

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee, Held on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019 at 10.00 am in Room 2, Thurles Municipal District Civic Offices, Castle Avenue, Thurles.**

**In Attendance:**

<b>Members of Council</b>	<b>Sectoral Interests</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Cllr John Crosse - Chairman	Laura Jones - Clonmel Park Hotel	Pat Slattery, Director of Services
Cllr Martin Browne	Imelda Walsh – IFA	Kathleen Prendergast, Economic Development Officer
Cllr Seamus Hanafin	Noel Byrne - PPN	Ita Horan, Head of LEO
Cllr Phyll Bugler,	Mary Spillane - PP	Tina Burke, Clerical Support

**Apologies:** Seamus Hoyne - LIT, Cllr. Tom Wood, Cllr Kieran Bourke, Cllr Siobhan Ambrose, Cllr Joe Hannigan, Cllr John Hogan and Cllr Mark Fitzgerald.

**Absent:** Edel Grace

**1. Welcome**

Cllr Crosse opened the meeting and welcomed all concerned. He highlighted that this was the last meeting of the current SPC as the committee will terminate with the life of the council on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019. He thanked all of those present for their commitment to the SPC to date.

**2. Minutes and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on the September 24<sup>th</sup> 2018 and notes from postponed meeting of 22 January 2019 were considered and there were no matters arising. Adoption of the Minutes was proposed by Noel Byrne and seconded by Cllr. Seamus Hanafin.

**3. Rail in Co. Tipperary**

Pat Slattery presented a paper which explored the question of Rail and if it was the best transport system to meet the needs of Tipperary into the future. The paper presented the background to the current rail services across the county with particular focus on the *Limerick to Waterford* and the *Limerick to Ballybrophy* routes. It went on to examine the experience in the U.K., Europe (Grenoble) and internationally (Canada and the USA).

In exploring alternative or innovative thinking two main themes were presented:

- 1.) Consideration for Transit Oriented Development in Tipperary Town, Carrick On Suir and Limerick Junction.
- 2). Explore the consideration of closing the these two above rail lines and seek to retain their current budgets in County Tipperary to provide for a more needs based transport model.

In conclusion the paper sought that in light of the above discussion and the climate change challenge also, consideration should be given to where best to target transport investment, to provide for the counties needs into the future. It was agreed that this theme should be part of the consultation for the next County Development Plan.

Noel Byrne felt the low carbon footprint and carbon natural alternative must be sought.

Cllr Martin Browne highlighted the fact that the current time schedule for the services is not meeting requirements for either workers or elderly people.

Cllr Hanafin agreed and stated that the current service times were very poor and that this then is making the case that the service is non-viable. However he issued caution on the proposal to remove the rail service from the county, as the money for running the trains is very unlikely to be put back into alternative services in the county if the train services were reduced.

Cllr Phyll Bugler stated that on-line ticketing is not available for the smaller town train station stops, which is a negative as when showing the numbers using the service they are not recorded.

Laura Jones highlighted the need for a good service in regard to a successful Tourism sector in the county.

#### **4. Update on Local Enterprise Plan, Regional Enterprise Plans and BREXIT**

Ita Horan, Head of Enterprise, presented the Local Enterprise Office Progress report up to the end of April 2019 including details of the Measure 1 Supports Feasibility, Priming and Business Expansion Grants; the Measure 2 Supports Mentoring, and Trade Event Support and the Business Advice and Entrepreneurship Support Services

She advised the meeting that Regional Enterprise Plans for both the South East and the Mid West were launched and adopted. These have a different approach to the Action Plan for Jobs as they are more action based and have measurable actions under 5 strategic objectives.

In regard to Brexit, Ita informed the SPC that companies have disengaged currently with Brexit preparations.

#### **5. Consider issues in regard to Taxi & Hackney Services in Co. Tipperary**

Kathleen Prendergast presented a paper on the Issues identified in regard to the taxi services across the county. The background to the Taxi and Hackney Services in Ireland and County Tipperary were presented. The Key issues identified were:

- Communities across the county and in particular rural areas perceiving a lack of available taxi/hackney services.
- There is lack of public clarity regarding the issuing of taxi licences relating to their application in specific geographical areas by the taxi licence holder.
- Concerns relating to the large number of licences issued versus the actual number of taxi's/hackneys in operation in the county.
- There is also concerns regarding the times and frequency of operation versus the peak requirements of towns
- The effect on the hospitality sector in towns and villages from Drink driving laws
- The effect on rural communities arising from the lack of ability to socialise with consequent impact on mental health and an increase in suicide rates
- An increase in anti-social behaviour arising from young people with drink taken having to wait inordinate times after nightclubs, pubs etc.

It was agreed that there is a need to:

1. Establish if there is a local Area Hackney Service Area in County Tipperary currently.
2. A comprehensive audit to be undertaken to establish the true position regarding the availability of taxis and hackneys and for the results to inform the decision making process

3. A comprehensive audit to be undertaken to establish the true position regarding the availability of taxis and hackneys Driver Licence Holders.
4. A review of Regulations for Taxi/Hackney services in order to counter the perceived bias towards city experiences rather than taking into account the needs of rural Ireland

The joint policing committee intends to take a delegation to the National Transport Authority in late 2019 and it was agreed that the above points should also be presented at same.

**6. A.O.B**

P Slattery thanked everyone for their commitment to the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee since its inception. He also thanked Cllr Crosse for his chairmanship of same.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson

