€100,000 Green for Micro' Funding Initiative**

Kildare Local Enterprise Office continues to provide support for businesses across county Kildare to prepare for the low-carbon economy.



Businesses in County Kildare can avail of two full days of consultancy costs worth €1,800, a unique opportunity to cut harmful emissions and make significant energy, waste, water and other savings through this programme.

applications are open for the Green for Micro Programme at:

<https://www.localenterprise.ie/Kildare/Financial-Supports/Green-for-Micro/>

### **Economic Support Services**

#### **MERITS – Innovation & Incubation Centre**

The Practical Completion Certificate has been issued for the building. Internal furnishing and ICT fit out are now underway with a view to opening the building in October. Applications for tenancy within the MERITS building has been steady and the evaluation process is well underway. The team recently announced its Autumn schedule of programmes with media coverage across social media, local print media and on KFM



The two LEO funded Programmes, TechHatch for early-stage businesses and GoGlobal for more developed companies that are revenue-generating, will commence this month and run for the next two months, leading to a public Demo-Day and Investor pitch day respectively

#### **Equine Tech Innovation Hub**

Construction commenced on site on the 31st May at the Irish National Stud. It is expected that the programme of works will be completed in September.

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

The design team have also submitted the Fire Safety and Disability Access certificate applications and a decision on those will be made in August both now approved. The team 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 however the application was not successful. The team will be pursuing other funding streams once they reopen in the coming weeks.

### **K-Hub Network**

Hosted by Kildare County Council The public and private co working and innovation space owners/managers have been meeting monthly and have formed the K-Hub network. The network leverage economies of scale in research, collaboration, training and funding applications and is supported by the economic development unit in Kildare County Council

### **Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail, Damien English TD visit to LEO Kildare 21<sup>st</sup> Sept 2021**

The Minister is meeting Local Enterprise Office teams nationwide, to see first-hand the work being done to support enterprise development on the ground and hear of the recent 'Look for Local' campaign in the county. As part of the visit the Minister met with two companies, held a meeting with key stakeholders in Aras Chill Dara and visited the MERITS Hub. Speaking on the visit Minister English stated that the 'The Local Enterprise Office in Kildare have worked hard with businesses across the county to help sustain them and local job opportunities over the past 18 months.'

## APPENDIX II

### **Progress Report from Mr. Eoghan Ryan, Director of Planning and Strategic Development**

#### **Kildare County Development Plan:**

Work is progressing on the drafting of a number of Draft CDP chapters. The following will inform the drafting of each chapter:

- Mandatory and non-mandatory objectives from the Planning & Development Act
- Section 28 Guidelines & SPPRs
- NPF NPO objectives
- RSES RPO objectives
- CE report
- Feedback at members workshops
- KCC Advisory Group and
- CE report on Members Directions

Early stages of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) is also underway.

Work is progressing well on the Functional Urban Area Analysis/Rural Housing Report, and the Needs Demand Assessment (HNDA) with the support of AIRO in Maynooth University and the Department of Housing and Local Government.

Survey work has now been completed for all non LAP small towns, villages, rural settlements and nodes (56 in total) to inform the County's Settlement Hierarchy in accordance with NPO 18b of the NPF, which will in turn inform the review of the CDP. Work is progressing well on the Settlement Plans - with some provisions to cater for one-off housing. The Planning Department have also been engaging with the NTA in relation to Modal Shift Targets in the forthcoming County Development Plan.

The Rural Housing Design Guidance document is being finalised.

The Open Space Strategy is being finalised.

A 'Building Heights- Position Paper' and a 'Hedgerows, Treelines and their Protection' position paper to inform the policy context of the County Development Plan have been prepared and have issued to the elected members.

Tenders have now been received and are being considered for a Virtual Consultation on the emerging Draft CDP.

## **Statutory Local Area Plans**

### **Athy Local Area Plan**

The Local Area Plan has been adopted and came into effect on 13 September 2021.

### **Naas Local Area Plan**

The Chief Executive's Report on submissions received to the Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Naas Local Area Plan 2021-2027 was circulated to the Elected Members of the full Council on the 16th of September. A Special Meeting of the Full Council will be held on the 21st of October to consider the Chief Executive's Report and Proposed Material Alterations.

### **Kildare Town Local Area Plan**

Draft Kildare Town Transport Assessment complete. Once the Naas LAP is adopted work will recommence on this LAP

### **Maynooth Local Area Plan**

Director of Services met with Des Foley, DOS for Meath County Council to discuss the preparation of a Joint LAP with Meath County Council, as required in the RSES (EMRA). ER discussed context and proposed guiding principles and that Kildare County Council should be the lead authority. There is general support for a Joint LAP. General discussion around Terms of References which will be developed over the coming month. Expect an initial Steering Group meeting to take place in early/mid October (following the adoption of the Meath County Development Plan).

Transportation Section have appointed consultants for the preparation of the Strategic Transport Assessment to inform the LAP. A separate meeting was established between the KCC and MCC Directors of Roads & Transport and their senior engineers to advance the Public Consultation process of the Transport Strategy.

Work has also commenced on background survey work including the preparation of the ACA Statement of Character, Social Infrastructure Audit and Sustainable

Planning and Infrastructural Assessment. KCC have engaged AIRO to complete a micro-census of the town to inform the LAP