

LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC Meeting Held In Council Chamber, County Hall, Dundalk on Monday 27th February, 2017 at 3.30pm

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

Officials: Mary T Daly, Senior Executive Officer
Thomas McEvoy, Head of Louth LEO
Anthony Abbott King – Senior Planner
Miriam Roe, Staff Officer

Apologies: Cllrs: Thomas Sharkey, Alan Cassidy
Ms Karen Devine, Environment/Conservation

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Upon the proposal of Cllr Conor Keelan and seconded by Mr Eddie Phelan the minutes of the meeting of 12th December, 2016 were adopted.

2. Matters Arising:

Cllr Keelan asked that the request for a representative from Fáilte Ireland to attend an SPC meeting be kept on the Agenda. Mary T Daly advised that Martina O'Dwyer, Fáilte Ireland has committed to attend the next meeting on 12th June.

Cllr Dearey, on behalf of all the members, extended a warm welcome to Mr Ciaran McDonnell who is the new representative from the Agriculture/Farming sector. Ciaran is the Chairman of the Co Louth branch of the ICMSA and is currently studying Agricultural Science in UCD.

3. Draft Co Louth Diaspora Engagement Strategy:

Mary T gave an update on the Co Louth Diaspora Strategy (Draft) which has been developed over the last number of months. The completed draft will be circulated to the members in the coming days and following SPC approval this will then go to full Council

meeting in March/April. Discussion followed during which the following points were raised:

- Is there a danger that FDI focus here might displace more effective strategies.
- It was hoped that using existing FDI companies to connect to diaspora abroad would pay dividends.
- If we make connections then we need to have 'deliverables' on the ground.
- Need unique element relating to Louth, perhaps honorary 'fellowships' akin to the honours given out by Trinity College
- Drogheda Chamber made a number of connections in California through the ITLG previously. Now that this is a county wide initiative there is a bigger team to nurture these contacts.
- The power of social media cannot be underestimated. Local connections can be the reason an FDI locates in a certain town/county.

The strategy was approved on the proposal of Cllr Kevin Callan and seconded by Cllr Marianne Butler.

4. Louth Economic Forum Action Plan Updates:

These updates had been circulated previously. Cllr Butler commented that perhaps Dundalk.ie domain name could be reserved. Mary T agreed to see if it was available.

5. Update LECP Implementation Plan/Progress Report 2016

Mary T gave a brief status update on The Local Economic & Community Plan, which was adopted by Louth County Council in March 2016. It is a requirement of the plan that a progress report is given to Council each year. This report is being compiled at present with narrative from the various agencies. The Economic updates will be circulated to this SPC before progressing to full Council. The Community Updates will be circulated to the LCDC.

6. National Planning Framework

Mary T gave a presentation on the National Planning Framework (NPF) 2040 to the members. The NPF will be the successor to the National Spatial Strategy and is a concise high-level strategic document. Developed in parallel with 3 Regional Spatial & Economic Strategies it will be a strong basis for more joined-up policies and more effective planning, investment and decision-making.

She then spoke about how the NPF feeds into the other strategies such as the LECP, County Development Plan and the Dunleer & Ardee LAP's and area based local development. The presentation then covered Strategic issues and policy choices and project timetable.

Anthony Abbott-King, Senior Planner, spoke about Louth's positioning stating that Louth is in the 'Greater Dublin Area' urban generated zone. Louth is number one for accessibility and this presents both challenges and opportunities.

Discussion followed which included the following points:

- Does Louth see this as an opportunity?
- Louth wants to be included in this framework and a good submission is needed in this regard.
- Brexit should be seen an opportunity
- This is one of the most important topics to come before the SPC. There are huge pressures on schools in Drogheda and on the jobs front and it needs to be recognised. Drogheda Chamber will be making their own submission in this regard. Also supports are needed in the area of job creation.
- Drogheda is linked with Dublin in its future development.
- How do you package Louth in the submission and how do we show that we have enough critical mass in terms of both Dundalk and Drogheda
- We need to show that Drogheda & Dundalk can be significant sustainable centres of grown within the Dublin context
- We need to look beyond jurisdictions Louth/Meath
- There is a 'white zone' between Drogheda and Dundalk could we look at focussing economic development in this mid Louth area.
- Should be looking at town centres serviced by public transport.

Members were invited to attend a workshop on 8th March to further discussion and compile feedback/ideas prior to making our submission on 16th March.

Any Other Business:

- Enterprise Week takes place from 6th to 10th March with events taking place in Dundalk, Ardee and Drogheda.
- Louth is still awaiting the decision on whether we will get the 'Fleadh Cheoil Na hÉireann' in 2018

The next meeting will be held on Monday 12th June, in Drogheda – Location to be finalised

This concluded the meeting:

Confirmed at Meeting held on: _____

Signed: _____

Chairman