



Minutes of the Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee Held on 5th September 2023 at 10.30am in Thurles MD Civic Offices and by Zoom.

Members of Council in Attendance	Sectoral Interests in Attendance	Staff in Attendance:
Cllr. Imelda Goldsboro Chairperson	Mary Spillane, PPN	Brian Beck, Director of Services (Zoom)
Cllr. Mary Hanna Hourigan	Laura Jones, Business Pillar (Zoom)	Anthony Fitzgerald, Head of Enterprise and Economic Development
Cllr. Mairín McGrath	Theresia Gruschlbauer, PPN (Zoom)	Kathleen Prendergast, Economic Development Officer
Cllr. John Crosse		Margo Hayes, Administrative Officer
Cllr. Phyll Bugler (Zoom)		Clare Lee, Climate Action Co-Ordinator
Cllr. Peggy Ryan (Zoom)		Aine McCarthy, Town Regeneration Officer
Cllr. Siobhan Ambrose (Zoom)		Donough Leahy, Clerical Officer
Cllr. Joe Hannigan (Zoom)		
Cllr. Seamus Hanafin (Zoom)		
Cllr. Seamus Morris (Zoom)		

Apologies: Seamus Hoyne (TUS), Pat Carroll (Farming Pillar).

Absent: Cllr. John Fitzgerald, Cllr. Tony Black, Tom McGrath (Business Pillar).

1. Welcome

Cllr. Imelda Goldsboro (Chairperson), opened the meeting by welcoming all present. She welcomed and introduced Theresia Gruschlbauer (PPN) who has joined the Committee as a replacement for Noel Byrne.

2. Adoption of the Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters arising

The Minutes of the last meeting were considered. Laura Jones proposed the adoption of the minutes and Mary Spillane seconded this item. There were no matters arising.

3. Local Economic Community Plan (LECP) 2022-2027 - Stage 2: Public Consultations SPC Sign-off

Margo Hayes, Administrative Officer, gave an update on the LECP process and progress to date. Margo advised that the purpose of the LECP is to set out the objectives and actions needed to promote and support economic development and local community development in County Tipperary. Margo outlined the priorities of the LECP over the next 6 years, outlined the partners they will be working with and went through the programmes they will be working on which include; Healthy Ireland, Age Friendly, LEADER SICAP -a Social Inclusion Programme and TUS. Margo then presented the five high-level goals of the LECP as follows;

1. Community Resilience and Wellbeing

2. Economic Development
3. Climate Action
4. Education and Skills
5. Culture and Heritage

In relation to this specific presentation, Margo highlighted Goal number 2, Economic Development and advised that it seeks for County Tipperary to be characterized by a diverse, innovative and environmentally aware economy in which enriching employment opportunities are available for all its citizens and the necessary education and training opportunities are easily accessible by all.

The current status for the process to adapt a Local Economic and Community Plan was outlined as follows:

- An Advisory Group is in place
- Consultants Exodea have been appointed
- Socio-Economic Profile Drafted (This will require update following publication of 2022 small area data, that is shortly due.)
- Draft High-Level Goals Agreed (and supporting objectives are in draft form)
- Consultation process underway:
 - In person community consultations carried out across the 5 MDs in May
 - Online Portal open and over 110 submission received to date
 - Phase 2 consultations proposed for September 13th 2023
 - Focus group/sectoral consultations September 2023
- Working group meetings to consolidate research/consultations on hand to date

Margo advised that the LECP is currently at Stage 2 which is another public consultation stage having already being through Stage 1 of public consultation. This next stage of public consultation is due to take place on September 13th at Borrisoleigh Community Centre from 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm and Clonmel Rugby club from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm. This will provide an opportunity for all the information gathered to date, including high level goals, objectives and submissions received to be reviewed and considered by the public. Margo stated that Community groups, businesses or any interested parties, can have their say in this plan during this next major stage of consultation.

Margo advised that they will then move onto the sign-off stage by both the SPC and LCDC. She requested the SPC to facilitate an additional meeting on the 12th of October to complete this process. Margo then concluded by outlining the specific objectives under the Economic Development High Level goals.

Chairperson Cllr. Imelda Goldsboro thanked Margo for the presentation and opened to the floor for questions.

Cllr. Phyll Bugler queried the distance from areas across the county, such as Nenagh to where the consultation meetings are taking place on the 12th of September. She also asked if a poster could be produced that the members of this committee could put up on social media for their constituents and groups, to inform them that the public consultation is taking place. Cllr. Bugler also asked what level of detail would be available at the meetings: - she herself is interested in the area of high-level visitor experience and accommodation and also farm buildings being developed into tourist accommodation. Cllr. Bugler asked if somebody from Ireland's Hidden Heartlands would be present at the meeting to advise of the tourism plans for the North of the County. In relation to the agricultural sector, she asked if somebody would be present to advise farmers in relation to adhering to low carbon output and how they can achieve their targets.

Cllr. Mairín McGrath thanked Margo for her presentation she queried if the steering group were they happy with the number of submissions provided by the community groups from the first round of public consultation. She noted that the summer period was a challenging

time to get people involved in consultation. She also asked if the upcoming public consultation is specifically on the high-level goals or would it be a broader public consultation, that is open to any members of the community and community groups.

Cllr. Seamus Morris discussed the promotion of sports tourism and said as a county we are slow to promote same. Cllr. Morris gave an example of the Pitch & Putt club in Nenagh, who are a small committee of volunteers, who recently held the National Stroke play championship in the town and Nenagh was full for two days. He mentioned that the GAA World games were held in Derry Town recently with over 1,000 competitors travelling from all over the world to visit. He felt that as a Council we should be looking to attract events like this and embracing sports tourism more. He felt that a Workshop should be created on how to help people promote sports tourism. He also mentioned "slow tourism" which is a massive tourism product across the world and he stated that in his opinion, Tipperary is perfect for this type of offering. He offered his support and was willing to work with the relevant staff member to promoting these ideas.

Kathleen Prendergast advised the committee that at the meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise on the 7th of June in 2022, the initial high-level goals of the LECP were discussed and today these new economic high-level goals are being presented for sign off. At the June 2022 meeting with the SPC, there were areas the SPC wished to see represented in a stronger way and these were now more evident in this current set. Those areas were: energy, climate change, transport, sustainability and social enterprise.

Margo Hayes then advised that she would write up a submission based on what both Cllr. Bugler and Cllr. Morris have said today so that it will be included in the process.

She advised Cllr. Bugler that there would not be any specific experts from Tourism or the Agricultural Industry at the consultation taking place in September but the event will provide an opportunity to include the issues so we can have actions formulated for its inclusion in the policy framework. Margo also stated that it was quite difficult to get venues to hold the events on the 12th of September so that was why the final two venues were selected. Margo confirmed it was a focused public consultation that is open to any members of the community and community groups and she noted that anybody who participated in the first round will be notified that this event is coming up. In relation to the consultation process to-date, there was over 200 people in attendance at the public consultation across the five MD's in May 2023. From the online portal there was 110 responses. Overall, the steering group were happy with the consultation outcomes to date.

She also agreed with Cllr. Morris's point in relation to sports tourism and noted that the world mountain running championships which took place in Clonmel last year brought huge crowds to the area also.

The adoption of the High-Level Objectives for the LECP Consultation was then proposed by Cllr. Mairín McGrath and seconded by Cllr. Mary Hanna Hourigan.

4. Town Centre First

Áine McCarthy, Town Regeneration Officer (TRO) gave a presentation on Town Centre First Programme and discussed the following topics in detail.

- Town Centre First Policy
- Town Team
- Town Champion
- Town Regeneration Officer
- Tipperary Progress to date
- Funding

The Town Centre First Policy was launched in February 2022 which kick-started the current approach to town regeneration. The focus is on addressing the change in the position of towns in the County from the places they once were with an emphasis on attacking dereliction and utilising existing buildings and un-used lands for new development and residential occupancy. Commitment to the Town Centre First Policy in the County Development Plan and any new Local Area Plan or Enhancement Plans etc. will result in alignment with Town Centre First Principles in County Tipperary.

Áine then discussed the Town Centre First approach, where a Town Regeneration Officer has been employed in every local authority. Town teams are to be established within the towns across the county. Towns will be selected and the Town Regeneration Officer will work with selected towns to develop plans. She is currently working with Roscrea, Clonmel, and Carrick on Suir.

Towns need to carry out town centre health check from which Town Centre First Plans are created. These plans will have to then be supported by an investment programme and then the delivery of outcomes is built on that investment implementation. Funding such as TVR, ORIS, RRDF can potentially support projects identified in TCF plans.

A Town Team is usually made up of about 10-12 people from Community groups, Youth Rep, Older Persons Rep, Business Owners/ Traders Rep or Business Association or Chamber of Commerce, Rep from local large-scale industry if one is in or within the environs of the town, PPN Rep, Sports club Rep OR Sports Partnership Rep, Elected Rep from the relevant Municipal District, Disability Rep, Residents Association Rep and a Rep from the Development Company.

The Town Champion or Chairperson of the committee would generally be the Spokesperson for the Town Team, ensuring that there is appropriate communication between the Local Authority and all stakeholders.

Áine stated her role is to assist Town Teams in driving on Town Centre First Objectives. There are 26 Town Regeneration Officers appointed nationally. The 26 Officers are part of a national network that meets on a monthly basis where they share their findings which can benefit the different counties also.

To date in County Tipperary:

- A Town Centre First Plan has been completed in Roscrea. A Town Centre First Team was set up, along with a Town Champion in January 2023, with the objective of preparing a Town Centre First Plan. In the Roscrea Plan (and other Town Centre Plans going forward) there will be short, medium and long-term projects identified. Roscrea Town Centre First Plan has 10 projects identified from the process of working with consultants, stakeholder engagement, public consultation with the community and focus groups. The next stage is to discuss and agree how best to fund and implement these projects from the plan. It is aligned with the Roscrea LAP and is included as an appendix in the Roscrea LAP.
- Currently Áine is working with Clonmel Borough District, where a new town team has been established and they are currently identifying the actions that the Town Team will focus on to deliver.
- It is expected that a new round of funding will be announced over the next few weeks and Carrick-on-Suir will be put forward at that stage for a Town Centre First Plan to be developed. Aine has been working with them to prepare for this and a new Town Team has been established.
- Áine also mentioned that Town Centre First Plans can align with Enhancement plans, as any town over the population of 500 people can be considered for Town Centre First Plan funding. Due to this opportunity smaller towns such as Mullinahone and Killenaule, who are currently in the process of developing Enhancement Plans, will now fit the brief for the funding opportunity under the Town Centre First Policy.

- Áine also advised that she is seeking advice from the National Town Centre First Office to retrofit any current existing plans with TCF Principles, (giving Ballina Killaloe Enhancement Plan as an example,) so they too can avail of the funding opportunity.
- Áine advised that the Compulsory Purchase Order Activation Group, which is a new group set up by the Director for Housing, consists of a range of staff and has a member from each Municipal District sitting on it.

In conclusion, Áine highlighted the many funding options and opportunities available and the various funding streams she will look to in order to seek funding to fulfil the actions in the Town Centre First Plans in towns and villages across County Tipperary.

Cllr. Imelda Goldsboro thanked Áine for her presentation and opened to the committee for questions.

Cllr. Mary Hanna Hourigan stated that Tipperary Town has a Town Regeneration Task Force and questioned if this is why they were not listed as a potential town to be part of the Town Centre First Plans. She also noted that, as the scheme will now be rolled out into villages, her own village of Cappawhite has a lot of dereliction and she would like to see it being prioritised. She had previously discussed this over a year ago with her MD, but nothing has happened since.

Cllr. Mairín McGrath enquired about the villages also, outlining that Aine mentioned 500+ was the threshold to reach to be considered for the policy. Mairin enquired about the Compulsory Order Activation Group and how it will operate. Mairin stated that living above a shop is always a major part of the viability of town centres and village life. She enquired in regard to the Croí Cónaithe scheme as to if the vacant property grant is available to use if the shop is being used downstairs as a business to which Aine confirmed it would be applicable to the upstairs of such a property.

Mary Spillane enquired about the recruitment process of the Town Team and if they have managed to get representation from all the groups mentioned. Mary asked how they recruit individuals and how inclusive the process is.

Cllr. John Crosse stated it is good to see a plan in action for Town Centre First and this is very important. He said in his opinion the only solution which will solve the town centre issues in Tipperary town, is a bypass of the town and therefore it has to be the number one priority. He queried if a meeting with the Minister, to see if we can put a push on delivering this Bypass, could be sought by the SPC through the Council itself or through the council Roads Section.

Cllr Siobhan Ambrose advised the meeting that Minister Jack Chambers visited Clonmel in June and the issue of the N24 was raised and will be brought back to national level as a key concern for the county.

Cllr. Phyll Bugler asked what Aine means by retrofit the Ballina-Killaloe Enhancement Plan and asked when will they see something delivered on this specific plan which is still awaiting delivery. She noted how successful Tipperary County Council have been in applying for the Urban Regional Development Funds for dereliction and vacancy but she said there are many different other projects that need to be funded too such as the Ballina Killaloe Enhancement Plan. Cllr. Bugler sought information on what was involved for towns in terms of Climate adaptation and retrofitting and she stated that she would like to get the figures on Croí Cónaithe delivery in County Tipperary.

Cllr. Joe Hannigan asked, in terms of the town and villages Renewal Funding opportunities for towns with a population of 500+, where would the 20% matched funding come from. He also asked if the funding for the Town Centre First Programme was national funding or local authority funding. Cllr. Hannigan acknowledged the fact that Nenagh was seeing huge effort to populate the town center but noted the challenges present at this time in regard to the number of children and youths that are now hanging around car parks. He stated

that there has to be additional supports put in place, such as leisure and youth activities for them, if this or any program is to be successful.

Áine McCarthy thanked everybody for their questions and thanked Cllr. Hanna Hourigan for highlighting that Tipperary town should have been included in her original presentation. She confirmed that Tipperary town is being managed directly by the Tipperary Town Regeneration Task Force and has a dedicated staff member - Michael Begley - leading the Town Centre First Plan. In terms of the villages, Áine advised that the focus is very much on the towns, with Roscrea being the main focus as the pilot town for 2023.

Responding to Cllr. McGrath, Áine advised that the Compulsory Purchase Order Activation Group, will look at the URDF Call 3 for Vacancy and Dereliction funding for Thurles, Clonmel and Nenagh and at the properties in those towns where they can best apply this funding.

Áine advised Mary Spillane that in terms of recruitment of people for the Town Centre First Team, it varies depending on the local circumstances. They can follow the Town Centre First Policy recommendations and thus ensure everybody is represented. In Carrick-on-Suir, having identified that a few areas were not represented, the team reached out and secured representatives from the other groups. In Roscrea, a survey was undertaken and this included a request to groups to have representation on the town team. Áine also gave an example of not having every group or body in the town represented - she stated that the Gardai could be on it, but it is not necessary to have them as they could be invited to attend a meeting once a year or every 6 months so that the town team are engaging with the Gardai.

Áine advised Cllr. Crosse that a request for a meeting with the Minister would be a matter for Tipperary Town Task Force to address.

Responding to Cllr. Bugler, she advised that the Ballina/Killaloe Enhancement Plan is very much in place and is a very good plan and its delivery would not be delayed. However, it had been recognised that if it aligned itself to the Town Centre First Policy it would have a stronger case to access funding nationally. In relation to the European Regional Development fund, the National Town Centre First office has advised that it could be used by the local authority for such projects. In terms of Climate adaptation and retrofitting, the town centre first office would like the Town Centre First Teams to consider this in developing their plans. Áine suggested that as the Croí Cónaithe project is under the remit of the Vacant Homes Officer in the Housing Department, the SPC might be able to get figures from there for the members.

Áine advised Cllr. Hannigan that the Town and Village Renewal Funding Scheme advertised was to be led by each Municipal District so if there is a gap of 20% funding, ideally the district would try to source funds internally to match the funding. She also advised that Town Centre First is a nationally funded programme under the Department of Community and Rural Development. It was this department that provided the funding for the pilot town of Roscrea and for her in her role as the Town Regeneration Officer. More funding is expected in the future. In terms of Anti-social behavior, she suggested that CCTV could provide a solution and the Council are looking at a policy for same at present as far as she was aware.

Theresia Gruschlbauer then asked what is the role of the Vacant Homes Officer and if there is a procedure for a group of people to approach the Vacant Homes Officer to discuss a project. Áine advised that she believes that the Vacant Homes Officer would be open to such discussion on some community projects but it would have to be in line with the Croí Cónaithe criteria.

The chair concluded the item and moved to the next Agenda Item.

5. **County Tipperary Climate Action Plan**

Clare Lee, Climate Action Co-Ordinator gave a presentation on the Draft Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 (LACAP) and she covered three key items in her discussion as follows;

- Setting the Scene for Going Green
- Draft LACAP
- Next steps in LACAP process

Clare discussed the new governance for Climate action in Tipperary County Council which supports the development of climate action measures across the Council services. A new Climate action steering group has been deployed at senior management level along with a new Climate Action office. These arise from the Climate Action Act which outlines national climate objective, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable and climate-neutral economy, and further, it commits to pursue and achieve outcomes no later than 2050. From this plan Local Authorities are required to achieve a 51% reduction in the Local Authorities own Green House Gas emissions and a 50% improvement in Local Authorities own energy efficiency by 2030 along with the delivery of LACAPs by February 2024.

Clare then discussed the LACAP and the three key elements of 1.) delivering Green House Gas submissions in Councils own operations, 2.) delivering and supporting the other sectors to reach their targets and 3.) identifying decarbonizing zones.

Clare demonstrated what the Draft LACAP will look like when published on the 21st of September 2023 for public consultation and comment. It included the following headings: Introduction, Stakeholders, Emissions Profile of County and County Council, Evidence-based Climate Actions, Decarbonizing Zone and Implementation & Reporting.

Clare stated that the vision for the LACAP, which Tipperary County Council, through the delivery of this LACAP and its Actions as they apply across all of its services and functions, support the National Climate Objective. This vision will be achieved across the following five strategic goals:

1. Governance and Leadership
2. Built Environment and Transport
3. Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure
4. Communities: Resilience and Just Transition
5. Sustainability and Resource Management

Clare mentioned the Decarbonizing Zone in County Tipperary which is based in Mid-Tipperary and outlined the future opportunities available to the Zone.

Cllr. Imelda Goldsboro thanked Clare for her presentation and opened to the floor for questions.

Cllr. Mairín McGrath asked if there was a time line on the strand of Local Authority Climate Action Fund applications being released. She felt that as community groups could get information that would assist their application, in particular communities are seeking for Electric Vehicles Charging Points in their villages, through engaging in the public consultation - She also enquired if there are projects or targets that will be in the Local Authority Climate Action Plan which will over-ride the County Development Plan generally and also more specifically in terms of future planning applications.

Cllr. Joe Hannigan enquired where the funding will come from to reduce the carbon emissions for the Local Authority and he also stated that there should be an emphasis on communities outside of the new Decarbonization Zone also for up-skilling opportunities.

Clare advised Cllr. McGrath that they are constantly in contact with the Department and the funding is due to be released shortly. She also advised that the Local Authority Climate Action Plan would not influence planning applications directly and that this is a funding of the spatial planning framework.

In response to Cllr. Hannigan, Clare advised that there are many other stakeholders involved in supporting and funding climate action for other sectors and communities, for example, the SEAI, the National Transport Authority, Development Companies etc.

6. Any other Business

Cllr Imelda Goldsboro, Chairperson confirmed the retirements of Clare Cashman, PPN and Michelle Kavanagh, Construction pillar and thanked them for there time on the Committee. She advised that the replacement of the representatives has commenced by the Corporate Section of Tipperary County Council.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Cllr. Goldsboro confirmed that there will be an additional meeting taking place on October 12th 2023, with a one Item Agenda on the County Tipperary Local Economic and Community Plan (2024-2029)- Draft Framework. This meeting will take place via Zoom at 10:30 am. Full details will follow.

That concluded the meeting.

Imelda Goldsboro

05/12/2023