

LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Economic Development & Enterprise Support Strategic Policy Committee meeting held via Zoom on Thursday 10th September 2020 at 3.30pm.

Present: Cllr Pio Smith (Chair)
Cllr Declan Power
Cllr Tomás Sharkey
Cllr Andrea Mc Kevitt
Cllr Sean Kelly
Ms Sarah Daly, Social Inclusion Rep
Mr P Malone, Business/Commercial Rep
Mr Alan Mc Ardle

Officials: Mr Frank Pentony, Director of Service
Mr Thomas Mc Evoy, Head of Enterprise
Ms Therese Mc Ardle, Administrative Officer
Ms M O Callaghan, Staff Officer
Mr Mark Johnson, Sen Engineer
Mr John O Hagan, Sen Engineer

Apologies: Cllr Dolores Minogue, Mr Gerard Melia, Farming Rep, Lorcan Cooke and Ms Colette Moss Senior Executive Officer.

1. **Approve minutes of meeting 20th February 2020 minutes** proposed by Cllr T Sharkey and seconded by Ms S Daly.

2. **Matters arising** – none

3. **Covid 19 – Business/Grants Supports.**

T Mc Evoy LEO explained that everything a business might need to know in relation to financial supports is available on one portal

<https://www.localenterprise.ie> .

TmcE described each of the supports offered and presented the current figures on applications and approvals for Louth.

Questions were then taken from the committee members.

Cllr P Smith asked why there were so many of the restart grant applications were rejected. TMcE explained that to be eligible for the grant, the business must be on the rates schedule and this was not the case for some new businesses however with the new Restart Plus scheme there is greater flexibility so the businesses rejected can reapply under the revised scheme.

Ms S Daly informed the committee that co - working hubs were being developed at Creative Spark Dundalk and The Mill Drogheda.

4. Town Centre Rejuvenation

Cllr P Smith introduced the topic saying that a lot of change is happening in our towns. He mentioned proposed pedestrianisation of areas, vacant shops and rejuvenation of main streets. He asked if the committee would consider prioritising this issue as a policy formulation for this SPC?

A discussion ensued on the various surveys that were carried particularly those carried out by the BIDs offices

The reports listed included:

- A report on Dundalk in 2011 for a national competition
- A report by BIDs Office on shoppers/visitors to Dundalk
- Shared Heritage Tourism Report

Mark Johnson Senior Engineer LCC then addressed the meeting and informed the members of the works that are ongoing in the towns under funding received from the NTA (National Transport Authority) to encourage people back into town centres. Measures such as

- widening footpaths for safer queueing at shops due to COVID restrictions,
- creation of eating spaces at premises namely **parklets**
- Parasols
- Benches and picnic furniture
- Planters

J O'Hagan, Senior Engineer LCC gave a brief overview of the urban regeneration projects ongoing in Louth at the minute.

- Bridge St Dundalk – waiting department approval
- West Gate Drogheda- at planning stage
- Ardee- at planning stage
- PACNR Drogheda – waiting department approval

He mentioned that the PANCR (Port Access Northern Cross route) will have a significant impact on the traffic times through Drogheda if it proceeds.

J O'Hagan added in all of the above cases there will be timely public consultation in due course.

5. SPC work plan.

Cllr P Smith Chairman asked the committee members for suggestions for this committee's work plan.

Cllr S Kelly put forward a suggestion that Tourism in Louth should be a priority for the committee. It was agreed that the current tourism officer Michelle Whelan should be invited to a SPC meeting in the future.

A further discussion ensued on Town Centre Rejuvenation and it was agreed that this committee will make this a priority and formulate a strategy to bring to full council.

In the end it was agreed that the two areas this SPC committee would concentrate on are

1. Town Centre Rejuvenation
2. Tourism in Louth

6. Proposed meetings schedule for 2020.

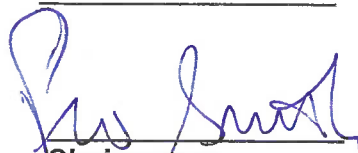
Cllr P Smith acknowledged that due to COVID the committee has had to cancel some of the scheduled meetings and asked if the members would agree to a meeting before the next planned meeting in November. The members agreed to hold another meeting on 22nd October 2020.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Confirmed at Meeting held on:

22nd Oct 2020.

Signed:


Chairperson

