



LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

**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 13th February 2017 at 3.30 p.m.**

PRESIDING: Councillor Seamus Butler, Chairperson.

PRESENT: Councillors - Peggy Nolan, Pat O'Toole,
Padraig Loughrey, Colm Murray.
Mr. Ray Hogan, Ms. Mona Considine.

APOLOGY: Ms. Louise Lovett.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms. Barbara Heslin, Director of Services.
Mr. Michael Nevin, Head of Enterprise.
Mr. Ciaran Murphy, Senior Executive Officer.

MEETINGS

ADMINISTRATOR: Anne Lee.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES.

On the proposal of Councillor P. Nolan seconded by Mr. R. Hogan, the Minutes of Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee held on the 24th October 2016 were confirmed and adopted.

MATTERS ARISING

Longford LECP Implementation Strategy.

Longford LECP Implementation Strategy was circulated.

It was agreed that the review of the LECP Implementation Strategy will be considered, in detail, at the next SPC Meeting on the 15th May 2017.

TOURISM UPDATE.

M. Nevin gave the following updates and replied to queries raised -

Longford Tourism Strategy.

Longford Tourism Strategy will be presented to Longford County Council for consideration and adoption at the March meeting of the Council.

National Wetlands Park.

There is a commitment from all the key stakeholder groups to work together on forwarding the plan for the National Wetlands Park.

Signage.

Signage has been ordered for the Canal Walks, Literary Trail and the Rebel Trail.

Website.

New visitlongford.ie website will be launched early Summer 2017.

Tourism Training Session.

A training session for people involved in the tourism sector was held in Backstage Theatre on the 6th February 2017.

PROMOTION OF LONGFORD AND ECONOMIC FORUM.

B. Heslin and M. Nevin gave updates on the following and replied to queries raised –

- Ongoing communication with Diaspora.
- Businessinlongford.ie website which showcases the most notable Business Enterprises which have been started and developed in the County.
- Creative and Innovative Space in Longford Town.
M. Nevin provided an update on the proposal and business plan for a Creative and Innovative Space in Longford Town. This project was previously submitted for REDZ funding in 2016. The current proposal incorporates an innovation based incubator space, digital hub, hot desking and creative arts and exhibition space. Following feedback received on the proposal the Council must now further develop the business plan and address sustainability and viability of the project, demand for the space, funding opportunities and corporate and management structures. Longford County Council will continue to work with and consult with the relevant stakeholders to ensure the proposal is ready for future funding streams.

In a reply to Councillor P. Nolan, B. Heslin confirmed that the project will be led by Longford County Council, in consultation with and support of the relevant stakeholders. Councillor Nolan suggested that all six members of Longford

Municipal District be represented on the Board of any new company set up to work on the project.

The Executive undertook to revert to the Council once the business plan and proposal for the governance structure is further developed. Councillor Nolan asked that this project be included on the agenda for the March Municipal District meeting. Councillor Nolan confirmed that work should continue on developing the business plan and progressing the project in advance of that meeting.

TOWN AND VILLAGE/REDZ/CLAR FUNDING – UPDATE.

M. Nevin circulated a report detailing projects in receipt of Town and Village Renewal funding and projects in receipt of REDZ funding.

ACTION PLAN FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

M. Nevin gave details of The Action Plan for Rural Development which was launched by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, and the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Heather Humphreys TD in Ballymahon on the 6th February 2017.

REVIEW OF BUSINESS INCENTIVE SCHEME (BIS).

Recommendations were outlined regarding changes to the Business Incentive Scheme. On the proposal of Councillor P. Nolan seconded by Councillor P. O'Toole, it was agreed to approve the recommended changes to the Business Incentive Scheme (BIS), as circulated - to be confirmed and adopted by Longford County Council.

DRAFT LEO PLAN 2017.

The Draft LEO Plan 2017 will be presented at the next SPC meeting for consideration and adoption.

SUBMISSIONS ON GOVERNMENT STRATEGY 2020 TO 2040.

The members discussed the Ireland 2040 – Our Plan - National Planning Framework Strategy.

It was agreed that Longford County Council requests 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 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.

It was noted that the closing date for initial submissions is the 16th March. These submissions will be used to prepare a draft copy of the Plan which is likely to issue for further consultation prior in the Summer. A final version of the Plan to be submitted to the Government in the Autumn.

It was agreed that the Council members, the Economic and Enterprise SPC and the Planning and Development and Cultural SPC be invited to make submissions.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Regional Action Plan For Jobs – Midlands Region First Progress Report:Actions To June 2016 was noted.

A.O.B.

Renaming of New Townparks Industrial Estate.

It was agreed that the renaming of the New Townparks Industrial Estate be referred to Longford Municipal District for consideration.

Funding for Free Wi-Fi in Longford Town.

B. Heslin stated that the European Commission wants to promote free Wi-Fi connectivity for citizens and visitors in public spaces in Europe through WiFi4EU. Barbara stated that this could link in with the proposed Creative and Innovative Space in Longford Town discussed earlier in the meeting.

On the proposal of Councillor P. Nolan seconded by Councillor P. Loughrey, it was agreed that the Council should consider applying for funding through the WiFi4EU Scheme when it opens for applications.

Regional Skills Forum Event on the 9th February 2017

Councillor S. Butler briefed the members on the Regional Skills Forum Event held on the 9th February. The following issues were considered -

- Abbot to hold an Open Day
- Career Sphere for the Midlands.
- Use of social media to highlight job opportunities.
- Branding of the County.
- Promotion of County Longford by the County Council.
- Skills Audit of communities leaving the county for jobs.
- How best to deliver these actions.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2017.

15th May, 18th September, 18th December 2017

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____

Anne Lee.

Meetings Administrator.

**Confirmed and adopted at Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on
15th May 2017.**

Signed: _____

Chairperson.