

LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC Meeting Held In Cooley Room, County Hall on Monday 1st February, 2016 at 3.30pm

Present: Cllrs: Mark Dearey (Chairman), Marianne Butler, Conor Keelan,
Kevin Callan, Alan Cassidy
Ms Karen Devine, Environment/Conservation
Mr Eddie Phelan, Development/Construction

Officials: Frank Pentony, Director of Service
Mary T Daly, Senior Executive Officer
Thomas McEvoy, Head of Louth LEO
Miriam Roe, Staff Officer

Apologies: Cllrs: Thomas Sharkey, Pio Smith
Mr Anthony McArdle, Community/Voluntary
Mr Paddy Donnelly, Agriculture/Farming
Mr Simon McCormack, Business/Commercial

Cllr Deary welcomed Aibhlin McCrann and Cliona Ryan to the meeting. He also expressed congratulations to Mary T and her team on their Fáilte Ireland – Best Tourism Initiative Award – for the Irish Maritime Festival.

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Upon the proposal of Cllr Kevin Callan and seconded by Ms Karen Devine the minutes of the meeting of 14th December, 2015 were adopted.

2. Matters Arising:

Cllr Dearey informed the members that Padraic White has stepped down as Chair of the LEF. He thanked Padraic for all his work with the Forum and in turn, more recently, for his interaction with this SPC. Cllr Dearey advised that Joan Martin, Chief Executive, is the temporary interim chair and is looking forward to working with whoever the new Chair will be. Thomas McEvoy asked if anyone has any ideas for nominees for this position to contact him directly.

Cllr Keelan asked if a rep from Fáilte Ireland had been asked to attend the meeting. Mary T advised that there was no one available at this time. She stated that Fáilte Ireland are currently working on the Irelands Ancient Strategy and Cllr Dearey asked if

Mary T could write back to them and ask that we would be involved in the Terms of Reference on this document.

3. Draft Local Economic & Community Plan:

Mary T briefly spoke about the LECP's legislative basis and context of the draft plan and how the draft economic objectives of LECP were formulated. Once adopted by the SPC, the draft plan will be forwarded to the Municipal Districts and then onto full Plenary Council for adoption. She then took the members through each of the 24 Economic Objectives mentioning the associated actions and who was responsible as Lead Delivery.

With regard to Objective 11 – Thomas McEvoy, LEO, who had worked very closely with Comminique International when writing the plan advised that the LEO would be the lead on the majority of actions under this objective.

Discussion followed regarding some elements of the Draft and Aibhlin McCrann and Cliona Ryan were on hand to answer any questions. Discussion included the following:

- Cllr Dearey asked could make reference in the plan that we are 'open to explore the idea of regional and inter-regional credit initiatives.'
- Cllr Keelan asked would the plan come back to the SPC when it was being reviewed. He was advised that it would come back before the SPC and that NOAC will be monitoring the delivery of the LECP on an ongoing basis.
- Cllr Dearey remarked that the idea, previously mentioned by Cllr Sharkey, of an MOU between LCC and DkIT was an excellent one and was worth progressing.
- Mary T advised that under Objective 21 that the LEF's Tourism & Heritage Action Plan was being reviewed and that the draft revision would come before the SPC shortly.
- Eddie Phelan asked if a separate action could be put in under Objective 001 regarding the 'two preferred sites' in Drogheda.
- Karen Devine asked if under Objective 19 could there be a commitment to a development strategy for all other towns in the County – not just Dundalk.
- Eddie Phelan mentioned producing guidelines for those considering developing in Town Centres. We need to give a potential investor as much information as possible to facilitate development in these locations. Mary T mentioned the Shop Front Guidelines, Business Incentive Schemes, etc. Which were coming on stream. It was asked if the words 'create incentives' could be included in the wording of Action 117?
- Cllr Keelan mentioned the REDZ funding awarded to Ardee & Drogheda but that Dundalk were excluded due to their Gateway Status stating that it was important that all funding that is available is applied for.

Following these comments on the Draft Objectives/Actions the following was agreed:

- a) Add in an action regarding the 2 'preferred sites' in Drogheda to be included under Objective 001
- b) Add an action regarding being open to explore alternative sources of finance – both regional and inter-regional.
- c) With regard to the Retail Sector it was decided that no change to the actions would be made in view of the shop front guidelines, business incentive schemes and other initiatives coming down the line.

The Draft LECP Economic Objectives were passed on the proposal of Cllr Kevin Callan and seconded by Mr Eddie Phelan.

4. Drogheda Boundary Review Submission:

Cllr Dearey mentioned the Drogheda Boundary Review and expressed his thanks to both Aibhlin & Cliona from Communique International and Louth County Council staff on an excellent submission which put forward strong arguments using a very clear narrative. Frank Pentony advised that there were just over 400 submissions received with the majority being from Co Meath. The Commission had met with the elected members in 2015 and are scheduled to meet with them again in mid February. All submissions should be available on the web site in the coming days. The Committee will have to submit a report, with recommendations to the Minister by 30th March.

5. Update on the Local Enterprise Development Plan 2016:

Thomas McEvoy, LEO, explained that a service level agreement with Enterprise Ireland requires the LEO to develop a County Enterprise Development Plan for 2016 which would set out how funding is to be spent. Thomas asked the members that if they had any ideas in this regard to contact him directly.

He went on to speak about Local Enterprise Week which runs from 7th to 11th March. This will comprise 15 activities and is spread across the county and is designed to— Deliver opportunities for SMEs to learn from specialists industry experts; Stage quality networking events to help business owners build professional networks; Stimulate enterprise and business development; Provide support and advice to those considering starting a business; Inform business owners about the supports and services available to their business. The week will finish up with 'Finance Friday' with information on the new forms of finance available.

Other areas touched on in the Draft Plan were training programmes, on-line trading vouchers, mentoring programmes and the accelerator fund was announced last week under the Regional Action Plan for Jobs. Thomas also referred his participation in a recent Radio 4 Interview regarding Brexit and its affect on indigenous business. Finally he mentioned at a submission from the Border Leos in conjunction with NI Enterprise Agencies for INTERREG funding. He finished his report by circulating last years Strategic Plan and this years Enterprise Development Plan Framework. He asked that if anyone wished to make an input to this years plan to contact him directly with

suggestions by mid February in order that he might incorporate these ideas in the Draft Plan. At Cllr Deareys request, Thomas agreed to contact the SPC members via email with a number of guiding questions.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 9th May in the Conference Room, Boyne Centre, Drogheda.

This concluded the meeting:

Confirmed at Meeting held on: _____

Signed: _____
Chairman