

Minutes of the Meeting of SPC1
Economic Development, Enterprise Support and Tourism
held in County Hall on 16th June, 2017 at 11am.

Present: Cllr. Pat Millea (Chair), Cllr. Tomas Breathnach, Mr. Phil Funchion, Ms. Theresa Delahunty, Cllr Patrick O'Neill, Cllr Pat Fitzpatrick, Ms Deirdre Shine, Cllr Michael Doyle, Cllr Peter Cleere, Mr. Charles Wani, Mr John Bambrick.

Apologies: Cllr Patrick Mc Kee, Mary Mulholland, Brian Tyrrell

In Attendance: Martin Prendiville, Fiona Deegan, Brid Hynes, Aisling Hayes, Mary Walsh

1. Minutes of Meeting held on 16th March, 2017

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16th March, 2017 were proposed by Cllr. Peter Cleere and seconded by Mr. Phil Funchion and agreed.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Update

Ms. Deegan circulated the LEO Local Enterprise Development Plan 2017 – 2020 and confirmed that the plan sets out the actions that the LEO propose to deliver over the next 4 years, in particular in 2017. Ms. Deegan clarified the budget allocation for 2017 as €262,450 for Measure 1 activities and €217,285 for Measure 2 activities. Ms. Deegan outlined the Key Performance Metrics which are used by Enterprise Ireland to monitor the impact of the LEOs, comparing 2016 outputs with 2017 and 2020 targets. It was noted in particular that 255 additional jobs were created in LEO Kilkenny client supported companies in 2016.

Ms. Deegan stated that approval had been received from Enterprise Ireland in the last number of weeks in relation to the plan and following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. Peter Cleere and agreed to adopt the plan for 2017.

4. Update on Economic Actions of Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP)

Ms. Brid Hynes circulated a detailed update of the Economic actions in the LECP and provided a verbal update on one individual action under each of the goals to highlight the sample of work that is being undertaken at present. The updates provided were as follows:

Action 1.11 which centres on work the Business Support Unit is doing in terms of updating its Invest Kilkenny website and promotional material. Ms. Hynes confirmed that this work will be complete and ready for launch over coming months.

Action 2.9 involves ongoing work by the Business Support Unit on the development of a database of Vacant Commercial Property– Industrial, Office and Retail. Ms. Hynes stated that it also included a list of lands for sale which has the potential for use for the promotion of economic development.

Action 4.5 highlighted the joint work of Kilkenny County Councils Heritage office, Kilkenny County Childcare Committee and the Kilkenny Carlow Education & Training Board in the provision of training and locally based materials to teachers and childcare providers on aspects of Kilkenny's built, natural and cultural heritage.

Action 5.2 highlighted the work underway in relation to the 2017 Town & Village Renewal Scheme. Ms. Hynes stated that expressions of interest had been invited by Kilkenny County Council following which the strongest 15 applications would be submitted to the DHRRGA by the end of June. Ms. Hynes further stated that the Council would be shortly commencing a process to facilitate the preparation of Town Centre Renewal Plans for the main towns in the county.

Action 8.5 relates to Carlow Kilkenny Energy Agency and Kilkenny County Council working in collaboration in relation to the roll out of the Kilkenny Better Energy Community Programme.

Action 9.4 - eDIGIREGION Project –a collaborative EU Project involving a number of regions from Europe including the South East Ireland which has resulted in a number of strategies that promotes and supports the implementation of ICT in the region including in Agriculture and Tourism.

5. Update on the Abbey Quarter

Mr. Prendiville provided an update on the Abbey Quarter, stating that:

- A new CEO had been appointed, namely Kevin McCormack;
- Property Agents (Lisneys) had been appointed;
- Work has commenced on the active marketing of the development of the site;
- Work is ongoing on the formal transfer of the 6 no. development plots to the Partnership;

Site Open Day

- A very successful site open day was held on 20th May, with in excess of 2,500 people visiting the site

Riverside Garden Project

- Preliminary site clearance has been undertaken (felling of poplar trees)
- Archaeological test excavations have been undertaken
- Detailed design is substantially complete
- Procurement process for works contractor has commenced, with 7 no. Contractors applying to be short listed to tender for the project

Brewhouse Project

- Work is ongoing on the detailed design of the building
- Opening up works and structural testing works on the Brewhouse building have been completed
- Site investigation works have been completed
- Procurement process for works contractor has commenced with 19 no. Contractors applying to be short listed to tender for the project

Mayfair Building

- Work is ongoing on the detailed design of the building
- Initial site clearance works have been undertaken with the removal of the trees between the Mayfair Building and the City Walls – these works will facilitate the conservation of the City Walls
- Work has commenced on the demolition of the various extensions to the original ballroom
- Conservation team working on proposals for the conservation of the city walls

Other works

Work is nearing completion on the preparation of a number of strategies for the implementation of the Abbey Creative Quarter Masterplan

- Archaeological Assessment Strategy
- Low Carbon Energy Strategy
- Utility Services Design
- Urban Design Criteria and Recommended Development code
- Parking Options Study

Mr. John Bambrick requested a visit to the site for the SPC1 members and Ms. Deegan agreed to arrange same in the coming weeks.

6. Tourism development update

Ms. Aisling Hayes provided an update on a number of initiatives that are underway to enhance the visitor experience, address market changes, develop tourism potential and build on Kilkenny's Tourism capability.

Action 3.1: Collaborative cross-county marketing initiatives are underway to target new streams and entry points, e.g. Tourism Ireland, Stena Line and the 3 sister County Councils (Wexford, Waterford and Kilkenny) Rosslare campaign which is ongoing. Such marketing drives are cognizant of probable negative Brexit implications.

Action 3.3: Developing area based strategies- this action is well underway with local community meetings taking place to help local groups build area specific tourism strategies according to identified assets. Local steering groups are developing to support rural tourism initiatives and maximise the impact of hero sites such as the medieval mile within Ireland's Ancient East, aimed at the culturally curious market.

Action 3.5: Continue development of the medieval mile - aligned with the ongoing development and marketing of the medieval mile – a new brochure is in development- this and other enhancements will cross promote with other visitor attractions in the region to deliver comprehensive visitor experiences of scale.

7. Small Business Vacant Premises Scheme Update

Ms. Hynes provided an update on the Small Business Vacant Premises Incentive Scheme – the scheme adopted by the SPC in late 2015 with the aim of encouraging business to occupy vacant commercial premises that have been vacant for over six months. The first Evaluation Committee meeting took place on May 4th 2017 with 5 applications being considered. One application was successful, due to displacement issues. A review of the scheme was undertaken and the following amendments to scheme are being recommended:

- A PR campaign for the scheme;
- A pre-application meeting to take place between the potential applicant and a member of the Business Support Unit to discuss criteria and eligibility;
- Application Form to be issued only following the pre-application meeting.

It is hoped that these amendments will provide greater awareness and clarity for potential applicants in advance of applications being made. Following a discussion on the scheme the SPC members approved the changes to the scheme.

8. Any Other Business

Martin Prendiville updated the members on the revaluation of all commercial properties rates and stated that the last time valuations were carried out was in the 1980's with ongoing debate on rates since. Mr. Prendiville stated that all commercial properties received a Proposed Revaluation Cert with a 60% decrease, 30% increase, 10% no change. The deadline for appeals to Valuation Office is Monday 19/6/17 and this can be also carried out online. Mr. Prendiville stated that staff were taking calls and answering questions and further stated that less than 50% responded to valuation office when requested originally.

9. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the SPC1 would take place on Friday 15th September 2017 at 11am in meeting room 1 County Hall.

Cllr Pat Millea stated that this was his last meeting as Chairman but will remain as a member. He thanked the committee for their kind support and stated that it was a pleasure to be Chairman and to work with everyone. He stated that his successor would be nominated as Chairman at the next Council meeting. Cllr Pat Fitzpatrick thanked Cllr Millea for his time as Chairman and this was echoed by the Committee.

The meeting concluded at 12.30pm

Signed: _____

PAT MILLEA
Chairman

Date: _____

