

LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC Meeting Held In Cooley Room, County Hall, Dundalk on Monday 11th December, 2017 at 3.30pm

Present: Cllrs: Mark Dearey (Chairman), Conor Keelan,
Marianne Butler, David Saurin, Pio Smith, Kevin Callan
Mr Eddie Phelan, Development/Construction
Mr Ciaran McDonnell, Agriculture/Farming
Mr Pat Mulligan, Community/Voluntary
Mr Simon McCormack, Business/Commercial
Ms Karen Devine, Environment/Conservation

Officials: Frank Pentony, Director of Service
Colette Moss, Senior Executive Officer
Thomas McEvoy, Head of Louth LEO
Miriam Roe, Staff Officer

Apologies: Cllrs: Thomas Sharkey

In Attendance: Martina O'Dwyer – Failte Ireland
Tara Smith, Boyne Valley Food Development Officer

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Upon the proposal of Cllr David Saurin and seconded by Mr Ciaran McDonnell the minutes of the meeting of 11th September, 2017 were adopted.

2. Matters Arising:

None

3. Meeting Schedule 2018:

The meeting schedule which was suggested for 2018 was agreed by the members.

4. Louth Economic Forum Action Plan Updates:

These updates had been circulated previously. Colette Moss advised that a meeting had been held between Louth County Council and the CSO to discuss what research data was available on Louth residents travelling to work outside the County each day. This will help create a profile of the skills available locally for potential FDI investors.

Following this desk research exercise, plans for more detailed primary research of commuters will be reviewed and put in place.

Thomas McEvoy has arranged to meet with the IDA to discuss their Building Block initiative which is operating in Sligo. This is a co-working space which is home to start-ups, established companies and incoming multinationals located in the centre of Sligo town.

5. Fáilte Ireland Update

Martina O'Dwyer gave a comprehensive update on Ireland's Ancient East. She spoke about the value of tourism, the Ireland's Ancient East brand and how it was developed. She gave examples of how the brand is being adopted in Louth and also mentioned that the IAE grants scheme for Storytelling Interpretation is still open. Fáilte Ireland are constantly encouraging the industry to use the logo, connect to Ireland's Content Pool which is free and also access the Ireland's Ancient Toolkit for Business.

A discussion followed which covered topics such as promoting our links / Viking story, growing visitor numbers, coach parking and provision of basic facilities, emphasis on 'come & stay' and the outdoor activities available in the county.

6. Boyne Valley Food Strategy:

Tara Smith, Boyne Valley Food Development Officer spoke to the members about the Boyne Valley Food Strategy, which was published at the end of 2016. She expanded on the strategies vision, its 6 pillars and its implementation structure. She spoke about her role, as the newly appointed BV Food Development Officer, in driving the implementation of the strategy. Tara also briefed the members on their achievements to date, including their showcase at the Oxford Food Symposium and their new brand identity. She concluded the presentation by listing the priority actions for 2018.

Topics which were discussed following the presentation included the importance of showcasing local produce, brewery tours, the Level 7 certificate offered by DkIT for the food service industry, food producers data base and the importance of promoting events throughout the year.

7. National Planning Framework Submission:

Anthony Abbott-King, Senior Planner updated the members on the submissions made by Louth County Council on the National Planning Framework. An Issues Paper submission was made originally on 31st March and a subsequent submission was made on 10th November. The basis of these submissions were the dominance of the Dublin / Belfast corridor in the urban network and the unique opportunity afforded by the towns of Drogheda and Dundalk as sustainable national growth centres along this corridor. This has been included in the Draft Plan.

The second element of these submissions outlined the potential of Drogheda and Dundalk as complementary consolidated urban growth centres forming a 'linear gateway' between the Dublin Metropolitan region and the north east of the Island. In response the Draft Plan recognises the designation of Newry / Dundalk as a spatial location on the economic corridor to develop critical mass to compete with other larger cities. It is hoped that the Plan will come before the Oireachtas for adoption in early 2018. It is worth noting that reference was made to 'joint urban area plans', for towns and their environs with a combined population of 15,000 or more which straddle different local authorities.

It was noted by the members that the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy is inviting submissions on the Issues Paper until 26th January, 2018. The Issues Paper and other relevant information is available on www.emra.ie.

Anthony to liaise with the chair of the SPC to keep him apprised of developments with regard to both plans.

8. A.O.B

Regional Action Plan For Jobs 2015-2017: Thomas McEvoy advised the members that the 3rd progress report is in the process of completion. Details of these reports are available on www.regionalapj.ie. It is hoped that the new action plan will take into account not just job numbers but also quality of jobs and the requisite skills to fill these positions.

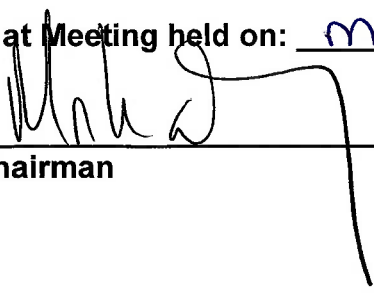
Broadband Penetration in Louth: Roll out of fibre in Louth is proceeding as planned. By end of 2018, this will result in 86% of Co. Louth premises having access to a high speed broadband fibre-based connection. This will provide the highest level of broadband penetration outside of Dublin. However, there will still be some areas in the County that will not be covered by high speed broadband and these will form part of the State Intervention for broadband. Thomas to circulate links to maps.

Louth LEO Update: Louth LEO have had a very successful year including workshops attended by over 800 businesses, mentoring visits, funding approval, trading on line vouchers and the continuation of the Student Enterprise Programme..

The next meeting will be held on Monday 12th March, at 3.30pm in the Cooley Room County Hall.

This concluded the meeting:

Confirmed at Meeting held on: Monday 12th March, 2018.

Signed: 
Chairman

