

Economic Development & Enterprise SPC

Minutes

25th February 2021 via Microsoft Teams

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

In Attendance: Mr Tony Larkin – Director of Services; Ms Elizabeth Hore – Head of Enterprise; Ms Martina Furlong – Economic Development Officer; Mr Brian Galvin – Special Projects; Mr Billy Byrne – Tourism Officer; Ms Siobhan Gethings – BUCANIER Project Officer; Linda Curtin – Screen Wexford; Edwina Colfer- Economic Development

Apologies: Cllr Michael Sheehan

1. Screen Wexford

Linda Curtin gave an informative presentation to the group on Screen Wexford. Screen Wexford is Wexford County’s dedicated film office. Established in 2020 by Wexford County Councils Arts and Economic Development departments, this initiative operates to develop film in the county whilst serving as a resource for local and international productions that are looking to film in Wexford. Screen Wexford is laying the groundwork in a number of areas to ensure we are ready to facilitate large scale productions in the county. The remit is both economic and cultural. Screen Wexford’s agenda includes the following:

- Increase & Maintain film, TV, commercial and new media production
- Increase the economic impact of the industry in the region
- Create jobs and business opportunities by promoting and facilitating media production in the region
- Facilitate the permitting process of Film & TV Productions
- Develop a strong workforce/talent base – working with WWETB and Carlow IT to develop training courses which will be responsive to industry needs
- Assistance in location and scouting services
- Management and expansion of visual locations database
- Source funding to facilitate new entrant film development
- Online presence via website and social platforms
- Networking in industry
- Work with Tara Film Studios, which has the potential to create up to 120 jobs during the construction phase and 30 permanent jobs when operational as well as catering for up to 400 cast and film crew plus 200 extras.
- Carbon neutral filmmaking - anything we do in Wexford is going to take its carbon footprint into account
- Diversity – create a community and workforce that is diverse and welcomes people of all abilities and backgrounds.
- Inclusion – create opportunities for girls and women to enter the industry in above the line roles is high on the agenda

The top areas in Wexford that have potential strengths at the moment are as follows:

Talent – there is a lot of talent in the County in the arts community. This talent needs to be fostered and educated.

Locations – Wexford has a wealth of film locations available in the County. This needs to be highlighted and promoted to get Wexford on the Map.

Cllr Michael Whelan thanked Linda for her presentation and stated that there are exciting times ahead for the County with the development of Tara Studios.

2. Minutes & Matters Arising

The Minutes of the previous meeting which took place on the 12th November were proposed by Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy and seconded by Cllr Mary B O'Leary.

3. Economic Infrastructure Update – Special Projects

Mr Brian Galvin Special Projects gave a progress report on the economic infrastructure projects for County Wexford. A number of projects are delayed due to Covid restrictions. Items to note include the following:

Technology & Business Infrastructure

- Trinity Wharf – tender assessment is currently underway
- Enniscorthy Technology Park – Snagging works have been held up due to restrictions
- John Street Building Regeneration Project – A CPO drawing and schedule is currently being prepared and will commence once this has been completed, Consultant ready to go.
- Kilmore Link Road – work was suspended in Jan 2021 due to restrictions and will require circa 3 months to complete
- Old Dublin Road Business Park – Tenders are currently being assessed and an appointment is expected by the end of Feb 2021

Town Centre Revitalisation & Regeneration Projects

- Crescent Quay – Works completed
- Templeshannon Regeneration – no tenders were received to open tendering competition. WCC now moving to a negotiated procedure to seek the required services – expected to take circa 2 months to complete. Preliminary design and bridge options report is to issue to WCC by end of February for review.

Public Building & Public Space Enhancement Projects

- Gorey Market House – tender is a competitive procedure with negotiation and the process is on-going
- Wexford Arts Centre – Tenders have been assessed and a report issued to the Department seeking approval to proceed to award the contract for construction
- High Hill New Ross – Works re-tendered and tenders due by mid-March 2021
- Esmonde Street Gorey – work developing the details design and tender document for the project are progressing
- Monck Street Public Realm Works Wexford – A design services team has been appointed but works have been hindered by the Covid 19 restrictions. Anticipated works will commence September 2021 with works substantially completed by Christmas 2021
- New Ross Public Realm – Fehily Tomoney & Co has been appointed to provide engineering services to Wexford County Council. Site investigation works completed and award of contract will be made following the lifting of the current Covid 19 restrictions. Part 8 application for public realm works will be advertised in Q1 2021.
- Crescent Quay Dredging – Design services for engineering assessment, environment and foreshore consent applications for dredging works at Crescent Quay currently being assessed.
- New Ross Fire Station – contract with the preferred tenderer will be signed and works commenced on site in Qtr 1 subject to Covid 19 Restrictions
- Mechanics Institute – contract for works expected to be awarded in April 2021 subject to Covid 19 restrictions. Timeframe of 6 months for completion of construction works

Recreational, Amenity & Tourism Projects

- Min Ryan Park – Contract for the skate-park and Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) has been awarded and works on site will commence following the lifting of the Covid 19 restrictions
- Carrigfoyle Trails & Activity Centre – planning drawings for the development of an Activity Centre building on the site (Phase 2) have been prepared and advertised for planning consent with a closing date of 23rd March 2021
- Gorey Town Park – development works impacted by contract delays and Covid 19 with approx. to months of work to be completed. Tender assessment of playground and gym equipment underway – works will take 2 months to complete
- Enniscorthy Tourism Project – brief for next stage of project currently being prepared and will be advertised in Q1 2021
- Wexfordia – Hook Lighthouse, Irish National Heritage Park and New Ross. Design services currently being procured to develop new visitor experiences at the INHP and Hook Lighthouse and to bring these projects to “shovel ready” status. Appointment of design services teams for INHP has been impacted by Covid 19 restrictions. Hook Lighthouse contract for tourism and environmental/services design teams will be advanced and expected that contracts will be in place by end of Q1 2021 when restrictions are lifted. Preliminary interpretative plan for Norman Centre in New Ross was completed in Jan 2021 and WCC is preparing tender documents
- Courtown Coastal Protection & Beach Nourishment Scheme – RPS Consulting Engineers have been appointed to provide these services.
- Fáilte Ireland Destination Towns Project – New Ross project to be managed by WCC and delivered locally within New Ross. Works have commenced on the laneways in town and overall project expected to be completed by Q3 2021 subject to Covid 19.
- Enniscorthy Sports Hub – Architect has been appointed to prepare detailed design and tender documents and procurement of works contractor for the Sport Hub building.
- Wexford Flood Relief Scheme – project brief for design services for Flood Relief Project has been advertised on Etenders. Closing date was 9th June 2020 with a total of 7 tenders received and are currently undergoing assessment.

Greenways

- South East Greenway (New Ross to Waterford) – Tendering of subsequent works packages are programmed through Spring of 2021. Works expected to commence for the initial contract in March 2021 and to be completed by October 2021. Works on entire Greenway are due to be completed by Spring 2023.
- Rosslare to Waterford City Greenway – planned to submit a development consent application to An Bord Pleanála in late 2021
- Wexford to Rosslare Greenway – An application to ABP is expected to be submitted in Q3 2021.

A discussion took place around the information provided.

- A question was raised around the Old Dublin Road Business Park and if the plans include the extension of the sewage system. The plans do not include the extension of the sewage system but will focus more on developing the area around landscaping, signage etc.
- A question was raised in relation to Architectural Plans for the Norman Centre in New Ross. The only plans available at the moment are for the Tourism Experience which was developed by Mirador Media. Copies of this will be circulated in due course.
- A question was raised in relation to Pearse Park in New Ross – this is being looked after by the New Ross Municipal District.
- A question was raised in relation to the funding for Templeshannon, if the funding not granted what happens. A commitment has been made to proceed with the Masterplan.

Cllr Michael Whelan thanked Brian for his update.

4. Covid 19 Business Support Measures Update

a. Restart Grant Report

Martina Furlong, Economic Development Officer, gave an overview on the Restart Grant Schemes for SMEs, Restart Grant and Restart Grant Plus. Statistics for both schemes as follows:

<u>Restart Grant 1 (RG1)</u>	<u>Restart Grant Plus (RGP)</u>
No of applications received under RG1 – 2,195	No of applications received under RGP – 2,265
No of applications rejected under RG1 - 128	No of applications rejected under RGP– 149
No of applications paid under RG1 – 2,067	No of applications paid under RGP – 2,116
Value of grants paid under RG1 - €7,549,374.15	Value of grants paid under RGP - €14,984,735.51

Overall Restart Grant Statistics as follows:

€22,534,109.66 paid out to Wexford Businesses

4,460 applications processed

2,197 Top Ups processed

Restart Grant Applications by Municipal District

Municipal District	Amount of Applications	% of Overall Total
Wexford Municipal District	1293	29%
Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District	1033	23%
Enniscorthy Municipal District	872	20%
New Ross Municipal District	738	17%
Rosslare Municipal District	431	10%
No Eircode Supplied	93	2%
Total	4460	

Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy thanked Martina Furlong and the Restart Team for all their work and professionalism with administering the scheme.

b. Local Enterprise Office Supports

Liz Hore, Head of Enterprise, gave an overview of the Business Supports administered by the Local Enterprise office in 2020 and what is planned for 2021.

Overview of Supports administered from 2018 - 2020

	2018		2019		2020	
Grant Type	No	Amount	No	Amount	No	Amount
Priming Grants	6	€72,990	8	€266,679	6	€184,450
Business Expansion Grants	14	€371,089	6	€116,765	12	€376,740
Feasibility Study Grants	2	€8,624	2	€20,475	5	€58,550
Grad Start Programme	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	€87,000
Agile Investment Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	€45,539
Client Stimulus Funding	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	60	€294,984
Total:	22	€452,703	16	€403,919	87	€1,047,263

Description	2018	2019	2020	2021
Microfinance Applications Approved	10	14	36	1
Microfinance Applications Refused	4	5	3	0
Microfinance Amount Approved	€238,000	€151,550	€908,300	€25,000
Individual Mentor Visits Approved	214	276	432	51
Training Programmes Held	79	77	114	15
Participants on Training Programmes	983	888	2133	201
Trading Online Vouchers Approved	32	33	475	33

Trading Online Vouchers Amount Approved	€65,927	€62,706	€1,091,456	€76,628
TAME Grants Approved	12	19	4	0
TAME Grants Amount Approved	€23,641	€23,523	€6,464	€0
Business Continuity Vouchers Approved	0	0	339	0
Business Continuity Vouchers Amount Approved	0	0	€494,750	€0
Business Continuity Vouchers Amount Paid	0	0	€424,436	€0
Micro Enterprise Assistance Grants Received	0	0	15	0
Micro Enterprise Assistance Grants Paid	0	0	9	€0
Micro Enterprise Assistance Grants Amounts	0	0	€6,613	€0

- The most recent NOAC report stated that Wexford Local Enterprise Office had the most improved job performance numbers nationally
- 2020 Annual Employment Survey is awaiting approval but Wexford Local Enterprise Office is one of the few LEOs to have net job creation despite Covid 19.

2021 Plans

- Budget of €1.5 million to support SMEs
- New Export Advisor for Brexit
- Local Enterprise Week running from the 1st to 5th March
- Kickstart of the new Green for Micro Initiative which is being piloted by South East Regions LEOs is being launched by An Tánaiste Leo Varadkar.
- Wexford one of ten LEOs selected to run a National Spotlight Event for Local Enterprise. The event chosen is “Masterclass Health checking your business for its forward journey” with Blaise Brosnan, Management Resource Institute which is running on the 4th March 2021.

Grant Schemes for 2021

- GradStart Programme - €15,000 pa X 2 years or €21,000 pa X 2 years - must have a min of 5 employees
- Agile Innovation Fund – to develop new or substantially improved products, services or processes - max project costs of €300,000
 - R&D Projects - 45% small companies - 35% medium
 - Business innovation Projects - 50% small companies - 50% medium
Eligible expenditure – existing staff or new staff costs, overheads, materials, consultancy, travel & subsistence, certification and clinical trials.
- Trading Online Voucher - €2,500 max - rate 50%. Eligibility - must be trading for 6 months.
- IP Start Programme - 3 days consultancy to a max of €2,610.
- Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters (TAME) - €2,500 max - International Marketing Materials, Trade Shows, Potential Customer Visits
- Lean for Micro - 3 days consultancy to a max of €2,700

c. Tourism Grants Updated

Billy Byrne, Tourism Officer, gave an informative presentation on the Tourism Business Continuity Scheme which has been recently announced. Qualifying criteria for the scheme as follows:

- Must not be eligible to apply for CRSS
- Must not be in public ownership, nor manage/operate a tourism asset on behalf of a public body
- Have not received funding under the following: Fáilte Ireland Coach Tourism Business Continuity Scheme or the Ireland Based Inbound Agents business continuity scheme
- Must have completed or commit to complete the Fáilte Ireland Covid 19 Safety Charter
- Intent to resume trading in 2021 or when it is safe to do so
- Average monthly turnover from October 2020 to Jan 2021 must be down at least 75% compared to the average monthly turnover for the period January to December 2019

- Must have a minimum of €50,000 turnover
- Must have been in existence and trading prior to January 1st 2020

The scheme will be opened in two phases. Phase 1 includes the following business categories: Outdoor activity providers; Tourism golf courses; Hop-on Hop-off bus tours; Cruise hire companies; Boat tour operators; Visitor attractions not eligible for CRSS (registered charities/trusts, outdoor attractions e.g. commercial visitor gardens, visitor farms, theme parks); Caravan & camping/outdoor accommodation. Applications for phase 1 will open on the 11th February and the closing date is the 8th March. Online applications made via The Fáilte Ireland Trade Portal. Phase 2 of the scheme will have a focus on transport.

Billy Byrne also updated the group on a recently Fáilte Ireland Covid19 consumer sentiment and behaviour report which was published in February 2021.

A discussion took place around these grants and if there was any grants available for tourism businesses with less than €50,000 turnover. There is nothing available at the moment but if anything does become available the information will be circulated.

A query was raised in relation to Golf Clubs eligibility. Golf Club membership fees cannot be included in the turnover figure – the golf club must have a tourism focus not just members.

5. Delivering Deliberative Democracy – participation by the PPN's in Local Government decision making

The Executive Summary of the document was circulated to the group prior to the meeting for their feedback. Mr Seamus Murphy gave an overview of the document with the main thing being how to make Communities more involved in decision making.

A discussion took place on how the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC could take these recommendations on board and to make information sharing more participative. It was felt that the SPCs in general have evolved into a place where updates are being given rather than policy being discussed.

- It was suggested putting Strategic Policy Development on Agenda for the meetings going forward.
- A proposal was made that any reports for the meeting be circulated at least 2 weeks before the meeting so people could have a chance to review.
- Cllr Michael Whelan suggested including this item on the Agenda for the next meeting to discuss further.

6. Directors Report

Main points from the Directors Report as follows:

- **BREXIT**: Rosslare Europort – Gateway to Europe. Rosslare Europort has strengthened its position as Ireland's leading port connecting industry to the continent, with up to 30 direct services to and from Rosslare weekly in 2021. Rosslare Europort is leading the development of port facilities, infrastructure and technology under the Masterplan for the port enhancing the strategic position connecting Ireland and the European continent. The Masterplan will see over €30 million invested by Iarnród Éireann in Rosslare Europort over the next five years.
- **Talent Mapping** – Wexford County Council in partnership with Abodoo are currently mapping the talent and skills of those living and working the County. The response has been very encouraging with a report on the skill mapping available at the end of Q1 2021
- **High Performance Building Alliance** – The HPBA has advertised for a CEO, closing date was the 23rd February. Shortlisting of the candidates will commence shortly. A draft MOU has been submitted to the UNECE for consideration.
- **Ballast Office** – Part 8 planning was approved at the November Wexford County Council meeting. Tender documents are currently being prepared.
- **Women in Business Network** – provides an excellent forum for peer to peer learning and inspirational speakers sharing their knowledge in business development. Upcoming events:

25th February with guest speaker Larissa Feeney, founder of the award winning Accountant Online and 25th March with guest speaker Chupi Sweetman Durney.

- Student Enterprise Awards 2021 - The County final is being held virtually on the 11th March at 7.00pm, invites will be issued shortly. The national Awards are being held virtually on the 14th May.
- Local Enterprise Week is taking place from the 1st to the 5th March. Wexford is one of 10 LEO's selected nationally under the spotlight campaign and will be featuring a masterclass and case study of LEO client, Professional Hair Labs located in Rosslare Harbour.
- Wexford Tourism International Marketing Campaign – In August 2020 recording took place in County Wexford by Peninsula Television for a TV series called Ireland County by County, which will be carried on 239 public broadcasting stations across America. Transmission of the first series begins on the PBS Create Channel on Friday 12th March.

7. Bucanier Report

Siobhan Gethings, BUCANIER Project Officer, gave an overview of the BUCANIER project which has run from 2014 to 2020 and is now coming to an end. It was an Ireland/Wales Cross Border Programme which included 9 counties in Ireland and 4 counties in Wales.

The aims of the BUCANIER Project were as follows:

- Support small businesses on the Irish Sea border
- To boost productivity across Ireland and Wales
- Increase innovation capacity within SMEs and social enterprises
- Increase collaboration with Higher Education institutions

Events/Outcomes from the Project as follows:

No of Cross Border Events	10
No of regional/local events	52
International operations	1
International franchise	1
Welsh/Irish Collaboration	3
Welsh/Welsh Collaboration	2
Business Expansion	10

Tony Larkin complimented Siobhan for all the work that was done on the BUCANIER project and for her help on the Restart Grant.

A discussion took place on the project and all Interreg Projects in the future. Due to Brexit there will be no further Ireland/Wales Interreg Projects. Any project that is currently being worked on will be completed and no new ones can be applied for.

8. AOB

- Cllr Michael Whelan proposed that a letter be sent to the Minister on behalf of the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC requesting that the Waterford to Rosslare Railway be kept under review for any future plans. This was proposed by Cllr John Fleming and seconded by Seamus Murphy.

Cllr Michael Whelan thanked everyone for attending.

Economic Development & Enterprise SPC

Minutes

13th May 2021 via Microsoft Teams

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

In Attendance: Mr Tony Larkin – Director of Services; Ms Elizabeth Hore – Head of Enterprise; Ms Martina Furlong – Economic Development Officer; Mr Billy Byrne – Tourism Officer; Ms Angela Finn – Economic Development; Mr Micheal O’Drisceoil – Graduate Economic Development; Edwina Colfer - Economic Development

Apologies: No apologies

9. Minutes & Matters Arising

The Minutes of the previous meeting which took place on the 25th February were proposed by Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy and seconded by Mary B O’Leary.

10. Delivering Deliberative Democracy – participation by the PPN’s in Local Government Decision making/Strategic Policy Development

A discussion took place on the Delivering Deliberative Democracy document and how to put it into practice. It was agreed that adding Strategic Policy Development as an agenda item for each meeting was a good start. It was also agreed that members of the SPC would be asked to submit agenda items before each meeting. The group hope that Wexford can become a model for best practice going forward. It was decided to concentrate on 1 or 2 issues that would be relevant to Economic Development & Enterprise and work on these issues for the year.

11. Covid Supports

a. Town & Village Renewal Scheme 2021

Angela Finn gave an informative presentation to the group on the Town & Village Renewal Scheme 2021. The Town & Village Renewal Scheme has changed its focus in 2021 to include the following: tackling dereliction in town centres; turning vacant properties into remote working and community spaces; investing in green spaces, parks and recreational amenities, projects that support and enhance the nighttime economy

Up to 8 applications can be submitted by each Local Authority for the following levels of funding:

- 4 applications funding €20,000 to €100,000
- 2 applications funding €20,000 to €250,000
- 1 application funding €20,000 to €500,000
- 1 application funding up to €50,000 (New Project Development Measure)

A new stipulation in the scheme is that 2 applications must not have previously received funding under the Standard Town & Village Renewal Scheme.

Expressions of interest for the Scheme are to be submitted to Economic Development by Friday 28th May and projects must be delivered within a 12-18 month period.

A new initiative under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme for 2021 is the Connected Hubs Call which is a scheme to develop the capacity and quality of existing remote working hubs in support of the National Hub Network. The hubs can be in public, community or private ownership. The minimum grant available per individual hub is €10,000 with maximum of €75,000. Multi Hub applications can be submitted for 5 or more hubs with a maximum funding of €250,000. Economic Development will be working with the Broadband Officer on potential applications. Projects must be completed before the end of 2021. Deadline for applications to be submitted to the Department is 17th June 2021.

It is felt that the timelines for a lot of these funding schemes is very short and doesn't give enough time to develop ideas for projects and have everything in place before the deadlines. A list of funding streams for the remainder of the year is to be requested from the Department so a plan can be put in place to submit the best applications possible.

b. Tourism Marketing Plan & Supports

Billy Byrne Tourism Officer gave an informative presentation to the group on Visit Wexford's Marketing Plan for 2021 and available supports for Tourism businesses.

- The theme of the marketing plan is Wexford Memories and will try to encourage domestic tourists to visit County Wexford this summer to relive old memories and make new ones. It has a county wide focus with a big emphasis on the outdoors.
- Campaigns/Competitions are being run on RTÉ 2FM, RTÉ 1s Today Show, the RTÉ Guide and Ulster 105 throughout May.
- Wexford is being included in 2 of the upcoming Tracks & Trails Programmes - Ferrycarrig/Forth Mountain 18th June and Rosslare 25th June.
- Wexford are in the top 3 Counties for hotel bookings in July, August and September according to the IHF Occupancy 8th April 2021.
- Wexford Trails - counters have been installed on 11 of the 27 Walking Trails in the County with the total traffic for April amounting to 53,033. Sport Ireland have recently approved 2 new Walking Trails and there are more awaiting approval. A new Adventure Trail has been launched which includes kayaking, paddle boarding, equestrian and more. This brings the total amount of Trails in the County to 5 – Heritage Trail (incl Norman Way), Garden Trail, Craft Trail, Walking Trail (incl Cycling) and Adventure Trail.
- Wexford has been picked as one of Fáilte Irelands 10 key destinations in the Country and will be used in their Make a Break Campaign.

A discussion took place on the information provided in particular on the campaigns being run in Ulster. Cllr Michael Whelan suggested that when Visit Wexford were running campaigns in Ulster that the attractions could be encouraged to run campaigns there at the same time to get more traction. This is to be looked into.

It was also suggested tapping into the Shore Angling market. Cllr George Lawlor informed the group that there are 1million registered anglers in Italy alone and there are more people fishing in Britain than attend football matches so this would be a good market to try a capture.

Outdoor Seating & Accessories Scheme

- The scheme is open to attractions, hotels, restaurants, cafés, public houses and other tourism and hospitality business establishments where food is sold for consumption on the premises
- Funding for the scheme is available to existing businesses only
- The premises needs to be commercially rateable by a local authority and have no commercial rates outstanding or have a payment plan in place.
- A section 254 licence is required for the installation or placement of appliances or structures in a public place and planning permission may be required for placement of appliances or structures in/on any private property.

- The scheme will provide for up to 75% of the ex-VAT cost of equipment purchased with a maximum allowable contribution of up to €4,000 per application.
- Expenditure must be incurred between 1st April 2020 and the 30th September 2021.
- The Scheme is open from 12th April 2021 and will close on the 30th September 2021.
- All queries in relation to the Outdoor Seating & Accessories Scheme can be sent to osas@wexfordcoco.ie.

c. SBASC

Martina Furlong gave an overview of the Small Business Assistance Scheme for Covid. The scheme closed on the 21st April and there were 144 applications received with €484,000 granted. 23 applications received were rejected. At this point there is no details of a Phase 2 of the scheme. Cllr Michael Whelan queried whether there would be anything on offer for the business with under €50,000 turnover. There is nothing at the moment.

12. LEO Strategic Plan

Liz Hore gave an informative presentation on the Draft Local Enterprise Office Strategic Plan 2021 to 2024. The plan is to provide details of where Enterprise Ireland Funding will be spent in the next 4 years.

Main outcomes for the plan are as follows:

1. Creating and raising local enterprise awareness and developing on enterprise culture and community-based enterprise activity
2. Providing a single/first point of contact service to the business community – providing business advice, direction and signposting, business counselling and mentoring
3. Providing support to private and community initiatives to secure the establishment and/or expansion of commercially viable micro-enterprise projects
4. Providing comprehensive pre and post start up supports to new and expanding micro-enterprises
5. Influencing the allocation of resources for micro-enterprise from EU, private and public funding sources
6. Promoting the general economic development of their areas

A discussion took place on the Plan and if there was any opportunity for the Economic Development SPC to feed into it. The group were informed that there was a 2 week deadline to submit the draft plan so unfortunately there was no opportunity to consult with the SPC. The final plan is to be signed off by the end of June. A copy of the draft plan is to be circulated to the group for information and if any of the SPC members have suggestions or feedback they can submit them to Liz Hore for consideration. If any of the suggestions are not relevant to Enterprise Ireland funding they will be directed to Wexford County Council funding.

13. Abodoo Skills Report

Micheal O'Drisceoil gave a presentation to the group on Wexford Skills Mapping 1st Quarter 2021. The objectives of the Skills Mapping is to Support Jobs, Know Industry Requirements, Attract FDI and Map the Skills/Talent of People. A key focus was on Leading Industries, Skills Availability, Languages Spoken, Workforce Population, Smart Working Preferences, Average Earnings. 700 people have registered to date. A discussion took place on the findings. It was felt that 700 is a very low number to get a sense of what skills are available in the County and that the CSO data would provide a more in-depth analysis of this data.

14. Economic Infrastructure – Special Projects - Questions

The report was circulated in advance of the meeting for review and there were no questions raised.

15. Strategic Policy Development Discussion

A discussion took place on what aspects the committee could focus on going forward. It was decided to focus on Rosslare Europort and how to attract the European Tourist to Wexford and

encourage them to stay here for longer. One of the ideas mentioned was stronger signage both in the port and on the roads to showcase what the County has to offer. Details of the development plans for Rosslare Europort, if available, are to be circulated in advance of the meeting to assist with the discussions. Rosslare Europort is to be added to the Agenda for the next meeting.

16.AOB

It was requested that reports be circulated in advance of the meetings for noting by the committee and if there are any questions they can be addressed at the meeting.

Agenda Items for next meeting:

- Reimagining our Main Streets / Town Centre Regeneration
- Rosslare and the Continental Tourist

Cllr Michael Whelan thanked everyone for attending.

Economic Development & Enterprise SPC

Minutes

23rd September 2021 via Microsoft Teams

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

In Attendance: Ms Elizabeth Hore – Head of Enterprise; Ms Martina Furlong – Economic Development Officer; Mr Billy Byrne – Tourism Officer; Ms Angela Finn – Economic Development; Ms Laura Lyons – Graduate Local Enterprise Office; Mr Adam Roche – Graduate Economic Development; Edwina Colfer - Economic Development

Apologies: Mr Seamus Murphy – Community/Voluntary Sector; Mr Tony Larkin – Director of Services

17. Minutes & Matters Arising

The Minutes of the previous meeting which took place on the 13th May were proposed by Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy and seconded by Niall Slattery.

18. Queries on update reports

a. Economic Infrastructure – Special Projects Report

Cllr Kathleen Codd Nolan queried what the updated costings were on Enniscorthy Sports Hub and if there was funding still available for these costings. This is to be followed up with Special Projects.

Senan O’Reilly informed the group that there has been talks of incorporating allotments in Enniscorthy Sports Hub. He wanted it noted that Wexford Athletics were not in favour of this as every inch of the area would be required in order to host Regional Athletics Events. It was also noted at the SPC that the funding approved was for a designated regional sports facility.

Cllr John Fleming queried whether the sale of the building in John Street has been closed yet. Liz Hore informed the group that the paperwork was being processed for acquisition.

b. Covid Supports

No questions were raised around Covid Supports

c. Funding

Cllr John Fleming queried where the idea to put a retractable roof on Monck Street came about. Liz Hore informed the group that there was a Fáilte Ireland Taskforce set up in 2020 to identify projects that could be developed in Wexford Town. One of the projects that was discussed was the weatherproofing of Monck Street. An application was submitted to Fáilte Ireland under the Local Authority Weatherproofing & Outdoor Dining Infrastructure Scheme which was successful. Cllr Fleming suggested that this type of retractable roof could be incorporated into the Murphy Building Project in New Ross.

Cllr Cathal Byrne queried whether the Streetscape Scheme could be expanded to include villages. Liz Hore informed the group that there was €260,000 allocated to Wexford and 4 towns/villages in the County were selected for the scheme. The scheme is currently oversubscribed with 167 applications received. Wexford County Council will be writing to the Department highlighting the demand in the County and requesting that the scheme be

expanded to other villages in the County. The applications received are currently being assessed. Priority will be given to applications that are shovel ready and a reserve list will be prepared for the remaining applications.

Cllr Michael Whelan queried when a decision would be made on the Town & Village Renewal Scheme 2021. Angela Finn is to contact the Department to see if there is any updates.

d. Tourism

No questions were raised around Tourism

19. Strategic Policy Discussion – Re-imagining our main streets/town centres to be thriving places to work, visit and live. To be vibrant and welcoming.

An in-depth discussion took place on how to re-imagine our main streets/town centres to be thriving places to work, visit and live.

Senan O'Reilly had circulated an overview of the Town Centre First Initiative to the group for information. The Town Centre First Initiative in the programme for government offers a real opportunity for transitioning to a greener, low-carbon lifestyle by promoting a return to town centre living where services and employment are easily accessible and where dependence on the motor car is reduced. It is also an opportunity to tackle the Housing crisis by providing affordable homes in well-served locations.

It was suggested carrying out audits on each of the towns to see what they have and what is missing and from this creating Masterplans for each town. A holistic approach should be taken on all plans as each town is different and would probably need a different focus. Liz Hore stated the County Development Plan and town plans would be key framework documents to support developments within the towns for forward planning.

A discussion took place about residential units being built in towns for older people. It is felt that older people's homes need to be within walking distance of the services and amenities in order to assist them. A discussion also took place in relation to accommodation over shops and how to encourage people to develop these into residential units. This option can be associated with costs in premises that don't have separate entrances to upper floors. Cllr Michael Whelan informed the group that Waterford have a scheme where if you have residential accommodation over your shop you would get a reduction in your rates.

A concern was raised about using potential retail properties or sites in town centres for residential, and its impact on viable town centres for business. It was agreed that options for living should be available in towns/villages. If a site is not suitable for business use it should be used for residential.

Cllr Ger Carthy asked that any policy being developed be steered to include smaller towns and villages especially in the Rosslare District as there is no main focal town in this district. Towns could be assessed in order of needs from needs audits that could be carried out.

Mary B O'Leary informed the group that the Local Link are currently working with the NTA and Connecting Ireland on developing more routes around the County. They are currently waiting on the funding to be agreed, but progress has been made in this area.

It was decided to look at other comparative reports on towns with similar population or size. Examples of good practice as an evidence-based approach on what can work.

It was agreed the 3 points to work on from this meeting are as follows:

- Need to show how having people living in the town centres is an economic driver
- Rural Regeneration – to ensure that smaller towns and villages are included
- Business Liaison Officer –to work with businesses directly in the Districts

20. Strategic Policy Discussion – Rosslare Euro-port and how to attract the European Tourist to visit and stay longer in Wexford.

Billy Byrne gave an overview to the group about the work Visit Wexford are currently carrying out around the International Market especially the French Market.

An in-depth discussion took place on this and what else we can do.

Suggestions as follows:

- Building on the Town Twinning's that we have in place currently as a first step and look at potential new collaboration where there is merit. A plan needs to be put in place to ensure that these partnerships are working for us. Rosslare Municipal District are currently looking at linkages with Dunkirk.
- School Tours have a potential to be targeted especially with the Norman Way and other historic sites in the County. It is felt that if people visit a destination on a school tour they usually come back when they are adults.
- Attending more French Trade Shows to market the county and encourage people to stay either the first night or last night of their visit and not just to use Wexford as a corridor.
- Organising more Fam Trips with tour operators from France and other countries and build on Bonjour Wexford.
- Trying to get our message promoted in the French Ports by using Smart Technology in the ports.
- Trying to develop a presence on the boats that are currently coming into Rosslare Europort
- Sending the Tourism Information Bus to France on an excursion to promote the County.

21. AOB

There was no other business.

Cllr Michael Whelan thanked everyone for attending.

Economic Development & Enterprise SPC

Minutes

2nd December 2021

Council Chamber, Wexford County Council

Attendance: Cllr Michael Whelan – Chair, Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy, Cllr Ger Carthy; Cllr John Fleming, Cllr Kathleen Codd Nolan, Niall Slattery – Business/Commercial Sector, Ms Mary B O’Leary – Social Inclusion Sector, Mr Seamus Murphy – Community/Voluntary Sector; Mr Senan O’Reilly – Environmental Sector,

In Attendance: Mr Tony Larkin – Director of Services; Ms Elizabeth Hore – Head of Enterprise; Ms Martina Furlong – Economic Development Officer; Ms Breege Cosgrave – Local Enterprise Office; Edwina Colfer - Economic Development; Ms Linda Curtin – Screen Wexford

Apologies: Cllr Cathal Byrne; Ernest Levingstone – Business/Commercial Sector, Dave Morris – Trade Union Sector, Cllr Michael Sheehan;

22. Minutes & Matters Arising

The Minutes of the previous meeting which took place on the 23rd September were proposed by Cllr John Fleming and seconded by Cllr Kathleen Codd Nolan.

23. Screen Wexford Presentation

Linda Curtin gave an informative presentation on Screen Wexford and the work that has taken place over the last year.

The Vision of Screen Wexford is to create an ecosystem in the county that facilitates creative excellence in Screen Sector production.

Key Activities include the following:

- Location scouting assistance
- Development relationships with proposed Tara Film Studios and peripheral studios
- Crew database development
- Liaison services with industry crew, facilities and service
- Increase the economic impact of the industry in the region
- Facilitate the permitting process of Film & TV productions
- Develop a strong workforce/talent base
- Design and activate training programmes to maximise opportunities for industry entry amongst stakeholders
- Source funding to facilitate new entrant film development
- Increase & maintain film, TV, commercial and new media production

Plans for the future

- Crew Development Hub for the region
- Industry Development Plan
 - Building database of existing filmmakers in the County
 - Identify gaps in the market & facilitate training and development around same
 - Delivery of Industry specific courses
 - Reach out to National Location Office & Screen Producers Guild to ensure we are up to date regarding upcoming productions
 - Encourage Carbon Neutral Filmmaking

Overview

- 9 Learning & Development Programmes
- Facilitating close to 80 learners
- Courses delivered both independently and in collaboration with Screen Skills Ireland, SKillnet and the Local Enterprise Office

- Approx 250 applications for training activities have been processed by the screen office highlighting the demand in this area
- By the end of 2021, 19 people will have received mentorship through our programmes
- We have facilitated approx. 25 productions in Wexford since Q4 2020
- Our locations and crew database is being developed at present
- Approx 3500 site visitors, 90 newsletter subscriptions and an average of 30 emails/day since Q4 2020
- On social platforms we have roughly 500 followers where we disseminate our learning opportunities, share locations and job opportunities and connect with our communities of interest
- Our new website will launch in December 2021

Liz Hore thanked Linda Curtin for all the work she has done over the past 15 months.

A query was raised around the dark video footage on the website. Linda clarified that this footage was provided by Celtic Routes and was very atmospheric. The footage works well on the Screen Wexford website as it has a different agenda than a Tourism Destination site. If new footage was to be sourced it could cost in the region of €10,000. Cllr Ger Carthy proposed investing in new footage.

A query was raised around Tara Studios. Tony Larkin informed the group that Wexford County Council had granted planning permission for this project but there was an appeal lodged. It is currently with An Bord Pleanala and a decision is imminent.

24. Queries on update reports

a. Economic Infrastructure – Special Projects Report

Cllr John Fleming asked for an update on the advanced factory in New Ross. A new set of drawings have been drafted and there has been a lot of progress in the last month.

Cllr Michael Whelan informed the group that funding had been secured for a Blueway from Foulksmills to Wellingtonbridge.

b. LEO Update

No queries were raised

c. Town & Village/Streetscape Update

No queries were raised

d. Tourism Update

No queries were raised

25. Transport – Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan

Mary B O’Leary gave an overview to the group on the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan which is now open to public consultation. The Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan is a major national public transport initiative developed by the National Transport Authority (NTA), with the aim of increasing connectivity, particularly for people living outside our major cities and towns.

Aim is to make public transport for ural communities more useful for more people by:

- Improving existing services
- Adding new services and
- Enhancing the current Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) network which meets the transport needs of people who live in remote locations.

A discussion took place on the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan and it was decided that a submission should be submitted by the SPC. The closing date for the submissions is the 10th December. Due to the short turnaround it may not be possible to keep the committee fully informed of what is included in the submission.

Transport consultation on the Rail Review opened on the 29th November with submissions accepted up till the 21st January 2022. This Review will consider how the rail network on the island of Ireland can improve to promote sustainable connectivity into, and between, the major cities, enhance regional accessibility and support balanced regional development. The Review will look at how the railways are used, how they could be used in future and how the network can evolve to serve the people on the island of Ireland and achieve policy goals. This is to be looked into.

26. Strategic Policy Discussion – Re-imagining our main streets/town centres to be thriving places to work, visit and live. To be vibrant and welcoming.

Research Update

The RIAI Town and Village toolkit is available from their website and includes case studies of various towns and villages. A discussion took place around this and it was agreed that each town has a different identity and needs and should be analysed separately. Healthchecks could be carried out on each of the towns to identify their needs.

A discussion took place around the Town Regeneration Officers. The Government is currently preparing policy on this and nothing will be announced until the report has been produced and funding is in place.

The County Development Plan is nearly complete and then the Town Plans will be looked at with Wexford being the first.

Vacant Property in Towns – studies have shown that a lot of the older shops in towns are not suitable for new shops, too small. Also a lot of the accommodation above the shops in towns are vacant. The Government is keen to get back to over the shop living but this is very problematic as most of them do not have separate entrances to the accommodation

It was suggested leaving unused large sites located in towns vacant for potential retail opportunities and not to use them for housing. A discussion took place on this.

A copy of the Town Centre First Policy is to be circulated to the group when available and this item is to be kept on the Agenda for the next meeting.

27. Strategic Policy Discussion – Rosslare Euro-port and how to attract the European Tourist to visit and stay longer in Wexford.

Twinning Current Status Update

Twinning

A list of the current Twinning that are in place were circulated to the group for information, more suggestions are being discussed by the Municipal Districts. A discussion took place on what the value and impact of the twinning relationships are. It is felt that a plan and budget should be in place for each of the twinning to assess the value. Any further comments on this are to be sent to Martina Furlong.

European Tourist

- Ongoing discussions are being held around French School Tours coming to Wexford in 2022. It is felt that if someone visits here on a school tour they may like to return or will encourage their parents to visit.
- Visit Wexford are arranging to meet with the Ferry Companies coming into Rosslare Europort to discuss options around advertising on the boats and in the Ports in France.
- County Wexford is the only County currently marketing to the International Market.
- A discussion took place around attending Tradeshows in other Countries. It is hard to see how effective these are but a presence at an international tradeshow would be good to raise an awareness of Wexford internationally.

- A discussion took place on Rosslare Europort and the lack of transport out of the Port. No bus or train service meets up with the Ferry Times. It was suggested inviting Glenn Carr, Rosslare Europort to an SPC meeting to give an update on the plans for the Europort.

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28. AOB

Cllr Michael Whelan congratulated Liz Hore and wished her all the best in her new role as Director of Services. The Committee members thanked Liz for all her work with the SPC over the last few years. Liz Hore thanked the Chair and the Committee and acknowledged her hard working staff.

Cllr Michael Whelan thanked everyone for attending.

Meeting dates for 2022 will be circulated shortly.

03/03/2022 Proposed by: Cllr. Barbara Anne Murphy

03/03/2022 Seconded by: Cllr John Fleming