



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE  
STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of Meeting of Economic Development and Enterprise  
Strategic Policy Committee held in the Council Chamber, Aras an Chontae,  
Great Water Street, Longford on Monday 15th May 2017 at 11.00 a.m.**

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**PRESIDING:** Councillor Seamus Butler, Chairperson.

**PRESENT:** Councillors - Peggy Nolan, Pat O'Toole,  
and Padraig Loughrey.  
Mr. Ray Hogan, Ms. Louise Lovett.

**APOLOGY:** Councillor Colm Murray and Ms. Mona Considine

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ms. Barbara Heslin, Director of Services.  
Mr. Michael Nevin, Head of Enterprise.  
Mr. Ciaran Murphy, Senior Executive Officer.  
Mr. Terry Rooney, Senior Executive Officer.  
Ms. Lorraine O'Connor, Regeneration Officer.

**MEETINGS**

**ADMINISTRATOR:** Anne Lee.

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES.**

On the proposal of Councillor P. O'Toole seconded by Councillor P. Nolan, the Minutes of Meeting of Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee held on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017 were confirmed and adopted.

**MATTERS ARISING.**

**N4/N5 Motorway Upgrade Project.**

Councillor S. Butler briefed the members on meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May between the N4/N5 Joint Affiliated Chambers of Commerce and Industry from the Midlands, West and North-West of Ireland and the Oireachtas Joint Committee for Transport Tourism and Sport at which the necessity to include the N4/N5 motorway upgrade project in the mid-term Capital Programme review currently being undertaken by the Government was highlighted.

## **Submissions for Ireland 2040 - Our Plan - National Planning Framework.**

Barbara informed the meeting that Longford County Council made a submission in March for Ireland 2040 – Our Plan – National Planning Framework. All submissions received were collated and included in one document. In summary, Barbara stated that Longford County Council is requesting that the National Planning Framework tackles the national imbalance that has developed over the last forty years by specifically and actively intervening and directing jobs and infrastructural investment into the northern section of the Midlands and East Region, and the Northern and Western Region.

The extension of the natural gas grid to County Longford to be a key priority. The N4 Development Corridor and Longford's position as a Strategic Portal for the north Midlands and the Northern and Western Region should be recognised and supported in the National Planning Framework and also the urgent need for the extension of high speed broadband to the County.

Mr. R. Hogan expressed disappointment that the PPN was not consulted prior to the submission being made.

Barbara stated that the closing date for initial submissions was the 16<sup>th</sup> March. A Draft Plan will issue for further consultation in the Summer. A final version of the Plan to be submitted to the Government in the Autumn.

## **REVIEW OF LECP IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY.**

M. Nevin informed the meeting that stakeholder groups would be requested to provide an update on proposed actions that would cover the period to the end of 2018. This would be done in conjunction with the community element of the plan. The updated actions will be brought back to the Economic SPC for the September 2017 meeting before going to the Longford County Council members for adoption at the Oct 2017 meeting. A review of all economic actions, existing and new will be undertaken in February 2018.

## **CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE HUB – UPDATE.**

M. Nevin informed the Committee that a formal offer had been made to buy the Providers building on Lower Main Street to serve as an Innovation Hub for Longford Town. If the offer is accepted, it is planned to immediately apply for maximum funding available (200k) under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme. Members expressed their support for the proposal and raised a number of technical points in relation to the proposal that were addressed by the executive.

## **NORTHERN QUARTER – UPDATE.**

Mr. T. Rooney informed the Committee that the Council is currently in consultation with NAMA regarding procurement of Sales Agents. The sales pack, marketing and advertising will be prepared during the summer and will be brought to the open market at the beginning of September.

## **TOWN & VILLAGE RENEWAL SCHEME.**

Terry stated that the 2017 Town and Village Renewal Scheme is focused on improving the economic development of our rural towns and villages. Selection of projects under the Scheme for 2017 will be by means of a competitive process. Final project selection will be made by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, on the basis of proposals submitted by the local authorities.

The closing date for Expressions of Interest is the 19<sup>th</sup> May. The Expressions of Interest will be assessed based on the priorities as contained in the Scheme Outline. A total of 15 project applications may be submitted by each Local Authority.

## **PROMOTION OF LONGFORD EVENTS - A DISCUSSION ON RETAIL EXCELLENCE.**

Barbara informed the Committee that Longford County Council, in conjunction with Longford Chamber of Commerce, are hosting an information evening with David Fitzsimons, Chief Executive Officer of Retail Excellence, on Tuesday 30 May at 6.30pm in the Longford Arms Hotel. The seminar is open to anyone involved directly or indirectly in retail.

Barbara stated that this event will provide an opportunity to begin the conversation around developing a road map for the continued development of our retail sector, improvements in public realm and positive engagement with consumers. It will also provide an opportunity to build on the recently launched Framework for Town Centre Renewal. The event will also consider the challenges and opportunities for those involved in the retail business and look at positive ways to attract consumers to the towns and villages in the County. David will make a short presentation after which attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions and debate issues relevant to their own businesses. A reception will be held after the event to facilitate networking and sharing of ideas.

## **UPDATE ON ECONOMIC ADVISORY FORUM.**

M. Nevin informed the Committee that the Longford County Council executive, the Cathaoirleach and representatives from the Chamber of Commerce had met with 20 Dublin based successful entrepreneurs with Longford connections at a networking event in Dublin in February 2017. Presentations were given to the group on plans and strategies the Local Authority intend to pursue and the feedback was extremely positive. It is intended to revert back to the group to seek advice and guidance on a project specific basis such as the plan to develop an Innovation Hub space. Chairperson Seamus Butler welcomed the initiative but said he was disappointed that he was not invited in his capacity as Chair of the Economic SPC. On a proposal of Peggy Nolan, seconded by Pat O'Toole it was proposed to include the Chair of the SPC in all future engagements with the Dublin based Economic Advisory Group.

## **A.O.B.**

### **Construction Suppliers to Roadbridge Event.**

Councillor P. O'Toole informed the Committee that Roadbridge, the preferred Infrastructure Contractors for the Center Parcs Longford Forest Infrastructure Works (Project) are inviting

suppliers, contractors and individuals interested in participating in the delivery of the Center Parc project to attend a “Construction Suppliers to Roadbridge Event” in Cooneys Hotel, Ballymahon on Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> May from 5.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

#### Framework for Town Centre Renewal.

Mr. T. Rooney, Acting Director of Services, referred to the recently published Framework for Town Centre Renewal. The framework sets out the key characteristics of a successful town centre and identifies existing supports and best practice examples from around the country.

The framework also includes an Action Plan for Town Centre Renewal which is intended to be a blueprint for towns and villages, guiding them through the three stages of town centre renewal: carrying out a town centre health check, forming a local steering group or Town Team that is representative of key local stakeholders and preparing a Town Centre Plan.

Barbara stated that the Local Authority has to consider setting up appropriate structures to maximise the sourcing of available limited funding and that consideration has to be given to including community groups/stakeholders to ensure that the maximum funding is received.

#### Closure of Longford Architectural Metalwork Ltd.

Councillor P. Nolan referred to the sad closure of Longford Architectural Metalwork Ltd with the loss of twenty four jobs. Councillor Nolan stated that she received an email from a company in County Leitrim regarding potential jobs for some of the workers who lost their jobs in Longford Architectural Metalwork Ltd.

#### **PRESENTATION FOR NEXT MEETING.**

It was agreed that the Regional Skills Forum be invited to the next meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> September.

#### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING.**

Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Anne Lee.**  
**Meetings Administrator.**

**Confirmed and adopted at Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017.**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairperson.**