

**MINUTES OF STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING ON  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
Council Chamber Cavan Co Council  
20<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

**Present:** Cllr. John Paul Feeley, Chairperson  
Mr Eoin Doyle Director of Service  
Ms Marcella Rudden, A/ Head of Enterprise  
Mr. John Donohoe, Chief Officer  
Ms. Caroline Brady, Administrative Officer  
Cllr. Eugene Greenan, Cavan County Council  
Cllr Sarah O'Reilly Cavan Co Council  
Cllr Peter McVitty, Cavan Co Council  
Ms. Nikki McGoohan, Cavan Chamber of Commerce  
Mr. Chris Kirk, Cavan PPN

**Apologies:** Cllr Carmel Brady

**In Attendance:** Ms Maire Gallen Regional Skills Forum

**1. Minutes**

On the proposal of Ms Nikki Mc Goohan, seconded by Cllr Eugene Greenan minutes of meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> May were approved

**2. Matters Arising** There were no matters arising

**3. Update on Implementation of Local Economic and Community Plan**

Mr John Donohoe advised the Committee that the launch of the Local Economic and Community Plan was scheduled for Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Work on the implementation of the plan was ongoing and a comprehensive overview of progress to date would be given to the Economic SPC at the next meeting – copies of same would be circulated in advance.

It was agreed that Item 5 and 6 on the Agenda would be dealt with in advance of presentation on the Regional Skills Forum.

**4. Update on Economic Forum, Town Teams, Food Strategy and Digital Strategy.**

Mr Eoin Doyle advised the Committee that the Chief Executive, Tommy Ryan had contacted all the proposed members of the Economic Forum. He was awaiting confirmation from two of the proposed members of their agreement to be part of the Forum – once this was agreed the first meeting would be scheduled before the end of the year.

Caroline Brady advised the meeting that Town Teams had been established in Cavan Cootehill and Virginia - 2 meetings had taken place to date and a SWOT analysis prepared in respect of each of each of the towns. A further meeting of the Town Teams was scheduled for early October and it was anticipated that the Town Plans for the Towns would be well underway by the end of the year.

A briefing paper on the Food Strategy had been received from Bullseye, the Consultants who were preparing the strategy – this had been circulated to the Committee prior to the meeting. The members were invited to forward any comments they had in respect of same to Caroline Brady within the coming days. A draft of the Strategy would be available early to mid October and following a review of this it is anticipated that the Food Strategy would be ready for adoption and launch by early December.

With regard to the Digital Strategy the committee were advised that a draft terms of reference had been prepared for the Strategy and a Steering Group were being set up to oversee the preparation and implementation of same. The first meeting of this group is scheduled for the end of October. Mr Eoin Doyle referred to the rollout of the National Broadband Plan. Cavan Co Council has set up an in house Broadband Action Group – the purpose of this group is to work with whatever service provider is appointed in this region to roll out the NBP to ensure there are no barriers to the rollout of the NBP and to educate community groups on the benefits of broadband. This model which has been developed in Cavan is now being rolled out in a number of other local authorities also.

Marcella Rudden referred to the difficulties encountered by many individual businesses with regard to access to high speed broadband. The Local Enterprise Office is limited in the support they can provide in this regard. She suggested that the Department would provide support in the form of a technical advisor to advise individual businesses on what is available in terms of broadband speeds relative to their requirements.

Mr Eoin Doyle also referred to an initiative being proposed by the Department of Arts Heritage, Regional Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs whereby Local Authorities were being asked to identify 20 'Strategic Connection Points' – these are rural based premises - mainly community centres, post offices, schools etc. The idea behind this is that in advance of the full rollout of the NBP, wifi would be available in a number of strategic 'community facilities' throughout the County where people could go to avail of free wifi. The Council are looking at the most suitable locations and would revert to the Department with same before closing date on 4<sup>th</sup> October.

Cllr Eugene Greenan referred to the difficulties encountered by businesses in terms of accessing high speed broadband. He referred to the fact that businesses and jobs were being lost to Navan (from Kingscourt) because of the availability of high speed broadband. He asked if it would be possible for the IT department in Cavan Co Council to provide a database of average broadband speeds within towns in Cavan - that way businesses could look at the potential of moving within the County rather than outside the County.

It was also noted that 30% of retail taking place is now done online – this will have considerable implications for businesses/retail within the County - it is now time for retailers to start looking seriously at how they carry out and promote their business and to look at the opportunities and threats they face into the future.

#### **5. Presentation from Maire Gallen – Regional Skills Forum**

Following on from the presentation a number of questions were raised by those in attendance – Mr John Donohoe asked if the Forum is inclusive of apprenticeships – Ms Gallen confirmed that it is. Cllr Peter Mc Vitty referred to the fact that there is little protection for employers and that a training guide for employers would be useful. Mr Chris Kirk referred to the Tate of Cavan and what it is telling us about the hospitality industry in Cavan – there is the potential to develop a cookery school in Cavan and more expertise is required within particular sectors of the Food Industry also. Ms Gallen advised the committee that she had spoken to Bulseye, the Consultants who are preparing the Food Strategy - through their consultations they had identified a number of 'needs' within the sector including more 'front of house training' and specialised food production, these would be incorporated into proposals for training emanating from the Skills Forum. In conclusion Cllr John Paul Feeley thanked MS Gallen for her presentation and wished her well with her work.

#### **6. AOB**

Mr Chris Kirk raised the issue of Killykeen and the potential that exists to develop the facility. He said it was important that we explore the potential it has to offer in terms of the chalets, equestrian centre etc. The development of Killykeen is mentioned in the LECP and it is important that we don't lose sight of that. In response Mr Eoin Doyle acknowledged Mr Kirk's comments, however, he reiterated the fact that Cavan Co Council does not own Killykeen therefore we are limited in what we can do. Work has commenced on the preparation of a Masterplan for Killykeen however there has been a change in management of Coillte and we are awaiting them to engage with us further in terms of progressing the Masterplan. Cavan Co Council has, in the last few weeks, carried out considerable works on the access road from Killeshandra. The recent Triathlon was a huge success and Coillte have improved many of the paths and trails. We are competing with all of Ireland to get some level of development priority for Killykeen but in the absence of a major commitment for Coillte for now there is little more that we can do.

#### **7. Date and Time for next meeting: Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016**