**Minutes of Meeting of SPC 1 – Economic Development, Enterprise Support & Tourism**

**Held in County Hall on 10th July, 2015 at 2.30pm**

**Present:** Cllr Pat Millea (Chair), Cllr Peter Cleere, Cllr Tomas Breathnach, Cllr Michael Doyle, Cllr Patrick O’Neill, Cllr Patrick McKee, Mr Michael Kennedy, Mr John Bambrick, Ms Theresa Delahunty and Mr Charles Wani.

**Apologies:** Cllr Pat Fitzpatrick, Mr Phil Funchion and Mr Martin Prendiville, Head of Finance.

**In Attendance:** Sean McKeown, Head of Enterprise; Aisling Hayes, Administrative Officer; Stephen O’Connor, Administrative Officer.

The Chairman welcomed the new Community & Voluntary Sector members nominated by the PPN to the Committee, namely Ms Theresa Delahunty and Mr Charles Wani.

1. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24th April, 2015 were proposed by Cllr Peter Cleere, seconded by Mr John Bambrick and agreed.

1. **Matters Arising**

The Head of Enterprise updated the Committee on the Careers & Opportunity Fair held in the Rivercourt Hotel on 4th June. It was noted that there were over 120 job vacancies on display from the 12 employers that had stands at the event and that over 750 people visited the Fair on the day.

It was also noted that discussion on a possible Rates Incentive Scheme for local business would be placed on the agenda at the next meeting of the SPC.

1. **Update on Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP)**

It was noted that the draft high level goals presented at the joint workshop of the SPC and LCDC held on 27th May last were subsequently incorporated into the draft socio-economic statements and issued for public consultation.

The Head of Enterprise summarised the public consultation phase of the LECP that had taken place during the month of June. It was noted that:

* the draft socio-economic statements had been put on public display in County Hall and all of the branch offices of the library;
* a public consultation session had been held in each of the 3 Municipal District areas to present and receive feedback on the draft socio-economic statements;
* an information leaflet had been prepared, with the assistance of the National Adult Literacy Agency, explaining the LECP and public consultation process and was distributed to the over 180 groups in the County affiliated to the PPN;
* public notice, advertisements and editorial seeking submissions on the draft socio-economic statements were placed in the Kilkenny People;
* a facility was also set up to facilitate online submissions and social media was used to promote the public consultation phase;
* despite all of the above efforts to encourage participation, engagement in the public consultation was limited. That said the feedback and submissions received were very constructive.

Mr McKeown circulated copies of the report on the public consultation and summarised the main submissions received. It was noted that the report had been agreed by the LCDC at their meeting held earlier in the day. It was also noted that:

* the 13 high level goals put forward in the draft socio-economic statements had been generally well received;
* the feedback / submissions received did not indicate there are many major gaps in or variances to be made to the socio-economic statements ; and
* the draft statements capture all of the major issues and priorities for local people, groups and agencies.

There followed a discussion during which a number of issues were raised. These may be summarised as follows along with the responses:

* Where is the funding going to come from to implement the LECP? It was noted that the LECP is to provide a framework to guide all publically funded local and community development programmes in the County over the next 6 years. This will involve the publically funded agencies agreeing to implement/resource the actions agreed.
* How does the LECP relate to the South East Action Plan for Jobs (SEAPJ) currently being prepared? The LECP will be aligned with and will derive many of its actions from the SEAPJ.
* How will the Actions agreed during the next stage of the LECP process be communicated and what engagement is planned? It was noted that the detailed actions will be put on public display.
* Tourism is an important economic driver in Kilkenny. It was noted that Kilkenny City and County is well placed to maximise opportunities that arise on foot of the Ireland’s Ancient East brand recently launched by Failte Ireland. It was also noted that the ‘Three Sisters’ bid for the European capital of Culture if successful will benefit the tourism sector in Kilkenny;
* The Kilkenny Rural Transport initiative has been very successful and a focus should be placed on developing it further in conjunction with neighbouring Counties? It was noted that this is an action that needs to be pursued in conjunction with the LCDC.
* What developments are planned for the development of the third level sector as an economic driver in its own right, especially foreign students that could potentially come to live and study in Kilkenny? It was noted that third level opportunities are actively been pursued, especially in the context of the development of the Diageo site.
* Reskilling and retraining initiatives need to be put in place? It was noted that this matter will be discussed with the Education & Training Board (ET&B.)
* Broadband is critically important to the future development of the County. It was noted that a number of pilot initiatives have been and are being developed in the City and County to improve broadband access for local business but that more initiatives need to be developed, especially in rural areas. The Chairman referred to a meeting he had attended earlier in the day convened by the Regional Assembly at which the proposed SIRO/ broadband joint venture between ESB and Vodafone was discussed.

The report on public consultation was agreed by the Committee.

1. **Next Steps on LECP**

The Head of Enterprise outlined the next steps in the LECP process as follows:

* + the 3 Municipal Districts must each consider and adopt the draft socio-economic statements and the report on public consultation;
  + the draft statements and report must also be sent to the Regional Assembly for comment/feedback; and
  + the process of preparing detailed actions for inclusion in the LECP will now begin based on the high level goals.

1. **AOB**

It was agreed to convene the next meeting on 30th October, 2015.

There being no further business, the Chairman concluded the meeting at 4.30pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

CHAIRMAN