



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Coiste Polasaí Straitéiseach Gnóthaí Forbairt Eacnamaíochta & Fiontraíochta

Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) Cruinniú/Meeting

Dé Máirt 14th Deireadh Fómhair - Tuesday 13th October, 2020 10:30

Meeting held online via Microsoft Teams

Members in attendance:

Cllr Karey McHugh (Chair)	Galway County Council
Cllr David Collins	Galway County Council
Cllr Declan Geraghty	Galway County Council
Cllr Thomas Welby	Galway County Council
Cllr Mary Hoade	Galway County Council
Dave Hickey	Business Representative
Dan Dowling	Community Representative
Paul Carey	Business/Construction Sector Representative
Paddy Matthews	Irelands Hidden Heartlands

Present:

Alan Farrell	Galway County Council
Kieran Coyne	Galway County Council
Diane Gallagher	Galway County Council
Breda Fox	Galway County Council
Eimear Dolan	Galway County Council
Ruth Mulhern	Galway County Council

Apologies:

Marian Spellman	Trade Union Representative
Ciaran Wynne	Galway County Council
Cllr Gerry Finnerty	Galway County Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC held on 30th June 2020

Cllr Karey McHugh welcomed everyone to the meeting. She advised that the meeting was moved to the online platform given the current restrictions in place due to the Covid-19 pandemic. She said that the use of online meetings would be kept under review and will be guided by the public health advice and government guidelines.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 30th June 2020 were approved on the proposal of Dan Dowling and seconded by Cllr Thomas Welby.

1. Tourism

Cllr McHugh introduced the first of today's speakers Ruth Mulhern, Tourism Officer. to the meeting and invited her to make her presentation (presentation attached).

Ms. Mulhern welcomed the members and gave them an update on the work of the Tourism Officer to date.

Ms. Mulhern gave the members an overview of the current situation regarding the Galway County Tourism Strategy.

Ms. Mulhern advised that there are 5 plans under the Tourism Strategy:

- The Connemara Coast & Islands Visitor Experience Development Plan
- Lough Derg Visitor Experience Development Plan
- Portumna Vision 2030
- The Burren & Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan
- East Galway Tourism Study

Discover Galway Food Experiences

Ms. Mulhern advised the members that she had pitched to the Department of Agriculture and that Galway County Council was one of six successful awardees in 2020. This funding is going to provide ongoing support to the Discover Galway Food Experiences stakeholders with the specific objective of Tourism product development in Galway, currently the geographical focus is East of the Corrib.

Galway County Council have been awarded €25,000 and are match funding the project to 11K bringing the total project value to 36K.

Ms. Mulhern acknowledged the work that has been carried out under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund in Athenry and Clifden to date.

Ms. Mulhern concluded her presentation.

Cllr McHugh thanked Ruth for her presentation and asked the members if they had any questions or observations.

- Dave Hickey asked if there has been any link in with Galway City Council and their Tourism Strategy? Ms. Mulhern advised that Galway City Council pitched in a different way to the County Council and that the City have a much larger marketing budget, Galway County Council have a centrally based budget and have a different brief. Ms. Mulhern stated that she works closely with the Tourism Officer in Galway City Council on a weekly basis and that they are collaborating on specific projects.
- Cllr Declan Geraghty thanked Ruth for her presentation and stated that we need to focus on domestic tourism for the next couple of years as international tourism won't be back to a full scale for a couple of years. Ms. Mulhern thanked Cllr Geraghty for the points raised and stated that she acknowledged the importance of marketing to our youth and to get them involved and spending all over County Galway.

Paul Carey stated that the money being invested in training and development was fantastic and that it is important for those out of work during the tourism off season. Mr. Mulhern stated that the Council should be lobbying for people to upskill and take up training opportunities wherever possible. Mr Farrell referred to the BIA Innovator Campus in Athenry which the Council had brought from inception to development and stated this would provide excellent training facilities for the tourism and hospitality sectors.

- Cllr David Collins stated that under the current climate it is hard to promote tourism in Ireland as we are being asked to stay at home and that we now need to plan for when we reopen.

Dan Dowling stated that Ballinasloe are not getting the attention they should with regard to attractions like the Aughrim Interpretive Centre. Mr. Dowling stated that there is a need for a greenway in Ballinasloe and that there is an opportunity to develop facilities in town such as the football pitch and the swimming pool.

- Cllr Mary Hoade welcomed the acceleration fund and advised that Headford were used as a pilot town for Galway 2020 and that the town needs to be further promoted. Cllr Hoade stated that as Covid will be with us for a while we need to support and develop domestic tourism as much as possible.

- Cllr Thomas Welby asked if there was any funding available for groups such as, Killary walks whereby the landowners want to get a walk set up but are having difficulty getting sponsors on board. Ruth Mulhern advised Cllr Welby that he should speak to Bernie Donnellan regarding the Outdoor Recreation Scheme.

Alan Farrell stated that having a dedicated Tourism Officer was of huge benefit to Galway County Council and that it is important to get the Tourism Strategy completed. Mr. Farrell stated that it is important that the Council continues to work closely with the various stakeholders including with Fáilte Ireland and that we focus on trying to lever money wherever we can.

This concluded the Tourism Q&A

2. Irelands Hidden Heartlands

Cllr McHugh welcomed Paddy Matthews, Fáilte Ireland Irelands Hidden Heartlands to the meeting and invited him to make his presentation (presentation attached).

Mr. Matthews introduced himself and gave an overview of Irelands Hidden Heartlands (see attached presentation).

Cllr McHugh thanked Mr. Matthews for his presentation and stated that County Galway is asset rich with experiences and that these need to be developed/promoted. Cllr McHugh stated that the website funding was very important in order for businesses to know how to use their websites correctly. Cllr. McHugh asked the members if they had any questions or observations.

Breda Fox thanked Mr. Matthews for his presentation and asked if Hidden Heartlands are linking with individual businesses in relation to the Web Improvement Programme and how this programme differs from the Trading Online Voucher Scheme being offered by the Local Enterprise Offices?

Mr. Matthews advised that the Web Improvement Programme being funded by Fáilte Ireland was for large website upgrades ranging from €3,000 - €40,000 and that it was 100% funded.

Cllr Declan Geraghty thanked Mr. Matthews for his presentation and stated that it had given him a better understanding of the Hidden Heartlands. Cllr Geraghty stated that it would be a good idea to develop marketing campaigns that were to be aimed at the youth.

This concluded the Hidden Heartlands presentation.

3. Local Enterprise Office

Cllr McHugh introduced Breda Fox, Head of Enterprise.

Ms. Fox welcomed the members and gave an update on the Local Enterprise Office.

Ms. Fox advised that information on a range of Covid supports could be found on the website such as the lunch and learn seminars that are being held online every Wednesday and also links to Enterprise Ireland for larger LEO clients.

Ms. Fox advised that all training and advisory sessions are currently being delivered online.

Ms. Fox gave some statistics up to the end of September 2020:

- 944 people have completed 30 programs/webinars online
- There has been 667 online Business Advisory sessions
- 101 people have participated in the Start Your Own Business course – this figure increased during lockdown
- 814 people applied for the Business Continuity Voucher Scheme (310 approvals, 210 referred for mentoring, 105 declined, 71 ineligible, 112 withdrawn, 1 work in progress)
- 463 Trading Online Voucher approvals & 400 in draft (this figure is up from 70 approvals in the same timeframe for 2019) – the match funding for clients has been reduced from 50% to 10% and this has been extended beyond September 2020.

Ms Fox advised that the Restart Scheme has paid out 12 million euro to date to qualifying businesses through the Finance Section.

Ms. Fox concluded her presentation.

Cllr McHugh thanked Breda for her presentation and asked the members if they had any questions or observations. As there were no questions this concluded the Local Enterprise Office presentation.

4. Regeneration

Cllr McHugh introduced Kieran Coyne to give an update on Regeneration.

Kieran Coyne gave apologies for Ciaran Wynne who could not attend the meeting. Mr. Coyne gave a brief overview on the work of the Regeneration Team.

Mr. Coyne advised that there are currently seven approved projects under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund:

Athenry

- Bia Innovator
- Town Park
- Shopfront Scheme
- Cross Street Enhancement
- Town Walls/North Gate

- Interpretive Wayfinding and Branding
- Tidy Towns Biodiversity Hub
- SGB Lab
- Market Square redesign

The projects under Athenry RRDF are at various levels of progress.

Tuam Masterplan:

Hogarth's Consulting were appointed in January 2020 to oversee this project. The first public consultation was held in March and a draft conceptual masterplan was presented at a steering group in June. Final draft of the Masterplan due to be completed this week.

Dunmore:

This project involves the development of a detailed design for the removal of derelict properties from Dunmore to create an improved aesthetic for Bridge Street and to enhance the remaining buildings in terms of accessibility and visibility and it is currently at public consultation stage where route options have been identified. Being advanced by Infrastructure and Operations in conjunction with the TII.

Kinvara Boardwalk:

The Kinvara Boardwalk project involved the development of detailed designs and bringing to planning stage a boardwalk/walkway to assure safe pedestrian access from Kinvara village to the National heritage site on the N67. This project has been completed.

Loughrea:

The tender process for the townhall redevelopment is nearing completion with the successful tenderer identified.

Portumna:

Documents are currently being developed for Part 8 application for the Courthouse.

Clifden:

Documents are currently being developed with the focus of the project being on Town Centre enhancement, Harbour Park Design, Beach Rd/Quay design, Town Centre Hub

Alan Farrell advised that there would be a more detailed update on Regeneration at the next meeting.

Cllr McHugh asked the members if they had any questions or observations.

This concluded the Regeneration presentation.

5. Rural & Economic Schemes

Cllr Karey McHugh introduced Eimear Dolan, Rural & Economic Section

Ms. Dolan gave an overview of the schemes:

Town & Village accelerated measure	15 projects approved €413,323
Town & Village main scheme	10 projects submitted – decision pending in November
Clár	10 projects submitted – decision pending in November
Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme	7 projects submitted – decision pending in November

Ms. Dolan informed the members that the Economic Rural & Community Development unit are promoting a shop local campaign to the value of €25k – this is small scale targeted promotion aimed at helping towns/communities who did not receive funding under the other schemes.

Ms. Dolan advised the members that there would be a more detailed update at a later meeting.

This concluded the Rural & Economic presentation

Cllr McHugh thanked Eimear Dolan for her presentation and asked the members if they had any questions or observations. As there were no questions this concluded the Rural & Economic presentation.

Cllr Karey McHugh confirmed that the next meeting will take place on the following date:

Tuesday 8th December at 14:30.

AOB

Cllr Karey McHugh asked if there was any other business.

As there was no other business to be discussed Cllr McHugh thanked all for attending the meeting.

The meeting then concluded.

