

**Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee for Economic
Development & Enterprise held on Monday 11th September
2017 at 10.30 a.m. in the Training Room, Áras Contae an Chláir,
New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.**

In Attendance:

Organisation:

Cllr. Richard Nagle	Chair
Mr. Brian McCarthy	A/Director of Economic of Economic Development
Cllr. Johnny Flynn	Elected Member
Cllr. Clare Colleran Molloy	Elected Member
Cllr. P.J. Ryan	Elected Member
Ms. Theresa O'Donohoe	Environment/Conservation
Mr. Pat Morris	Ennis Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Padraic McElwee	Head of Enterprise.
Cllr. Ian Lynch	Elected Member
Cllr. Gabriel Keating	Elected Member
Mr. William Hanrahan	Agriculture/Farming
Mr. Niall O'Callaghan	Regional Business Development Manager Mid West
Ms. Fiona Reilly	Regional Business Development Executive
Ms. Ailish McMahon	Economic Development
Mr. Patrick Staff	Economic Development

Apologies

Cllr. Pat McMahon	Elected Member
Ms. Dympna O'Callaghan	Business Commercial Sector.
Mr. Seamus Ryan	IMPACT

Cllr. R. Nagle welcomed Mr. Niall O'Callaghan Regional Business Development Manager Mid West and Ms. Fiona Reilly Regional Business Development Executive to the meeting.

Cllr. R. Nagle congratulated B. McCarthy on his new position as A/Director of Service. He also paid tribute to G. Dollard for his contribution to Clare County Council over the past twenty years. He wished him every success in his future career.

1. Minutes of meeting held on the 17th July 2017 and matters arising.

Minutes of meeting held on the 17th July 2017 were proposed by Cllr. G. Keating seconded by P. Morris and agreed.

2. Update by Mr. Niall O'Callaghan, Regional Business Development Manager – Mid-West.

Cllr. R. Nagle welcomed Mr. Niall O 'Callaghan, Regional Business Development Manager, Mid West and Ms. Fiona Reilly, Regional Business Development Executive to the meeting.

N. O'Callaghan presented a comprehensive presentation on the IDA. In his presentation he outlined the following:-

- IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and the Local Enterprise Office are tasked with creating employment - 2 ½ years into a 5 year strategy
- A very successful year was held in 2016
- A brief overview was provided to the Mid-West Region as follows:-
 - 130 IDA Ireland backed companies
 - Employing 17,143 staff
 - IDA employment growth of +3,400 since 2013
 - 70% of all investment come from Existing Client Companies
 - 16 locations in the Mid-West have an IDA backed Client Company

Reference was also made to recent successes:- Element Six to create 100 jobs at Shannon plant. US manufacturer opens operation in Shannon. Clare jobs boost as Beckman Coulter plans expansion.

Indicator of future success – significant weakness in Ennis with regard to lack of available commercial property.

3 significant projects are ear marked for Shannon – this is due to the availability of commercial property.

Reference was also made to the threats from BREXIT

93% of IDA clients rank growth prospects as good or excellent

No. 1 challenge – is the availability of talent with regard to experienced professionals – it is the availability of talent is what \drives companies

Cllr. R. Nagle thanked N. O'Callaghan and Ms. Fiona Reilly for the comprehensive presentation. He stated that there is an excellent

working relationship between the IDA and Clare County Council and that a lot of work has taken place.

N. O'Callaghan replied to questions raised by the members:-

N. O'Callaghan stated that there is a weakness in Ennis with regard to the availability of commercial property. He referred to the challenges in Galway with regard to traffic/commercial properties. He referred to the better work/life balance in Clare. He stated that there are currently 17 viable investors visiting Clare (same as Limerick, this is the first time since IDA began recording that this has occurred).

With regard to queries raised in relation to ROCHE, N O'Callaghan stated that the in November 2015 Roche outlined that they were going to close, this is still the case. He stated that the IDA are still providing support to Roche.

Members also expressed their concern that industry is needed in West Clare and that there is a need to improve Rural Ireland. Reference was made to the lack of commercial property in Ennis but stated that commercial properties were available in Kilrush and Ennistymon and hoped that this would attract investment.

N. O'Callaghan stated that the IDA is to bring foreign direct investment into the county and is competing with 63 other investment competitors and that the goal is to win foreign direct investment for Ireland.

With regard to job creation, the IDA is a government state agency, the IDA is the only agency to publish its accounts fully and they are 100% accurate. N. O'Callaghan stated that when there is an announcement of jobs, it could be over a five year period.

Members also expressed with concern with regard to the development of the Information Age Park in Ennis. They stated that the Information Age Park needs investment as a high priority. It was noted that it was three quarters full at the moment. Members asked would the IDA get involved to further progress this development. N. O'Callaghan replied and stated that it would have to be hugely significant for the IDA to get involved.

The members suggested that the A/Director of Service, CEO of Clare County Council, Head of Enterprise would liaise with the IDA

and Shannon Group and to report to the full Council on the opportunities/challenges that lie ahead for the Information Age Park. It was also suggested that the SPC members should be included in this engagement.

B. McCarthy stated that in view of the SPC and its membership and having regard to the Ennis Municipal District and Kilrush Municipal District. He stated that it would be important to progress sites on the Gort Road and sites on the Shannon Estuary. He also referred to the SIFP for the Shannon Estuary.

B. McCarthy stated that the Planning Authority is assisting in doing a study on vacant housing. He stated that it is hoped to do an economic study for Ennis and that this would include the Information Age Park in Ennis

A detailed discussion took place in relation to the Information Age Park in Ennis. Cllr. Nagle stated that a Corporate Policy Group meeting was taking place this afternoon and he outlined that the issues/concerns with regard to the Information Age Park would be raised. He suggested that a meeting take place with Cllr. J. Flynn, Cllr. C.C. Molloy, P. Morris, the Head of Enterprise and A/Director of Service with regard to further progressing the Information Age Park.

The members also referred to the sites behind the Information Age Park and that the Council should take an active role in pursuing same. The members agreed to a proactive approach towards the Information Age Park – a two way process.

It was also suggested that the West Clare corridor should be involved also.

It was also noted that Mr. Ray O'Driscoll, Managing Director, Commercial Properties, Shannon Group would be making a presentation at the November SPC meeting. The members suggested that the following questions/queries in relation to the Information Age Park be raised:-

- When will the roundabout commence?
- Lands at the back of the Information Age Park – when will this be opened up?
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3. Update on Planning Legislation and guidelines – by Mr. Brian McCarthy, Senior Planner.

B. McCarthy stated that no draft of the National Planning Framework had been received. He outlined that the members would be kept informed in relation to the National Planning Framework and invited members of the SPC to submit comments to prepare a submission to the Department.

B. McCarthy outlined that consultants were appointed in early February to prepare a feasibility study for a Maritime Centre in Cahercon. He stated that currently companies are looking at the Shannon Estuary on the Clare side for investment.

4. Update on the Local Enterprise Office by Mr. Padraic McElwee – Head of Enterprise.

In reply to queries raised by the members in relation to the Industrial Age Park Ennis, P. McElwee outlined that Clare County Council have produced a promotional brochure for the County.

P. McElwee presented a comprehensive and updated members on the Local Enterprise Office.

In his presentation he referred to the success of the MarketFest during Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2017. 15 local Clare Food and Craft companies participated and positive feedback was received.

P. McElwee referred that the development of a Food Strategy for County Clare was under consideration

The Ennis Food Festival will take place from the 12th – 15th October 2017. LEO Clare will host an event on Thursday 12th October aimed at promoting the integration of Clare Food producers with Clare Food providers.

The Food on the Edge with a banquet evening showcasing all Clare Local Food Producers will take place on Wednesday, 11th October.

The National Ploughing Championships is to take place from 19th – 21st September in County Offaly. Wilde Irish Chocolate from Tuamgraney will be representing County Clare.

P. McElwee outlined that a delegation from Rhode Island are visiting County Council on the 17th and 18th September. This is a significant economic and tourism opportunity for the county. P. McElwee outlined a comprehensive itinerary for the delegation. He referred to three objectives for the trip:-

- Support and develop two way traffic on the recently introduced Norwegian Air route between Providence and Shannon
- Develop Rhode Island as a gateway destination for Clare enterprises seeking to export into the US market.
- Promote Clare as an ideal location for any Rhode Island companies seeking to enter the European market.

P. McElwee outlined to the members that the key message is to build relationships with the delegation from Rhode Island.

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- Two way traffic from the Norwegian Airlink
- Look at Rhode Island – this is a potential gateway for the US Market
- Can County Clare get international investment

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The members asked the question is there a member of Clare County Council represented on the Shannon Group? It was noted that the CEO has outlined that the Council should be represented on the Shannon Group

P. Morris asked the question as to what is currently happening with regard to the Incubation Hub?

P. McElwee stated that funding has been approved, site identified and will be progressed to the next stage. This will take approximately 12-18 months.

5. Date of next meeting – 13th November 2017.

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on the **13th November 2017** in the Training Room, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

6. AOB.

W. Hanrahan referred to the recently launched Clare Rural Development Strategy. He referred to coastal erosion in West Clare and to the planning application from Trump International Development in Doonbeg. The members requested to know could something be done for West Clare to progress development in particular Kilrush?

B. McCarthy replied and stated that this planning application is currently on further information.

T. O'Donohoe referred to Bio-Economy. Cllr. G. Keating proposed that T. O'Donohoe would give a presentation to the members at the November meeting on the overview of National Policy that the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC could proactively influence.

It was agreed that a schedule of works/work programme 2018 would be discussed and agreed at the 13th November SPC meeting.

With no other business the meeting concluded.

Signed:

Cathaoirleach

**A/Director, Economic Development
& Enterprise**