

LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of Infrastructure, European and Cross Border Affairs and Sustainable Energy Strategic Policy Committee meeting held in The Cooley Room, County Hall, Dundalk on Thursday 13th October 2016 at 4.00pm.

Present: Cllr O Tully (Chairman)
Cllr D Minogue
Cllr K Flood
Ms J Byrne, Environment/Conservation Rep
Mr P Malone, Business/Commercial Rep
Mr M Mc Greehan, Agricultural/ Farming Rep

Officials: Mr P Donnelly, Director of Services
Mr A Sherry Senior Executive Officer
Ms T Mc Ardle
Mr B Woods
Ms M O Callaghan, Staff Officer

Apologies: Cllr E Corrigan
Cllr E Coffey
Cllr C Markey
Ms Emer O Gorman

1. Minutes

An amendment was agreed to include P Malone's comments that he had asked for a joint SPC meeting with Economic Development and Enterprise Support at previous meetings held in April and June.

On the proposal of Mr P Malone seconded by Mr M Mc Greehan the minutes of the meeting held in June 2016 were noted and approved.

2. Matters Arising

It was agreed that a date for a joint meeting with this SPC and the Economic and Enterprise Support SPC be arranged.

P Donnelly said that a provision for joint SPC meetings will be noted at the next Corporate Policy Group meeting.

P Malone raised the issue of Brexit and how it is affecting the traders in Dundalk and surrounding areas. The CEOs of the border counties have engaged EBR to

arrange a consultant's report on the effect of Brexit on the area. P Malone expressed fears for Dundalk traders as currency fluctuations could encourage shopping in Northern Ireland. M Mc Greehan said farmers in the area also have grave concerns about the impact of Brexit on their livelihoods.

Mr Malone raised the issue of a rate support from Central Government due to the currency issues for retailers in the border areas.

Cllr Tully advised the committee that the Council is taking steps to address the difficulties which may arise due to Brexit.

The Chairperson Cllr Tully welcomed Ms J Byrne to the meeting and committee members and staff introduced themselves to her.

3. Update on Better Energy Communities

Barry Woods gave a presentation to the committee on the Better Energies Community Grant Scheme in Louth. The presentation included a short video where previous participants of the 2015 scheme gave an outline of the works done under the scheme and the advantages gained in terms of lower energy bills and better heat retention. Comments and questions were invited from the committee. Chairperson O Tully added that the scheme has enhanced a large number of council housing making them more energy efficient and cheaper to heat for tenants. Ms J Byrne asked if there is a learning element for builders and traders to be gained from the scheme. P Donnelly commented that a number of local contractors benefit from the scheme each year in terms of business and in learning new energy efficient skills. O Tully said that builders are taking great pride in achieving nearly zero rated buildings. P Malone added that he is aware of the scheme benefitting Blackrock and the town of Dundalk.

B Woods added that DKIT are involved in the scheme by way of monitoring and verifying the energy savings. The 2015 Louth BEC scheme has been nominated for an Energy Award by SEAI.

4. Update on Peace IV Programme

Therese Mc Ardle gave a presentation to the committee on the current status of the Peace IV funding application. Ms Mc Ardle informed the meeting that Brexit has caused the application process to accelerate. The Peace IV Programme is a five year programme until 2020, however Brexit may have implications for the programme after 2018. The Peace office has been extremely busy working on Louth's Action Plan which has been submitted and is currently awaiting approval. Questions were taken from the members and Ms Mc Ardle clarified that the call for project applications would be issued early in 2017 and that there is an amount of the grant set aside for small grants which may be suitable for smaller groups to apply to. M Mc Greehan enquired if children with special needs were included in the plan. Ms

Mc Ardle said that the projects for Children and Young People would cover all young people.

P Malone asked for a copy of the statistics on the deprivation index used in the Action Plan. Ms Mc Ardle agreed to forward the statistics to Mr Malone.

Cllr Minogue congratulated Ms McArdle on her work and added that she welcomed the availability of small grants in the plan.

Cllr Tully thanked Ms Mc Ardle for her update on the funding application.

5. Any Other Business

P Malone informed the meeting that he is due to attend an Oireachtas Committee meeting on the 8th November and would bring to the meeting any issue the council would like to raise on their behalf.

P Malone also reminded the committee of the Shop Local Vouchers that are available. He encouraged all to consider the vouchers as gift options.

It was agreed that the date of the next Infrastructure, European and Cross Border Affairs and Sustainable Energy Strategic Policy Committee would be held on a Thursday afternoon in January 2017, date to be circulated nearer the time.

It was agreed to circulate today's presentations to all committee members by email.

Confirmed at Meeting held on: _____

Signed: _____
Chairperson