



Minutes of the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee

Held on 09 November 2021 at 10.30am in Tipperary MD Civic Offices and by Zoom.

Members of Council	Sectoral Interests	Staff in Attendance:
Cllr. John Crosse - Chairman	Imelda Walsh – Farming Pillar, Zoom	Kathleen Prendergast, Economic Development Officer
Cllr. Seamus Hanafin, Zoom	Mary Spillane - PPN, Zoom	Pat Slattery, Director of Services Zoom
Cllr. John Fitzgerald - Zoom	Tom McGrath – Business Pillar - Zoom	Celine Kinnane Clerical Officer Zoom
Cllr. Joe Hannigan, Zoom	Jim Sheehan, Development Construction Pillar - Zoom	Anthony Fitzgerald TCC, Zoom
Cllr. Siobhan Ambrose - Zoom	Mary Spillane PPN - Zoom	
Cllr. Phyll Bulger Zoom		
Cllr Seamus Morris Zoom		

Apologies: Cllr. Mary Hanna Hourigan, Cllr Mairín McGrath; Laura Jones, Business Pillar; Noel Byrne, PPN; and Cllr Imelda Goldsboro,

Absent: Cllr Peter Ryan; Cllr Tony Black; Claire Cashman, PPN; and Seamus Hoyne, TUS

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

Cllr. John Crosse, Chairman, opened the meeting and welcomed all attending. He noted the apologies received for this meeting.

2. Adoption of the minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were considered and Seamus Hanafin proposed the adoption of the minutes and John Fitzgerald seconded this item.

3. Commercial Vacancy Incentive Scheme matters and Clarification regarding Hotels

Kathleen Prendergast outlined the adopted Commercial Vacancy Incentive Scheme and she was seeking a clarification regarding Hotels. Kathleen highlighted that Hotels are not specifically included in the scheme but they were not on the list for exclusion either and the need for clarity on this.

Cllr Siobhan Ambrose stated that most towns in the county have vacant premises which were former hotels owned by families and not corporations. The

inclusion of these properties in the scheme was important. She also felt that limiting of the maximum sum to €5,000 was not adequate as it was the same for small and big businesses regardless of the rate bill they received or the size of the premises. Her opinion is that the Local authority would not have been in receipt of rates from these vacant properties for a number of years so the Local Authority will benefit greatly if they reopened and every encouragement should be given to them to do so. Siobhan proposed that the Retail Sub-Committee be reconvened to look at this matter and consider categorisation (perhaps in terms of square footage) of businesses so that the sum of €5,000 could be exceeded in certain cases.

Cllr Joe Hannigan agreed that it would be worth re-looking at this matter. Cllr John Crosse felt that it would be worthwhile to review the matter, but we had to be cognisant of the fact that the grant awarded impacts on the financial position of the Council and therefore must have strong criteria to support its rationale.

In order to provide clarity sought on the inclusion of hotels in the current scheme, Siobhan Ambrose proposed hotels are included in the current scheme. Seamus Hanafin seconded this.

Kathleen referred to the points raised by Cllr Siobhan Ambrose re the grant sum awarded and she stated that any fundamental change would have to be researched and consultation would also have to be carried out with the Finance section of Tipperary County Council. She stated that she would reconvene the sub-group and they would consider and revert to the SPC at a future meeting with their findings.

Cllr Siobhan Ambrose asked if there was any leeway to include a business in the higher grant sum if it is not in the primary retail area. Kathleen Prendergast stated that there is an exceptions location request in place and that it is up to each Municipal District to consider and request for an area of exception to be included in the Prime Retail Area of the scheme for a specific period of time. However, this would have to be considered by the MD and then a case submitted to Finance and the Management Team for approval before it can be added.

Kathleen Prendergast referred to the adopted CVIS scheme and the next stages of development which would be the training staff on the scheme and the marketing of the scheme appropriately.

She presented a new proposed brand and an associated tagline "Rejuvenating Tipperary". The new brand follows closely the colour scheme and branding already in place in Tipperary County Council. A range of different material for

businesses which will be tailored to each town will also be available. A database of accountants, solicitors, and auctioneers has been developed and they will be targeted directly. Also, posters for the windows of vacant premises will be distributed along with a Social Media and Press Advertising campaign to promote the scheme.

Cllr John Fitzgerald stated that he felt it was a very good scheme and that the promotional and marketing tools were very worthwhile. He felt that the brand proposed looked very good and gave a strong corporate brand. His experience was that a lot of premises opened in Clonmel recently, rents are not too high, there are incentives to open at this time, and this CVIS grant is considered very worthwhile.

Cllr Siobhan Ambrose added that it was very professional and business-like brand and that it should appeal to new companies starting out.

Cllr John Fitzgerald proposed the branding Ideas for the CVIS and Imelda Walsh seconded. Imelda Walsh stated that the posters in the shop windows will add value to the promotion of the scheme as they will be placed in shops that will be able to avail of the scheme.

Cllr Siobhan Ambrose queried that if one had a business on a street and wanted to open the same type of business (offering the same service) on another street in the same town, could you apply for the CVIS for the second business on the second street. Kathleen Prendergast clarified that one could apply but a commitment would have to be given that if you did close the first business within the time frame specified in the scheme you would have to make a full refund of the grant.

Cllr Siobhan Ambrose further enquired that if a family business was closed for three months but it never went on the market as available for rent, could the offspring of that family apply for a grant under the CVIS if they were opening a business in that premises. Kathleen Prendergast advised that each case is looked at individually and that they would have to verify that the business was fully closed, evidence by notification to the council for the change of business status under rates and provide a set of accounts showing that the business had ceased as further evidence.

4. Retail Supports

Kathleen Prendergast gave a presentation on the Retail Sector and the supports provided by Tipperary County Council, outlining the following;

- Retail is Ireland's largest Industry

- 23% of the States revenue comes from retail (more than twice of the second largest sector - the financial sector.)
- Retail is the largest private sector employer with 83% of businesses employing less than 10 people
- It is the sector that is used to measure how well the economy is doing
- Every €1 creates an extra 26c in value to the domestic economy
- €1m spent in retail creates 26 jobs directly and indirectly in the domestic economy.
- 5% of retail sales are transacted on line from Irish registered companies.

Local Authority have a direct role in planning, local taxation, traffic management, county promotion, business support and the mobilisation of collective action. Opportunities arise to support retail businesses to improve competitiveness and influence their bottom line such as;

- Creating a welcoming environment through the cleanliness of towns, the visual amenities, orientation and getting around.
- Adding to the retail experience can be shaped through Heritage, culture, tourism, festivals, events, and Playgrounds or Parks.
- Supporting community well-being and vitality through civic pride such as pride-of-place and supporting Town Teams or Forums.

Tipperary County Council contributes to the Retail Sector through a range of services, supports, grants, promotions and collaborations as follows:

- Commercial Vacancy Incentive scheme
- Christmas Retail Support scheme
- Town Painting Enhancement scheme
- Retail Support Information
- Social Media Campaigns with Shop Local Tipperary Facebook having 895 likes and 1282 followers. Instagram has 1290 followers and 191 posts to date
- Commercial Rates Early Payment scheme
- Shop Online Directory
- LEO Trading Online Voucher scheme
- LEO General and Retail Specific Training Programs
- Applications under the Town and Villages Funding schemes
- Local Press and Media Promotions
- LEO Look for Local National Campaign
- LEO Retail Restart Grant
- Online Property Portal
- Sponsorship to attend Retail Excellence Irelands Retail Retreat
- Festival Supports through funding and preparation and safety aspects.
- Retail Apprenticeship Programme
- Town Centre Initiative supporting the development of Town Teams.

Cllr Siobhan Ambrose queried if the Shop Local promotions was open to all businesses or confined to rate payers. Kathleen Prendergast replied that in regards to the Shop Local campaign, as we do not have access to data on rate payers, we provide a generic message to all people to shop local in County Tipperary.

Cllr Seamus Hanafin shared the view that we have not seen the full impact from Covid19 yet from a retail perspective. He noted that supply chain issues are proving challenging, transport costs have gone from 10% to 60% and energy costs have doubled. He felt that there is a very good response from our Local Authority. Seamus highlighted the fact when 2000 jobs were lost when Dell closed in Limerick in 2009, €18 million was given to regenerate the mid-west region but within the same eighteen months, 6000 jobs were lost in retail and there were no supports offered to that sector. With the public realm work going on in Thurles an adverse effect on businesses was being felt compounded by the impact of COVID. He suggested that the wider Local Authority must be more cognitive of the effect of works on retail businesses given the high value of the retail sector to the county.

5. Review of SPC Topics 2021 and Planning for 2022 Meetings

Kathleen Prendergast outlined the topics covered in 2021

2021 Topics of discussion

12 January 2021 Meeting

Review of 2020 and Agenda Topics Schedule 2021
 Tipperary The Place The Time - 2020 Marketing Campaign
 Approval of LECP Annual Report 2020

9 March 2021 Meeting

Agreement on the Standing orders adopted by TCC
 County Development Plan & Economic Development
 Digital Strategy Update
 Preparing the way: Recovery and Resilience - County Tipperary's Future Digital Placement

11 May 2021 Meeting

Our Rural Futures - Natural Development Policy 2021 - 2025
 Focus Group - Digital Strategy
 Tipperary Tourism Destination Recovery Taskforce
 Tipperary Tourism Marketing Plans

13 July 2021 Meeting

Lit and New Technological University
 Local Enterprise Office Mid-year Reports and Update
 Lisheen Bio Economy Centre Agrichemway Project

9 November 2021 Meeting

Commercial Vacancy Incentive Scheme Outline and clarification
 Retail Supports in County Tipperary
 Review of 2021
 Planning the Agenda Topics for 2022

Kathleen stated that many of the topics covered in 2021 will be relevant to 2022 also. She sought ideas for additional topics they would like covered in 2022. The following list was agreed:

- Tourism - Relevant Strategic Elements (Look at Sporting Tourism)

- Enterprise Ireland and the IDA - New Regional Enterprise plan with a focus on Tipperary and both the South West and South East areas.
- Food producers
- 2022 - 2027 County Development Plan
- Social Enterprises & Co-operatives
- Local Economic Community Plan Process and Final Plan
- Climate Change - Economic Impacts
- Farming and Agriculture in County Tipperary.
- Broadband in County Tipperary
- County Tipperary Digital Strategy Reset
- County Tipperary Remote Working Strategy
- Power Generation (Community Power)

Mary Spillane would like to see an all-round inclusion and diversity in community, sports and commercially. She would like to see us leading the way with inclusion and how it links in with sports and people with disabilities. Kathleen Prendergast stated that this SPC would consider inclusion in respect of the economic impact.

6. Date of 2022 meeting

Kathleen Prendergast asked for direction on the number of meetings to be held in 2022, she noted that there were 5 meetings (1 extra than is mandatory) held in 2021 and the meeting agreed that they would hold 5 in 2022 also.

Cllr Seamus Hanafin requested that the meeting dates be reconsidered due to the volume of meetings occurring with some other meetings clashing with the SPC meeting. It was agreed that Kathleen Prendergast will do a poll on meeting day dates and times and then new dates for 2022 would be circulated.

7. Correspondences

The Chairman Cllr John Crosse, confirmed there was no correspondence received prior to the meeting.

8. Close of Business

The Chairman Cllr. John Crosse, thanked everyone for their attendance and time.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: John Crosse Date: 1/2/22

Chairperson.