

Minutes of the Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held in Áras Contae an Chláir on Monday, 9th April 2018 at 11.00am

Present:

Cllr Richard Nagle, Chairperson
Cllr P.J. Ryan
Cllr Pat McMahon
Cllr Johnny Flynn
Cllr Gabriel Keating
Cllr Clare Colleran Molloy
Teresa O'Donohoe
Pat Morris
Dympna O'Callaghan
Liam Conneally, Director of Service
Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer
Brian McCarthy, Senior Planner
Padraic McElwee, Head of Enterprise
Valerie Fleming, Assistant Staff Officer

1. Minutes of meeting held on 8th January 2018.

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th January 2018 were proposed by Cllr P.J. Ryan, seconded by Cllr Gabriel Keating and agreed.

2. Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising.

3. Presentation on South Clare Strategic Development Zone (SDZ).

Using a PowerPoint presentation Brian McCarthy, Senior Planner, outlined the proposal to designate the University of Limerick (UL) campus in County Clare and its hinterland as a Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) with the capacity to generate 3,500 jobs for the region. The SDZ will provide a full range of living, working, amenity, social, cultural and recreational spaces integrated with the facilities of the University. The proposal includes the reopening of the Errina Canal which will provide the final

inland waterway link between Lough Erne in County Fermanagh and Limerick City as well as the Shannon Estuary.

Brian confirmed that a decision from the Minister would take in excess of 6 months from the date of the SDZ application. The making of an SDZ application is an executive function of the Council however given the strategic and wide ranging impact of a new SDZ designation he is seeking the support of both this SPC and the elected members in order to proceed with the application. He confirmed that UL are supporting the designation and added the construction of the Northern Distributor Road would be crucial to the success of the SDZ proposal.

The decision to support the SDZ application was proposed by Cllr P. McMahon, seconded by Cllr P.J. Ryan and agreed.

It was proposed by Cllr Richard Nagle to write to the relevant Minister and Oireachtas members seeking their support of the South Clare SDZ designation.

4. Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Work Plan update presentation.

Using a PowerPoint presentation Padraic McElwee, Head of Enterprise, outlined the role of the LEO office and the programmes they have delivered throughout the year.

433 jobs have been created over the last three years by small enterprises and the LEO office supports 1,339 jobs in total in small enterprise. Nationally Clare LEO is 7th overall in terms of job creation.

In response to a query from Dymphna O'Callaghan Padraic advised that there wasn't any one particular reason why companies failed to start up but factors included (a) inadequate market research, (b) inability to source matching funding and (c) lack of enthusiasm.

Pat Morris asked for a status report on the Incubation Hub for Ennis and Padraic advised that a premises has been identified for lease and the project is now progressing. Liam Conneally agreed that this matter is a priority and he is liaising with the Rural Directorate who are leading the projects delivery and will report back to the next meeting on its progress.

Clare Collieran Molloy queried if the aim to create 433 jobs in 3 years is on target and Padraic confirmed that year on year the jobs target has been surpassed.

5. Update on Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).

Brian McCarthy outlined that Cllrs Bill Slattery and Pat McMahon sit on the Regional Assembly Board representing Clare. He referred to the Council's submission to the Regional Economic & Spatial Strategy preparation process and thanked the committee for their input. He expects the Draft to be available by June 2018 and wants to ensure that priorities for Clare are included in this draft. He undertook to forward a copy of the Council's submission to the Strategy to the SPC members.

In response to a query from Theresa O'Donohoe Brian confirmed that the Regional Assembly is responsible for all public consultation relating to the Strategy.

6. AOB.

Brian McCarthy made reference to a recent presentation to the SPC from Vincent McCormack, G Kinetic, regarding the potential of offshore renewable energy. He confirmed that Clare County Council assisted GKinetic in the completion of a Foreshore Licence Application to the Department in relation to the potential deployment of a tidal test device in the Fergus Estuary.

Liam Conneally provided clarification on the role of the sectoral representatives on the SPC.

7. Date of next meeting.

Pat Morris suggested that the next meeting be rescheduled from 14th May to a date in June. It was then agreed to hold the next Economic Development SPC meeting on Monday, 18th June 2018 at 11.00am.

The meeting then concluded.