



MINUTES OF MEETING

Project Name	Strategic Policy Committee Enterprise, Economic Development & Tourism		
Purpose of Meeting			
Location of Meeting	Council Chamber		Date and Time
			2.30pm 6 th July, 2020
Present	Name	Representing	
	Gerry Murphy (GM), Head of Finance Evelyn Reddin (ER), Head of Enterprise Linda Meredith (LM) Staff Officer BSU Dom Reddin, Administrative Officer Cllr. Conor Bergin Cllr. Aidan Mullins Cllr. Aisling Moran Pat Culleton Deirdre O`Connell-Hopkins	LCC LCC LCC LCC Member LCC Member LCC Member LCC Dev/Construction Rep Trade Union Rep	
Apologies	Bernie Everard	Business/Commercial Rep	
Item No.	Description	Action By	Date for Completion
1.	Confirmation of minutes		

	Minutes of previous meeting were proposed by Cllr. Aidan Mullins and seconded by Cllr. Aisling Moran.		
2.	<p>Presentation on Draft Laois Digital Strategy</p> <p>Angela McEvoy & Antionette Brennan gave a detailed presentation on the Draft Laois Digital Strategy.</p> <p>Public Consultation will take place from 8th July, 2020 to 8th August, 2020.</p> <p>Laois Digital Strategy will go before the full Council for adoption at the September, 2020 meeting.</p>		
3.	<p>Economic Development Update</p> <p>Evelyn Reddin gave an update on the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) and Business Support Unit (BSU) work to date and specifically the supports that business have availed of to date this year.</p> <p>Aidan Mullins complimented the work carried out by LEO & the BSU. He queried if the Facade Enhancement Scheme could be extended to the whole County.</p> <p>Gerry Murphy advised that the Portlaoise Facade Enhancement Scheme was a pilot scheme - an initiative which was developed through the Portlaoise Town Team.</p> <p>The Town Team would be extended to Portarlington in September and subsequently other towns throughout the county.</p> <p>Aidan Mullins queried the purpose of The Cube.</p> <p>Evelyn Reddin advised The Cube Will be a multi point incubation hub for the development of a Low Carbon Centre of Excellence, assisting in attracting and developing companies with a low carbon focus.</p> <p>Aisling Moran queried the administration process of applications for Trading Online Vouchers & Business Continuity Vouchers.</p>		

	<p>Evelyn Reddin advised that each application is fully assessed and the applicant appointed a mentor if deemed necessary before being approved. The LEO Staff build up relationships dealing with the businesses and ongoing mentoring & support is available to all businesses.</p> <p>Deirdre Hopkins O`Connell queried if LEO/BSU will be compiling data on the effect of Covid 19 on businesses in the County. Evelyn Reddin advised that the Laois Business Recovery Group would be compiling this data.</p>		
<p>4.</p>	<p>Tourism Update</p> <p>Dom Reddin gave an update report on the current tourism initiatives in the County.</p> <p>Tourism Destination Funding</p> <p>Portlaoise has been allocated €500,000 under the “Destination Towns” initiative launched in 2019 by the National Tourism Development Authority. €147,000, match funding to be provided by LCC. Works to include enhancement of the Laneways, lighting & soft landscapes in Portlaoise town centre are due to commence late July 2020 with an estimate completion time of 14 months.</p> <p>Barrow Blue Way</p> <p>Laois County Council in conjunction with Kildare County Council and Waterways Ireland are due to commence upgrade works on the Barrow Blue Way on 15th July, 2020. The route is 46 km with 16 km in County Laois. The planned upgrade is to provide a multi-use shared 46km off-road, flat accessible, public space and leisure route. The proposed upgrade will improve access to the Barrow Way, to include walkers, cyclists, wheelchairs users and families.</p> <p>Estimated that works will be complete in 18 weeks.</p>		

	<p>Car Parking Rock of Dunamase</p> <p>Laois County Council are pursuing with options for the provision of a Car Park and appropriate interpretive signage at the Rock of Dunamase. A Visual Impact Assessment of the area around the Rock of Dunamase and a Geophysical Study was carried out in two locations at the Rock to identify the likely extent of subsurface archaeological remains in each of these sites. LCC are currently having the land valued and are negotiating all possibilities with land owners.</p> <p>Laois County Council Tourism Grant Scheme</p> <p>The Council will continue to make available the Tourism Grant Scheme for 2020.</p> <p>Laois Tourism launched their new website in the Spring. Currently working on new branding and promotional material</p> <p>Big Ideas working with hotels in the county to encourage visitor to the County.</p>		
5.	<p>AOB</p> <p>Evelyn Reddin advised that Laois Chamber, Laois LEO & Laois Tourism recently launched the “Love Laois” campaign. The Initiative is a joint effort to promote Laois to Laois people as a place to explore, staycation, shop and enjoy as the local economy aims to survive and recover during these very challenging times.</p>		
	<p>Next meeting to be held on Friday 4th September, 2020 @ 2.30 pm</p>		