

LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

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

Present: Cllrs: Mark Dearey (Chairman), Conor Keelan,
Marianne Butler, David Saurin
Mr Eddie Phelan, Development/Construction
Mr Ciaran McDonnell, Agriculture/Farming

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

Apologies: Cllrs: Thomas Sharkey, Pio Smith, Kevin Callan
Mr Pat Mulligan, Community/Voluntary
Mr Simon McCormack, Business/Commercial
Ms Karen Devine, Environment/Conservation

It was agreed by those present, to take Thomas McEvoy's Brexit Update, whilst waiting for a quorum to begin the meeting officially.

LEO Brexit Updates & Initiatives:

Thomas McEvoy spoke about the current Brexit supports available from Enterprise Ireland, InterTradeIreland and the Local Enterprise Office. Speaking on the role of the LEO's; he covered, creating awareness and promoting preparedness among clients, promoting existing supports and preparing a 'Brexit Package'.

Discussion followed on a number of items including the concern that Brexit posed a serious risk in terms of the potential for smuggling and the negative impacts that has on legitimate business, by creating unfair competition and distorting the labour market. Cllr Dearey asked that a risk assessment on the potential/impact of smuggling be considered. This was noted by Thomas McEvoy and LEOs will include this item in their discussions with Revenue Commissioners, BICOC and other stakeholders.

It was stressed that preparing for Brexit should be a priority for business on a County wide basis and not just for business in the north of the county.

A quorum was reached so the Chairman officially commenced the meeting.

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Upon the proposal of Cllr David Saurin and seconded by Mr Ciaran McDonnell the minutes of the meeting of 12th June, 2017 were adopted.

2. Matters Arising:

Cllr Dearey expressed thanks, on behalf of the committee to Mary T Daly for her contribution to the SPC since 2014 and also extended a warm welcome to Colette Moss, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development & Planning.

3. LEF – Draft Education & Training Action Plan:

The Chairman welcomed Aibhlín McCrann who presented the LEF Draft Education & Training Action Plan to the members. Setting the context she explained the process which was undertaken in developing the plan. The focus of this plan is not to duplicate the actions contained within the statutory plans such as the LECP and Regional Action Plan for Jobs but rather to identify the deficits. This informed the decision on the actions listed under the headings of FDI, Enterprise/Indigenous Industry, Tourism & Food.

Discussion followed with the members asking for a strengthened narrative regarding apprenticeships and inclusion of a specific action on apprenticeships.

It was agreed on the proposal of Cllr Mark Dearey and seconded by Cllr David Saurin that the Education & Training Action Plan be passed subject to the following provisions:

The insertion of text acknowledging the importance of apprenticeships both in the body of the document and also as a specific action under 'Our Priorities'.

The amended document is to be circulated to all the members of the SPC who will revert with their approval. Only at this stage will the plan be deemed passed by this SPC.

Cllr Dearey asked if the SPC Chair could become a member of the LEF as he would see a benefit in understanding the background and thought process surrounding plans which are brought to the SPC. Following a brief discussion Cllr. Dearey requested that the matter be referred to the Chief Executive / LEF Chairman.

4. Louth Economic Forum Action Plan Updates:

The LEF Action Plan updates were circulated for noting. Tara Smith, Boyne Valley Food Development Officer is scheduled to speak at the SPC meeting on 11th December regarding her role and also the goals of the Boyne Valley Food Strategy.

5. LEO Updates:

Thomas McEvoy briefed the members on a number of items including:

Mentor Programme - which is designed to match up the knowledge, skills, insights and entrepreneurial capability of experienced business practitioners with small business owner/ managers who need practical and strategic one to one advice and guidance.

Online Trading Vouchers - The Scheme offers small businesses the opportunity to develop their website or digital marketing strategy by availing of vouchers of up to €2,500 or 50% of eligible expenditure (net of VAT).

Innovation Investment Fund – Details of which are on the LEO website

Regional Enterprise Development Fund – Thomas spoke about some of the applications from this region.

Irish Best Young Entrepreneur (IBYE) - Open to those aged between 18 and 35 and either have a business idea or have already started a business. There is a chance to win a share of the €50,000 county investment fund through the LEO. The closing date for applications is 29th September, 2017.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 11th December, at 3.30pm in The Cooley Room, County Hall, Dundalk

This concluded the meeting:

Confirmed at Meeting held on: _____

Signed: _____

Chairman