

Minutes of Economic Development , Enterprise & Planning Strategic Policy Committee Meeting

LEO Cavan Offices, Boardroom CITC Building, Dublin Road, Cavan

Friday 26th September 2025 @ 9.15am

Present: Cllr. Winston Bennett, Chairperson
Mr Brendan Jennings, Director of Service
Mr Conor Craven, Head of Enterprise
Cllr. Adrian Rogers
Cllr. John Paul Feeley
Cllr. Val Smith
Cllr. Brendan Fay
Mr. Richard Moeran
Ms. Caroline Brady, Town Regeneration Officer
Mr. Nicholas O’Kane, Senior Planner
Mr. Karl Kelly, Business Advisor, LEO

Apologies: Cllr. T.P. O’Reilly
Ms. Connie Whelan
Mr. Michael Lynch

1. Welcome & Introduction

Chairperson Cllr. Winston Bennett formally welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes from previous Meeting

Minutes from 13th June 2025 were adopted. No matters arising.

Proposed: Cllr. John Paul Feeley

Seconded: Mr. Richard Moeran

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Update on Cavan Economic Strategy

Caroline Brady gave an update on the economic strategy following the presentation given by OCO Consultants at the previous meeting. The actions following this meeting have been streamlined to address the low level of disposable income in Cavan, skills shortage, early school leaving and to further assist businesses to grow and expand. The focus for the county will be in the following areas of Agri food/tech, Manufacturing, Construction, Renewable Energy, Digital and Tourism. Over the next 10 years, the 5 pillars that will be focused on are economic diversification & promotion, forging new clusters in both the county and regionally, enhanced focus on skills, education & talent, addressing infrastructure deficit, particularly the lack of enterprise space and finally community inclusion and sustainable development.

RM asked if there would be issues with trying to develop the agri- food sector as it appears to be focused on the south of the country. Caroline Brady advised that this was one of the key sectors identified and would be given due consideration in the implementation of the economic strategy.

5. Cavan Heritage Plan

Ann Marie Ward, Heritage Officer gave an overview of the draft heritage plan 2025 to 2030. Ann Marie spoke about the National policy frameworks along with the local strategies. She then discussed the four pillars informing the county heritage plan – Learning is Connection, Shaping the Future by conserving the past, Our Memories held in Voices & Keepers of the Landscape.

It was proposed to bring the plan forward to the Council Meeting for consideration in November.

Proposed: Cllr. Val Smith

Seconded: Cllr. Brendan Fay

6. Biodiversity Action Plan Update

Cathal Flood, Bio Diversity Officer presented on the Biodiversity Action Plan which he confirmed follows the statutory obligations under the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan in line with EU Strategy. He advised that there are Local plans for Bawnboy, Dowra, Shercock, Maghera and Killeshandra. He discussed the pressures for Cavan and the need for stakeholder engagement and outlined the 10 strategic themes and actions which are contained in the plan. The local biodiversity projects undertaken in 2025 were also mentioned.

It was proposed to bring the plan forward to the Council Meeting in November for their consideration.

Proposed: Cllr. Val Smith

Seconded: Cllr. Brendan Fay

7. Development Contribution Scheme Review

Nicholas O'Kane presented on the Development Contribution Scheme Review. He advised that the previous scheme had brought in approximately €9.5 million and that he was proposing some changes to the new scheme which he estimated would bring in €11 million. He advised that it was proposed to leave the rate on residential dwellings and industrial units the same, while adding an additional rate on schools, service station forecourts and health care settings. Brendan Jennings advised that the funding received by the council through these contributions, fund the provision of biodiversity and feasibility studies before schemes become eligible for capital investment. There was a general discussion around increasing the rate on B&B's above 4 bedrooms but it was decided not to proceed with this as it may be a deterrent to business when accommodation for tourism is necessary.

It was proposed to bring the Review of the Development Contribution Scheme to the Council Meeting in November.

Proposed: Cllr. John Paul Feeley

Seconded: Mr. Richard Moeran

8. Created in Cavan

Conor Craven presented on the Created in Cavan Food network. He discussed the background to the network, touching on the number of current members, both producers & hospitality and the number who had received supports through the Local Enterprise Office. The projects undertaken in 2025 were mentioned and a sample of reels were played to the committee to give a flavour of what the network meant to the members. Conor also mentioned the newly established craft network. Brendan Jennings mentioned the background to the creation of the network and that the Local Authority was seeking to continue to support local food and drink businesses in County Cavan.

9. Scheme for Waiver of Commercial Rates – Small Business Rates Incentive Scheme & Scheme for applying rates on vacant properties

Margaret McNally followed up on her presentation on these areas at the previous meeting to agree rates for the upcoming budget meeting in November. It was noted that the current rates incentive scheme was very successful, and it was agreed to retain same at the current level. In relation to vacant properties, it was agreed that Rates should be charged at 10% for the first year, 25% in year 2 and a further 10% increase each year thereafter.

The proposal to have a 10% charge on Vacant Properties in its first year was endorsed by the Committee.

Proposed: Cllr. John Paul Feeley

Seconded: Mr. Richard Moeran

The proposal to have a 25% charge on Vacant Properties in the second year and a 10% increase each year thereafter was endorsed by the Committee.

Proposed: Cllr. John Paul Feeley

Seconded: Cllr. Brendan Fay

10. AOB

Conor Craven spoke about the Succession Planning event being held in The Hotel Kilmore on 4th November 2025.

11. Date of Next Meeting

TBC

Signed: Wendy L Bennett Date: 22.12.25
Chairperson