

Economic Development & Enterprise SPC

Date: Wednesday 20th April 2016

Time: 11.30 am

Location: Meeting Room, Block A, Wexford County Council

Committee Members Present: Cllr Michael Sheehan, Chairman; Cllr Kathleen Codd Nolan; Cllr George Lawlor; Cllr John Hegarty; Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy; Cllr Keith Doyle; Cllr Martin Murphy; Mr Karl Fitzpatrick; Mr Ernest Levingstone; Ms Caroline Beale; Mr Dan Kennedy

In Attendance: Mr. Tony Larkin, Director of Service; Ms. Carolyne Godkin, County Development Officer; Mr Tom Banville, LEO; Ms Siobhan O'Neill, County Tourism Officer

Apologies: Cllr Frank Staples; Mr Sam Rose; Ms Susan Murphy

1. Minutes & Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meetings which took place on 4th December 2015 were proposed by Ernest Levingstone and seconded by Cllr Martin Murphy.

- Mr Ernest Levingstone queried whether there was any update on New Ross Port. Mr Tony Larkin informed the group that the legislation was passed before Christmas but the detailed regulations had not been passed.
- Mr Ernest Levingstone asked if there was any update on the Advance Factories in New Ross. Mr Tony Larkin informed the group that the Advanced Factories had been included in Wexford County Council's 3-year Capital Programme which was approved at the Council meeting on Monday.
- Cllr John Hegarty queried when the Schools report would be published. Ms Carolyne Godkin informed the group that the Department of Education had been invited to submit observations but to date; no response had been received from the Department. Publication of the report will be over coming weeks.

2. Economic Development Progress Report

Carolyne Godkin updated the members on the following projects:

- SIRO: Construction will commence in Wexford Town in May 2016 with the 1st connections expected in the early summer. A public information event for business stakeholders will take place on the project on the 16th May in Wexford County Council. Enniscorthy will be rolled out in autumn 2016 and Gorey in early 2017. New Ross will be included in the next phase of the programme.
- Gas Pipeline: The feeder main into Wexford Town will be completed at the end of April 2016 with testing being carried out at the moment. The 1st anchor loads will be connected in May/June 2016. Another 9km of pipeline will be installed around the town by the end of 2016 and a further 7km in 2017.
- New Ross is still under consideration for an extension of the gas pipeline into the town. Currently Gas Networks Ireland is determining the financial viability of the project before submission to the Energy Regulator for approval to commence. Viability is linked to the extent of the pipe laid around the town and the result should be known in the next few weeks.

Tourism Report: Siobhan O'Neill gave an informative presentation on current and future plans for Tourism in the County.

- Irelands Ancient East: County Boundary signage is now in place for Ireland's Ancient East. 100 sites have been selected to host Orientation signage with 12 of these sites in Wexford. A funding scheme called "Ancient Spaces Capital Scheme" was launched in 2015. A training programme has been developed, called the "Dwell Programme", to train businesses on how to encourage visitors to use the eastern corridor as a touring zone rather than a transit zone
- Norman Way Trail: Funding was secured for this project under the ancient Spaces Capital Scheme. 10 sites have been targeted in South Wexford extending from Lady's Island to Kilmore Quay. The trail will eventually extend to New Ross, Ferns, Enniscorthy and Kilkenny
- Visit Wexford Pass: A discount card available for both visitors and locals allowing them discounts in various retail outlets and attractions up until the end of June 2016. 65 businesses have joined the scheme to date. The Pass is being distributed to all Conference attendees over the next few months.
- Regional Access Fund (Rosslare Europort): A partner project between Irish Ferries, Rosslare Europort, Waterford, Kilkenny and Wexford County Councils and Tourism Ireland has secured funding of €140,000 to deliver an overseas campaign targeting the UK M4 corridor. Funding available until 2020.
- Department of Tourism, Transport & Sport Action Plan 2016 – 2018: A copy of the report was circulated to the group for information.

A discussion took place on the future plans for Tourism in the County. Opportunities were identified as battlefields, walks and mountains, sporting events such as Angling.

Local Enterprise Office: Tom Banville circulated a Local Enterprise Office Update for information

3. LECP – Economic High Level Goals & Actions for Local Economic & Community Plan

The draft LECP was circulated to the group prior to the meeting for review. Tom Banville gave a presentation to the group on the plan and the High Level goals which are relevant to the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC. The High Level Goals and objectives relevant to the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC are as follows:

- HLG3 - Continue to develop and promote County Wexford as a great place to live, work and visit
 - Promote Tourism as a major sector for development
 - Supporting rural tourism throughout the county
 - Making the living environment more attractive
- HLG4 Develop and market County Wexford as an outstanding business environment for starting, growing and attracting business
 - Increasing the number of Start Ups
 - Grow existing small businesses to expand and develop
 - Support Exporting Businesses
 - Attracting investment into Wexford
- HLG5 Continue to protect and enhance our infrastructure and promote resource efficiency in order to create the right conditions for long term sustainable economic growth
 - Access to High Quality Broadband
 - Improved Road and Transport Network
 - Sustainable use of Water Resources
 - Environmental Awareness and Sustainability

A discussion took place on the Plan and the Economic Objectives set out in the plan.

The SPC agreed the Economic Objectives and Actions. This was proposed by Cllr George Lawlor and seconded by Cllr John Hegarty. The SPC will meet again mid-May to formally adopt the Plan, before it is presented to the June Council Meeting.

4. AOB

- Wexford County Councils 3 Year Capital Programme was adopted at the Council Meeting on Monday. The plan includes all projects that the Council would like to pursue, however many are subject to securing additional grant funding.
- The Department of Social Protection will be invited to attend an SPC meeting in the near future to give a report on the Jobs Fair and other items of interest.
- Town Hall Meetings: 2 town hall meetings have been completed. A town hall meeting for Wexford is proposed to run in conjunction with SIRO on 16th May 2016 – should scheduling allow. The New Ross Town Hall Meeting has yet to be scheduled.
- Dan Kennedy suggested putting the minutes of the meeting on the website so people can be directed to them.

No date was set for the next meeting.

Meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC

Date: Monday 25th July 2016

Time: 11.00 am

Location: Council Chamber, Wexford County Council.

Committee Members Present: Cllr Michael Sheehan, Chairman; Cllr Kathleen Codd Nolan; Cllr Johnny Mythen, Cllr Frank Staples; Cllr Paddy Kavanagh, Cllr Martin Murphy, Mr Karl Fitzpatrick, Mr Dan Kennedy

In Attendance: Mr Tom Banville, LEO; Ms Carolyne Godkin, Mr Colum Kavanagh, Mr Barry Browne, Economic Development; Dr Cormac O’Keeffe, Lecturer in Finance, Dept. of Accountancy And Economics, WIT, Dr Ray Griffin, Lecturer in Strategy, WIT

Apologies: Mr. Ernest Levingstone; Mr Sam Rose; Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy; Cllr John Hegarty; Cllr George Lawlor.

1. Minutes & Matters Arising

No matters arising.

2. South East Economic Monitor Presentation by WIT

Dr Cormac O’Keeffe and Dr Ray Griffin gave a joint presentation on the South East region with a particular focus on Wexford. The extensive presentation showed clearly that the South East’s economy continues to be characterised by high levels of unemployment, deprivation and significantly lower job quality when compared to the state or other regions.

The main points made during the presentation were:

- 6,312 missing IDA jobs in the region
- 7,260 missing higher education places in the region
- Regional IDA office not the problem and they are well aware of the problem and that it was getting worse
- The South East has experienced 14 years of stagnation and was not receiving it’s fair share of IDA visits
- Missing High Quality tent pole jobs. High quality old economy jobs being replaced with inferior quality new work.
- Not enough people with degrees in the region as most receive 3rd level education outside of the region and a large proportion of these do not return, creating a large regional education gap.
- Tourism sector not creating enough jobs to enable recovery and that it has only a small part to play.
- The main conclusion from the presentation was that the region was being left behind and that there was no sign of this changing.

It was suggested that the South East region needs to look at establishing a structure similar to the Western Development Commission for the southeast. It needs to be a new, regional, statutory body that discusses the regional needs in detail and makes request for the region at a higher level than local IDA offices. A plan, akin to the South East Action Plan for Jobs, albeit smaller and more focused, needs to be developed. Most importantly, the group needs to be strategic and careful in

what they ask for, in that it should actually delivers results – what has been asked for in the past by the southeast had not attained the results required.

A discussion and question and answer session took place on the detail of the presentation with the following members contributing Cllr Michael Sheehan, Mr Dan Kennedy, Cllr Kathleen Codd-Nolan, Cllr Frank Staples, Mr Karl Fitzpatrick, Cllr Johnny Mythen, Cllr Paddy Kavanagh.

Cllr Michael Sheehan noted that he had brought a motion to a recent Council meeting seeking a southeast taskforce to tackle the lack of regional progress. Following the presentation, he proposed to bring the issue of a ‘focused southeast regional group’ back to Council for discussion.

Proposed by: Cllr Paddy Kavanagh

Seconded by Cllr Johnny Mythen

3. LECP – Economic Priorities

Mr Tom Banville outlined that at the previous meeting there was no quorum for the LECP but it was not back on the agenda. He then proceeded to give a presentation to the group on the plan and the High Level goals which are relevant to the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC. The high level goals and objectives relevant to the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC are as follows:

- HLG3 Continue to develop and promote Co Wexford as a great place to live, work & visit
 - Promote Tourism as a major sector for development
 - Supporting rural tourism throughout the county
 - Making the living environment more attractive
- HLG4 Develop and market County Wexford as an outstanding business environment for starting, growing and attracting business
 - Increasing the number of Start Ups
 - Grow existing small businesses to expand and develop
 - Support Exporting Businesses
 - Attracting investment into Wexford
- HLG5 Continue to protect and enhance our infrastructure and promote resource efficiency in order to create the right conditions for long term sustainable economic growth
 - Access to High Quality Broadband
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 - Sustainable use of Water Resources
 - Environmental Awareness and Sustainability

A discussion on the plan took place, with Cllr Martin Murphy Cllr Paddy Kavanagh, Cllr Kathleen Codd-Nolan and Cllr Johnny Mythen contributing.

4. Department of Social Protection

Ms Carolyne Godkin noted that the presentation from the Department of Social protection will be scheduled for the next meeting.

5. Wexford County Council Capital Plan

Ms Carolyne Godkin gave a presentation outlining Wexford County Councils 3 year capital programme, focusing in on the Economic & Enterprise department priorities while also identifying the sources of funding and outlined some of the special projects within the plan. Plan to be forwarded to members.

6. Updates

Ms Carolyne Godkin gave the members a brief update on the following projects:

Three Sisters 2020 bid for the European Capital of Culture 2020 has been unsuccessful. A report on the competition and feedback on each bid will be made available in coming weeks and this will provide the time to review and focus on how best we can continue to work regionally into the future.

Carolyne also provided updates on:

- Roads Construction Projects: Both **New Ross and Enniscorthy/Oilgate Bypass projects** are now underway, with both planned for completion during 2019.
- The primary **Gas pipeline** connection from Great Island has been complete and anchor loads are currently being connection and commissioned at the Drinagh end of Wexford town. Spurs from the pipeline across the town are now under construction and connections will continue over the coming months for anchor loads, with other commercial and residential customer connections along the way.
- **SIRO**, the commercial broadband venture between ESB and Vodafone, is rolling out in Wexford town currently, with commercial and residential connections expected to begin in the Autumn of 2016.

The following items were noted /queried:

- Cllr Sheehan: That the efforts to bring gas to New Ross are continuing and that he expected a final decision around September time. Have the town strategies post by-passes commenced as yet?
- Cllr Sheehan: Rosslare Port and its future continues to be of concern. Is it possible to source a copy of the Indecon report for review.
- Cllr Paddy Kavanagh noted the need for a traffic plan to be in place for Templeshannon, and indeed Enniscorthy generally, with both the flood relief and bypass projects.
- Cllr Johnny Mythen noted that we are inclined to put a lot of funding into tourism and that further emphasis should be placed on helping SME's.

6. AOB

Cllr Paddy Kavanagh welcomed the launch of the plans for Johnstown Castle with a planned €7.5 million investment and how it was a good news story for all of Wexford.

Cllr Michael Sheehan requested that the following be brought to a future meeting:

- An audit of broadband availability in the county
- Town Hall meeting dates: New Ross and Wexford

Cllr Sheehan noted apologies for Cllr John Hegarty and Cllr George Lawlor and put forward a request from Cllr Barbara Ann Murphy regarding not having any SPC meeting on Mondays and to hold any further meetings in the afternoon.

Date of the next SPC meeting proposed for Wednesday, 21st September at 4pm in Wexford County Council offices.

Cllr Michael Sheehan thanked everyone and brought the meeting to a close.

Meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC

Date: Wednesday 21st September 2016

Time: 4pm

Location: Council Chamber, Wexford County Council.

Committee Members Present: Cllr Michael Sheehan, Chairman; Cllr George Lawlor; Cllr John Hegarty; Cllr Johnny Mythen; Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy; Cllr Keith Doyle; Cllr Martin Murphy; Mr Karl Fitzpatrick; Ms Caroline Beale; Mr Dan Kennedy

In Attendance: Mr Tom Banville, WCC; Ms Carolyne Godkin, WCC; Mr Don Davern, Virgin Media; Ms Patricia Delaney, DSP;

Apologies: Cllr Frank Staples; Mr. Ernest Levingstone; Mr Tony Larkin

1. Virgin Media Presentation

Don Davern from Virgin Media gave an informative presentation on Virgin Media and their plans for County Wexford. The Virgin Media fibre network will be completed in the 4 main towns in Wexford by October 2017. All estates and businesses will have the option to connect to Virgin Media within a 2km radius of the town. A discussion took place on how the County Council can work with Virgin Media around road openings to lay ducting so as to minimise disruption. Cllr Keith Doyle informed the group that the work has commenced on laying the ducting in Enniscorthy and that there has been no complaints or disruptions to date. Cllr Barbara-Anne Murphy brought up the point that 60% of the population in County Wexford live outside the main towns and that they are being forgotten about. Don Davern informed the group that Virgin Media rely on the railway line for service and require a minimum of 4,500 people in that area. The National Broadband Plan will be awarded in June 2017 and it has stated that 80% of rural homes will have broadband connections.

2. Minutes & Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting which took place on the 25th July were proposed by Cllr George Lawlor and seconded by Cllr Martin Murphy.

A discussion took place on the time of meetings. It was agreed to hold the next meeting at 2.30pm.

3. Correspondence

Further to the update at the last SPC meeting by Chairman Michael Sheehan, formal correspondence was received by the SPC detailing the motion passed by Wexford County Council members at the July meeting requesting that a *South East Task Force be established for the South East Region*. This request was not accepted by the Department.

A discussion took place around the need for a focus on the region in order to bring about significant economic gain and what the next steps could be. Cllr Johnny Mythen proposed the SPC elected members revisit the issue at a future Council Meeting and pursue a motion to seek a focused regional group, similar to the Development Commission in the West be established. This was proposed by Karl Fitzpatrick and seconded by Cllr Michael Sheehan.

4. Enterprise Centre County Plans

Cllr Sheehan noted that plans are progressing on the development of an Enterprise Centre in New Ross, with a property being identified to house the centre at a prime location in the heart of the town. The centre will support start-up business, likely related to manufacturing sector. In Enniscorthy a bank of land has been identified on the southern edge of town with the potential to develop a new a business park. It is likely that this would seek to re-house the existing Enterprise Centre as the current one has reached its capacity.

These plans are in place in addition to the Gorey development of 'The Hatch Lab', which will be housed in the new M11 Business Campus, adjacent to the Amber Springs Hotel and less than 5minutes walk from Gorey main street.

Cllr Michael Sheehan asked that the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC endorse these plans. Proposed by Karl Fitzpatrick and seconded by Cllr Keith Doyle.

5. European Capital of Culture – final report

The European Capital of Culture 2020 selection panel's final report was circulated to the group for information. A discussion took place around the content of the report and what the plans are for the region going forward.

Carolyne Godkin informed the group that although the overall bid was unsuccessful the local Authorities plan to work together on a number of projects identified in the *Cultural Strategy* for the region. The appointment of the new Arts Officer in Wexford County Council will be a big help with the progression of this work. A Regional Tourism strategy has also been put in place for the 3 counties involved and it is hoped to continue with the plans included. One initiative, that a landing page is being developed that will link the 3 counties and the domain name www.visitsoutheastireland.com has been purchased. Cllr Michael Sheehan thanked the bid team and in particular the Wexford team for all the hard work that was done.

6. Department of Social Protection presentation

Ms Patricia Delaney, Area Manager in Department of Social Protection gave an informative presentation on the services available from the Department of Social Protection and an update from the Jobs Fair. Currently there are 316,296 people on the live register which is a year on year decrease of 11.9%. 56% of these are short term and 44% are long term unemployed.

The Pathways to Work 2016-2020 sets out 6 strand of activity as follows:

- More regular and on-going engagement with people who are unemployed.
 - Greater targeting of activation places and opportunities
 - Incentivising the take-up of opportunities
 - Incentivising employers to provide more jobs for people who are unemployed
 - Reforming institutions to deliver better services to people who are unemployed
 - Building workforce skills.
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- *Activation services* available are as follows: DSP Case Officers; Local Employment Service; Turas Nua; Service offering in Wexford, Enniscorthy, New Ross and Gorey (follow ups and walking appointments available); Actively working with 4,500 jobseekers.
 - *Employment supports* available are as follows: Community Employment; TUS; Gateway; JobBridge; JobsPlus; Momentum; Supported Employment; Traineeship
 - *Employer Supports* as follows: Jobmatching; Assistance with recruitment campaigns; Jobs Ireland website; Working with other agencies; Financial supports.

A discussion took place around all the services available.

Jobs Fair:

There were 3,500 attendees to the Jobs Fair held in Wexford County Council Offices, Carricklawn in March 2016 and there were a total of 700 jobs on offer (300 of these were abroad and some of these jobs were outside the county).

Feedback from the day was that people didn't want to travel outside the county to work. Cllr Keith Doyle pointed out that there is no public transport from Wexford to Kilkenny and Carlow and that this might be a factor with people not applying for these jobs.

The day was seen as a great success and 71 jobs have been confirmed as being filled following on from the Jobs Fair.

Cllr Michael Sheehan asked that a motion be passed from the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC requesting another Jobs Fair for Wexford. Cllr John Hegarty suggested holding a Jobs Fair specific to ICT in the Gorey area as The Hatch Lab in Gorey will be opening shortly and might be good to link up the two initiatives.

Mr Tom Banville asked if details of the IBYE programme could be sent around to the target group of 18-35 year olds on the live register. Ms Patricia Delaney is to liaise with Mr Tom Banville around this possibility.

Cllr Johnny Mythen felt that it was hard to represent people when engaging with Intreo. Ms Patricia Delaney informed the group that Intreo staff cannot discuss personal information with anyone without the consent of the person in question. If a letter of authorization signed by the person in question was submitted there should be no problem.

Cllr Sheehan thanked Patricia for her very informative presentation and on the work that is being achieved around the county.

7. AOB

- LECP – the next stage of the LECP is the ongoing implementation and monitoring of the plan. Cllr Michael Sheehan asked that a copy of the Economic Section of the Final LECP be circulated to the members for information.
- Recreation Funding – Wexford Walking Trails have been granted funding of €102,000 from the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs for the development of the trails in the County. An overview of what the funding will be used for was circulated to the group for their information. Ms Caroline Beale queried whether the trails will be accessible. Ms Carolyne Godkin informed the group that at the moment a lot of the trails wouldn't be fully accessible, but that information on each trail is available online for those interested to determine if suitable. Increasing access and ensuring the trails meet National Trail Office standards are a priority.
- The Secondary School Education report is now available on the Wexford County Council website for download.
- Dates for the Town Hall Meeting in New Ross are proposed for late October depending on speakers and local availability.
- Leader Funding – Community Roadshows are currently taking place to discuss the Leader Funding. The first call for applications is due to take place before Christmas and will focus on Community Centres and Artisan Foods. Cllr Keith Doyle asked if the application forms for the grants could be made available to the groups. Ms Carolyne Godkin informed the group that the

forms were not currently available but if groups could contact the project officers in WLD they would get them to complete an expression of interest form and will invite them to apply when the scheme is opened.

- National Broadband Plan – Local Authorities have a defined role in the NBP to bring better WIFI hotspots to the County. Carolyne Godkin indicated that a report on same will be brought to the next SPC meeting. Cllr Michael Sheehan suggested bringing all the current contractors and providers together to discuss their plans going forward.
- C Godkin informed the members that a delegation from Savannah, Georgia will be visiting Wexford from the 3rd to 6th October. The visit will have a civic, economic and tourism focus and aims to create a business corridor between the two regions. The delegation will be lead by the Mayor of the City of Savannah Mr Eddie De Loach.
- It was suggested inviting the managers of the various Enterprise Centres around the county to present at the next meeting to give an overview of the situation from start to finish.

The date of the next meeting is November 30th at 2.30pm