

Economic Development & Enterprise SPC

Minutes

3rd March 2022

Council Chamber, Wexford County Council

Attendance: Cllr Michael Whelan – Chair, Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy, Cllr John Fleming, Cllr Kathleen Codd Nolan, Cllr Michael Sheehan, Cllr Cathal Byrne; Niall Slattery – Business/Commercial Sector, Ms Mary B O’Leary – Social Inclusion Sector, Mr Seamus Murphy – Community/Voluntary Sector; Dave Morris – Trade Union Sector, Mr Senan O’Reilly – Environmental Sector, Ernest Levingstone – Business/Commercial Sector

In Attendance: Mr Tony Larkin – Director of Services; Ms Breege Cosgrave – Acting Head of Enterprise; Ms Martina Furlong – Economic Development Officer; Ms Niamh Bolger – Economic Development

Apologies:

1) Minutes & Matters Arising

The Minutes of the previous meeting which took place on the 2nd December 2021 were proposed by Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy and seconded by Cllr John Fleming.

2) Correspondence

Cllr Michael Whelan acknowledged a letter that was sent from an SPC Member, a copy of which has been distributed to attendees. The chair was pleased that the Member of the SPC felt the group was working and that he is enjoying the experience and hope the rest of the group feel the same. Cllr Whelan hopes we continue that way and that the SPC works in the current format.

3) Queries on Update Reports

a) Economic Infrastructure – Special Projects Report

A number of queries were raised and a request for a member of the Special Projects Team to attend the next meeting to field queries was made.

1. Enniscorthy Sports Hub – Have the department approved the funding? When will the works commence? (Cllr Kathleen Codd-Nolan).
2. Enniscorthy Sports Hub – Running Track – a number of observations have been made about the condition of the track in some places. It opened in 2014, the life span is generally 8 to 15 years. Are there any plans to re-surface the track/funds being sought to re-surface it, cost circa €250k? (Senan O Reilly)
3. Enniscorthy Tourism Project – (Cllr Cathal Byrne) – How many tenders were received? Has a decision been made or when is a decision likely to be made on the tenders? Will a presentation be made?

4. John St Project New Ross (Cllr John Fleming) – The council are in negotiations with the owner. What is the status from a Special Projects point of view re innovation centre etc?
5. Carrigfoyle Activity Centre Project – (Cllr Michael Whelan) – Asked if a copy of the consultants report and survey could be distributed to the SPC Members. If Planning Permission is ready, can a link to the planning documents also be provided?
6. Wexfordia – (Cllr Michael Whelan) – Asked about the consultants report to see what areas of these sites could be amalgamated. Asked for an update on the project.
7. New Ross Tourism Project (Cllr Michael Whelan) – Current status?
8. New Ross Green Way – Update

Responses to the queries raised will be sought in the interim.

b) LEO Update

Cllr Michael Whelan raised a query in relation to the student enterprise programme. Breege advised that initial presentations were done on Teams by students and the awards ceremony would be held in County Hall.

Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy highlighted the goal of the Women's Coalition Group and advised the next meeting date was the 9th Match.

c) Town & Village/Streetscape Update

Cllr Michael Sheehan raised a query in relation to streetscape and the extent of checking that was carried out when finalising the payments. It was advised that photographic evidence along with proof of payment was required.

Cllr Kathleen Codd-Nolan raised a query in relation to 2 unsuccessful T&V applications from Enniscorthy Municipal District (Caim and Killealy). Cllr Cathal Byrne asked that the department be written to find out where the applications fell down.

d) Tourism Update

A discussion took place on the Fáilte Ireland initiative in relation to staff in the hospitality industry and the availability of staff.

4) Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

Breege Cosgrave gave a brief update on LECP planning and steps necessary to document a new LECP for Co Wexford. The Community Section are taking the lead but Economic and Enterprise have input into the Economic elements of the plan.

A brief discussion took place in regard to the effectiveness of the plan, the timeframe involved and the need for a nominee from the SPC members.

5) Town Centre First Policy (TCF)

Martina gave a short presentation on TCF, town plans and town regeneration officers.

A discussion followed which covered town health checks, the use of previous retails spaces for living spaces, access considerations etc.

The Planning section is taking the lead on this initiative and a request was made to ask Diarmuid Houston Senior Planner to the next SPC in May.

6) AOB

Cllr Michael Whelan extended his thanks to Edwina Colfer for all the work she has done over the years on the Economic & Enterprise SPC and congratulated her on her promotion. He also thanked Tony Larkin for his courtesy in dealing with this committee and wished him a long and exciting retirement.

Signed: Michael Whelan Date: 19/5/22.

Proposed by: Barbara Anne Murphy Date: 19-5-22

Seconded by: GEORGE LAWLOR Date: 19-5-22.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday 19th May at 14:30 in WCC Council Chamber.

Economic Development & Enterprise SPC

Minutes

19th May 2022

Council Chamber, Wexford County Council

Attendance: Cllr Michael Whelan – Chair, Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy, Cllr. George Lawlor, Niall Slattery – Business/Commercial Sector, Ms Mary B O’Leary – Social Inclusion Sector, Mr Dave Morris – Trade Union Sector, Mr Senan O’Reilly – Environmental Sector, Mr Ernest Levingstone – Business/Commercial Sector

In Attendance: Ms Elizabeth Hore – Director of Services; Ms Martina Furlong – Economic Development Officer; Ms Laura Parle – Economic Development

Apologies: Ms Breege Cosgrave – Acting Head of Enterprise; Cllr Kathleen Codd Nolan, Cllr Michael Sheehan, Cllr Cathal Byrne, Mr Seamus Murphy

1) Minutes & Matters Arising

The Minutes of the previous meeting which took place on the 3rd March 2022 were proposed by Cllr Michael Whelan and seconded by Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy

2) Correspondence

Cllr Michael Whelan noted that the LECP needs a nomination which was seconded by Liz Hore and asked the attendees for nominations. Dave Morris proposed Cllr. George Lawlor which was seconded by Mary B O’Leary. All agreed.

3) Marketing Summary report

Cllr Michael Whelan welcomed Billy Byrne and Jean O’Connell representing Visit Wexford to deliver tourism marketing and social media updates.

Jean noted that Jan – April ’22 the PR value was €1,205,866 to which Cllr Michael Whelan questioned if it was the amount spent. Jean clarified that it was not the money that has been spent, rather the amount in media coverage.

Jean stated that social media is all about Destination marketing. People are attracted to staying in a county depending on what they can see and do there and then look for hotels accordingly. Jean said this is played by site rankings in relation to Hotels, Self-Catering and Camping in Counties that have large number of activities.

It was felt that media coverage is needed quickly in relation to Autumn as it looks to be a struggle for the hotels as bed nights are low. Wexford appears to be ahead of many other hotels in other counties and family days out seems to be doing well.

Cllr Michael Whelan expressed concerns regarding tourism accommodation surrounding housing Ukrainian families to which Jean confirmed this is happening

across the country but that the main issue is that hotels need more rooms. Liz Hore noted that there are 6 hotels being planned/in planning for the county which will alleviate some of this duress.

Billy Byrne noted that the county is lacking in budget accommodation – for the likes of school tours/university groups etc. Tourism Ireland will be encouraging this. This was seconded by Senan O'Reilly and suggested Westport as an example of a county doing this successfully.

Jean felt that there needs to be events/festivals to help promote the County and encourage people to come and stay. Everyone in attendance agreed with this and the idea of evening festivals/events need to be addressed. Jean noted that Laois has a good number of small festivals and Kerry has a good festivals programme planned whilst Wexford Opera Festival is the only large festival that is listed currently in the County. Cllr George Lawlor suggested linking in with the Opera House for evening events. Cllr Lawlor also suggested to create a strong relationship with the parents of GSU students as the spending/return as the US figures were low, that this would be a good opportunity to expand and grow awareness of Wexford internationally.

Billy announced the launch of the Rose of Tralee at Wexford County Council on May 31st with the event taking place in the council chamber and a 3 day visit to Wexford in August which will bring more visits to Wexford.

Senan O'Reilly believes Wexford has a good chance to host the Fleadh Ceoil very soon. Cllr. Lawlor supported this and stated that Wexford hopes to be successful in the bid process in 2024 and noted that Drogheda took in €700,000 in 10 days by hosting the event.

4) Queries on Update Reports

a) Economic Infrastructure – Special Projects Report

Special Projects Team Report updates were provided on the following:

1. Trinity Wharf – the access road contract will be awarded in 3-4 weeks with site development works being assessed in Aug/Sep '22
2. Enniscorthy Tech park – Phase 1 complete
3. John Street Building regeneration project: Works are underway, CPO are being served and the design process will start shortly.
4. Kilmore link road: Complete
5. Old Dublin Road: Applying to TII for funding for the active travel elements, with Wexford County Council funding €120,000.
6. Forth Mountain Activity Centre Project – currently in Planning for the next phase

7. Wexfordia – (Cllr Michael Whelan) – It is hoped to go to planning for INHP by the end of 2022, Hook lighthouse are to take on a new tourism coordinator who is expected to be appointed next month and a design is expected in Sep/Oct '22. New Ross Tourism Project saw the completion of the Norman centre and a review of the JFK centre will be proposed and should have a new design within the next month.
8. New Ross Green Way – Progress is going well with 3 contracts close to completion for tender.

Sean Meyler followed up with Min Ryan skate park updates that it is hoped to be finished within 6-8 weeks as there was a delay. Curracloe water sports is in the final stages with funding coming from failte Ireland and they hope to see works beginning early next year.

b) LEO Update

Martina Furlong briefly discussed the updates for LEO:

- The Local Enterprise Offices are organising the Local Enterprise Village as part of the National Ploughing Championships – which will showcase the quality of the type of companies that LEO's support
- Digital Start is a pilot initiative from the LEO designed to give LEO funded clients a digital edge by helping businesses prepare and implement a plan for the adoption of digital tools and techniques across their business.
- National Women's Enterprise Day – being held 13/10/22. Breege Cosgrave, Acting Head of Enterprise has been selected as chairperson of the National NWED organising committee.
- Export Development Advisor – Joan Pask has been appointed as the tenderer for a contract of services as export development advisor.
- National Enterprise Awards – Professional Hair Products Ltd in Rosslare won at County level and will now represent Wexford LEO at the National Awards in Dublin.
- Student Enterprise Awards - Co Wexford Intermediate Winners 'Little People, Big Pasts' from Ramsgrange Community School are among the Top 5 entrants from around the country who will compete in the Helix.

5) AOB

Cllr George Lawlor expressed concern for secondary school places in the County as it could impact big international companies relocating to Wexford if there isn't enough school spaces.

A request was made to write to the department to get an update on the All Ireland Rail Review, especially in relation to the Rosslare to Waterford railway line.

Senan O'Reilly highlighted the news surrounding climate change and asked if there was a way to bring attention to this or have someone speak to the members. Director of Services stated that they could host a thematic meeting regarding green in terms of economic development at the next SPC meeting. In addition the County

development Plan would be presented to the County Council at a special meeting in June and would place a key focus on sustainability and the challenge of climate change.

Signed: Michael Whelan
CHAIR

Date: 22/09/22

Proposed by: _____

Date: _____

Seconded by: _____

Date: _____

Next Meeting Date: 22ND September at 14:30 in WCC Council Chamber.