

Minutes of the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee

Held on 11 May 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. Mary Hanna Hourigan, Zoom	Tom McGrath – Business Pillar - Zoom	Aisling Kelly, Assistant Staff Officer, Zoom
Cllr Máirín McGrath, Zoom	Laura Jones – Business Pillar, Zoom	Mary Ryan, LEO, Zoom
Cllr Imelda Goldsboro, Zoom		Marie Phelan, Tourism, Zoom
Cllr. John Fitzgerald - Zoom		
Cllr. Joe Hannigan, Zoom		Guest Speaker: John Gilsean

Apologies: Cllr Siobhan Ambrose, Clare Cashman, Seamus Hoyne and Anthony Fitzgerald, LEO

Absent: Noel Byrne, PPN, Cllr Peter Ryan, Cllr Dr. Phyll Bugler, Cllr Tony Black, Cllr Seamus Morris, Jim Sheehan.

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

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

He noted the Commercial Vacancy Incentive scheme was adopted by the Council Members at their May meeting following the review carried out by a Sub-group of the SPC. He thanked the members for their work on this valuable scheme.

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

The minutes of the last meeting were considered and Cllr Mary Hanna Hourigan proposed the adoption of the minutes and Cllr Seamus Hanafin seconded this item.

3. Our Rural Future – National Rural Development Policy 2021-2025

Kathleen Prendergast gave a presentation on the National Rural Development Policy – Our Rural Future 2021-2025.

This plan has particular importance as it presents opportunities in the strategy which Tipperary may benefit from, including areas such as:

- Remote working
- Revitalising Rural towns and villages
- Optimising communities and new technologies
- Employment
- Apprenticeships
- Tourism opportunities
- Supporting communities
- Transitioning to climate neutral economy

Cllr Seamus Hanafin highlighted the importance of re purposing and re using vacant properties and old buildings especially in town centres in order to help revitalise towns and villages and was pleased that it was included in this Policy. He noted that 49% of the national development plan funding went to Dublin in the past. He agreed with the importance of identifying locations for the development of advance technology bases and queried the selection process for these.

Cllr Máirín McGrath agreed with the importance of rural development post Covid 19 and noted that the rollout of the rural broadband further strengthens this. She felt that County Tipperary's Comhairle ná nóg is very active and therefore is well positioned to capitalise on funding and development opportunities.

Cllr Joe Hannigan stated that it was an exciting time and we must get moving on these plans with the towns and villages in the County.

Cllr Seamus Hanafin requested a copy of this presentation in the distribution of the minutes.

4. Digital Strategy Focus Group

John Gilsenan gave a presentation to the meeting outlining the many changes that had occurred in the digital landscape arising from the ongoing Covid19 pandemic. He spoke about the impact this will have on society as never has there been such great use or focus on digital technologies.

A full discussion ensued covering a range of areas including:

- Broadband availability and digital technology.
- The National Rural Resilience plan
- The Review of the climate Strategy.
- Remote working opportunities.
- Irelands 2nd place in Europe in the rankings of people working from home in May 2020.
- Research showing Tipperary as a great place for living and working.

- The likelihood of less people leaving the county to work abroad or in bigger cities in Ireland and the ideal opportunity to encourage workers who have left the county to now return to the county.
- The effectiveness of the www.tipperary.ie website in attracting businesses to the county.
- The status of Digital hubs (in place or planned) across County Tipperary with the locations and availabilities in Cahir, Questum, Cloughjordan, Nenagh, Roscrea, Templemore, Thurles, Tipperary and Carrick on Suir.
- Tipperary is also in a very strong position with rolling out 18 BCPs with 8 already up and running and 10 currently underway.

Cllr Mary Hanna Hourigan thanked John for the presentation and she noted the provision of housing and infrastructure in line with the opportunity of the remote working will be critical to people choosing one county over another. Cllr Hourigan also felt it was important now to continue to buy Irish and local.

Cllr Joe Hannigan noted the planning policy can prove difficult in certain circumstances and we should be looking at how to encourage people to relocate here or remain here and work remotely.

Cllr John Fitzgerald spoke about the introduction of remote working and the resulting lower costs for people due to working from home. Other benefits were that commuting to cities was removed and people still could work for the larger companies normally only based in cities.

Cllr Joe Hannigan requested a copy of the presentation be sent with the minutes of the meeting.

The Chairman, Cllr John Crosse, thanks everyone for their input.

5. Tipperary Tourism Destination Recovery Taskforce

Marie Phelan, Tourism, TCC, gave a presentation on Tipperary Tourism Destination Recovery Taskforce which included:

- An outline of the importance of the sector to the economy of the County.
- Details of a taskforce which has been set up with members from Failte Ireland, OPW, Independent representatives and Tipperary County Council.
- The aims of the task force including ensuring that tourism jobs in Tipperary would be sustained and that the sector would be supported to recover.
- A short-term plan for recovery of tourism with agreed actions for an 18-month recovery for the County with a focus on Tipperary as a whole County is now developed.
- The plan will remain agile to change and rethinking as required as the economy progresses over the coming months.

6. Tipperary Tourism Marketing Plans

Marie Phelan gave a presentation on the Tipperary Tourism Marketing Plan

She highlighted the range of different approaches being used including social media, radio and TV promotional campaigns with Today FM, local radio and RTE. QR scan codes for take a hike and Suir blue way promotion; collaborations with social media influencers online promoting Tipperary and finally working with ambassadors such as Sam Bennet and Rachel Blackmore to promote Tipperary throughout 2021.

Marie asked the members of the SPC present to get behind the promotional campaigns using the #Tipperary on social media activities and outings. She also showed the new video promoting Tipperary which is due to launch next week.

The Chair thanked Marie for both of the presentations and noted the work gone into them.

Cllr Seamus Morris commended the promotion of Tipperary and noted an excellent promotional programme had been on Channel 5 recently. He felt that the GAA and Semple stadium -the home of hurling in Ireland - could be considered as a stronger promotional tourism opportunity.

Cllr Joe Hannigan noted that Lough Derg local service providers support this marketing plan.

Imelda Walsh felt that it was great to see life 'beyond the pale' is now coming to focus through Our Rural Futures Policy and it gives great hope for the farming sector also to see such plans in place for rural counties.

Laura Jones commended the recent upskilling skills courses offered to the hospitality sector from the ETB, and Skillsnet. She also noted the importance of the support grants from LEO and Failte Ireland. She noted that there was a skills shortage as a product of Covid 19.

Mary Ryan state that there were skill shortages but the ETB had launched a team to examine the workforce and any skills shortages. She agreed to provide information on this to the members of the SPC.

Cllr Mary Hanna Hourigan noted that there was a wide offering of local crafts in the county and as part of tourism promotion they could add to the experience of tourists.

Marie Phelan noted the comments in relation to the hurling and the GAA and confirmed that these did appear in previous years promotional videos and she

was currently working with Tipperary Heartlands and Lár ná Pairce in relation to promotions once restrictions are lifted and once spectators are allowed to attend games again.

7. Correspondences

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

8. Date of next meeting

13 July 2021 at 10.30am

9. Close of Business

Cllr. John Crosse, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and time.

-) The Chair expressed his sympathies and on behalf of the SPC group to Cllr Siobhan Ambrose and her family on the recent death of her father former Cllr Tom Ambrose R.I.P.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: John Crosse M.C.C. Date: 13/7/21

Chairperson.

