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

**Held in County Hall on 11th December, 2015 at 2.00pm**

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

**Apologies:** Cllr Patrick O’Neill, Mr Michael Kennedy and Ms Deirdre Shine.

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

1. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30th October, 2015 were proposed by Cllr Patrick McKee, seconded by Mr John Bambrick and agreed.

1. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

1. **Update on Local Enterprise Office (LEO)**

It was noted that a ‘Year-To-Date’ (YTD) Progress Update (to 3rd December, 2015) on delivery of the LEO’s annual action plan had been circulated to the members in advance of the meeting. The Head of Enterprise summarised the report. It was noted the LEO had exceeded the targets set in most of the indicators. It was also noted that the list of 23 projects approved Measure 1 grant assistance in 2015 were appended to the report. Mr Phil Funchion asked if it was a condition of grant-aid that promoters approved adhered to employment law legislation. The Head of Enterprise confirmed that it was implicit in the standard letter of offer of grant-aid that promoters adhere to all legislative conditions that apply to business, including employment law. In particular, he said that the LEO requires copies of the contract of employment and evidence of wages and taxes paid in respect of employees where salary costs are supported. Mr Funchion stated that as a Board member of the former Kilkenny CEB, he had been given an assurance in writing by Minister Bruton that the issue of employment law attaching to conditions of grant approval would be revisited under the new LEO. It was agreed that the Committee write to the Minister seeking clarification on the position.

1. **Economic Actions of Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP)**

It was noted that the public consultation phase on the draft LECP actions had ended on 30th November last. Stephen O’Connor provided a brief summary of the public consultation: He confirmed that the draft actions were presented to each of the Municipal Districts (MDs) at their meetings. A summary of the main points raised at MD meetings are as follows:

* There needs to be a focus on job creation in Castlecomer;
* The plan needs to be targeted at town level;
* There needs to be a broadband needs analysis undertaken in the north Kilkenny area;
* Tourism opportunity for tourist routes linking the city to north Kilkenny;
* “Fab Labs” should be invetsigated for educational development;
* Small business need to be assisted to explore public procurement opportunities;
* The plan requires resources to fulfil the potential it offers;
* The proposed regional economic forum is critical;
* ERDF funding opportunities should be explored to help fund the LECP actions;
* Social enterprise offers potential and should be studied, for facilities, opportunities and resources;
* Broadband is essential for communication and business;
* Monitoring and reporting of the LECP is critical and there should be an annual report presented to each Municipal District on progress in implementing the LECP.

Mr O’Connor confirmed that there were 4 submissions made through the public consult site and 7 submissions received directly via e-mail. A summary of the main points raised are as follows:

* There is a need to matching the skills of unemployed with industry specific opportunities;
* Acknowledgement that designation of REDZ zones within the county offers opportunity;
* There is a need for structured training programmes for ‘front of house’ staff in the tourism sector;
* Social enterprise offers opportunities;
* There needs to be greater connection between Kildalton College and Teagasc, to examine opportunities such as in the equine sector;
* Tourism promotion needs to expand beyond the city;
* REDZ and LEADER funding should be prioritised on supporting rural towns;
* Broadband availability is a major issue in rural areas;
* There should be a village renewal / Tax incentive scheme for rural towns.

The report on public consultation was proposed by Cllr Michael Doyle, seconded by Mr John Bambrick and agreed. The Head of Enterprise confirmed that the feedback received from the public consultation had been taken into account in redrafting the economic actions circulated in advance of the meeting. There followed a discussion during which the following further revisions to the LECP were agreed:

* A commitment be included to support the Fair Employment principle, as agreed and accepted by Kilkenny County Council in September 2013;
* RE: High Level Goal 2: A commitment be included to support the retention of local services, especially in rural areas (including rural post offices); and
* RE: High Level Goal 4: A commitment be included to support the Gold Star Project, which is aimed at encouraging business to be more inclusive of people with disabilities.

The Head of Enterprise summarised the proposed Implementation and Monitoring arrangements for the LECP as follows:

* All stakeholders involved must ensure they collaborate and allocate the necessary resources towards actions contained in the LECP;
* Agencies given a lead role will have primary responsibility for ensuring that the actions listed in the LECP are implemented, and they will be asked to provide regular updates on their delivery;
* An LECP Advisory Group will be established to comprise representatives from the LCDC and SPC1 to oversee the overall monitoring and implementation of the LECP;
* The Chairs of the LCDC and SPC1 will sit on the Advisory Group, along with nominated members from each Committee;
* The Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly are to establish an ‘Economic Strategy Forum’ which will also have a monitoring role in relation to the LECP;
* Each year, the support staff for SPC1 and the LCDC will engage with all of the stakeholder organisations to prepare an annual action plan, which will comprise a list of the prioritised actions from the LECP to be delivered in that year. These annual plans will include details of the agencies involved in the delivery of each action, along with baseline figures (where available), key performance indicators, milestones and outcomes/ targets to be delivered in that year;
* The annual actions plans will be presented to SPC1 and the LCDC for approval at their first meeting each year. The first annual action plan will be finalised by the end of Quarter 2 2016 and will cover the period until the end of 2017;
* The Chairs of the LCDC and SPC1 will provide a written report on the progress of the implementation of the community and economic actions respectively, to Kilkenny County Council, and the three Municipal Districts bi-annually. These progress reports will be published and will identify areas for further action.

The above Monitoring arrangements were proposed by Cllr Patrick McKee, seconded by Cllr Tomas Breathnach and agreed.

The draft LECP, as circulated, was approved on the proposal of Cllr Peter Cleere, seconded by Cllr Pat Fitzpatrick and unanimously agreed by the Committee.

It was noted that the LCDC approved the draft Plan at their meeting held earlier that day. It was further noted that the LECP will now be presented to Kilkenny County Council to be formally adopted at their meeting to be held on 21st December next. If endorsed it was noted the LCDC had proposed at their meeting that the Plan be launched on 12th February, 2016. This was agreed by the Committee.

1. **AOB**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would take place in March, 2016 (date to be confirmed), by which time the LEO should have received its budget allocations for the year, and the annual action plan for the LECP will have been drafted.

There being no further business, the Chairman concluded the meeting at 4.15pm.

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

 CHAIRMAN