



## MINUTES OF MEETING

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| <b>Project Name</b>        | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strategic Policy Committee</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Enterprise, Economic Development &amp; Tourism</b></p>  |  |
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| <b>Purpose of Meeting</b>  |  |  |
| <b>Location of Meeting</b> | <b>Microsoft Teams</b>   | <b>Date and Time</b>   |
|                            |  | <p>11.00 am</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021</p>  |
| <b>In attendance</b>       | <b>Name</b>  | <b>Representing</b>  |
|                            | <p>           Cllr. Conor Bergin<br/>           Cllr. Aidan Mullins<br/>           Cllr. Aisling Moran<br/>           Pat Culleton<br/>           Bernie Everard<br/>           PJ Phelan<br/>           Julie Bergin, A/Head of Finance<br/>           Evelyn Reddin (ER), Head of Enterprise<br/>           Denise Rainey (DR), Administrative Officer BSU<br/>           Linda Meredith (LM) Staff Officer BSU<br/>           Dominic Reddin, Administrative Officer         </p> | <p>           Chairperson SPC,<br/>           Member LCC<br/>           Member LCC<br/>           Dev/Construction Rep<br/>           Business/Commercial Rep<br/>           Community/Voluntary Rep<br/>           LCC<br/>           LCC<br/>           LCC<br/>           LCC<br/>           LCC         </p> |
| <b>Apologies</b>           | <p>           Deirdre O`Connell-Hopkins<br/>           Pat Hennessy<br/>           Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance         </p>  | <p>           Trade Union Rep<br/>           Agriculture/Farming Rep<br/>           LCC         </p>   |

| Item No. | Description   | Action By | Date for Completion |
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| 1.       | <p><b>Confirmation of minutes</b></p> <p>Minutes of previous meeting were proposed by Pat Culleton and seconded by Bernie Everard.</p>  |           |                     |
| 2.       | <p><b>Presentation by Niall Kelly, Cube Director</b></p> <p>Niall Kelly, Cube Director gave a detailed presentation on The Cube Low Carbon Centre of Excellence, outlining its objectives and specific areas of focus going forward.</p> <p>Following the presentation, Niall Kelly/Evelyn Reddin answered any questions raised by the members.</p>   |           |                     |
| 3.       | <p><b>Support to Business (Covid 19) – Julie Bergin</b></p> <p><b>Small Business Assistance Scheme (SMASC)</b></p> <p>51 applications were received for Phase I of the Small Business Assistance Scheme for Covid (SBASC). 33 applicants were eligible for the scheme with a total of €132,000 paid out (€4,000 per business).</p> <p>Phase II of the scheme has just been announced by the government. Further details including the go live date will be announced shortly on the Laois County Council website.</p> |           |                     |

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|                  | <p><b>Commercial Rates Waiver</b></p> <p>€2.2 million to be recouped in relation to the Commercial Rates Waiver Scheme.</p> <p>A further extension of the 2021 Commercial Rates Waiver has been announced for quarter 3 of 2021.</p> <p>Currently awaiting on details to be issued.</p>  |  |  |
| <p><b>4.</b></p> | <p><b>BSU Update</b></p> <p>Denise Rainey (DR) provided an update on the works carried out by the Business Support Unit (BSU) to date this year specifically highlighting the following:</p> <p><b>Business Incentives &amp; Supports</b></p> <p><b>Shop Front Grant Scheme</b></p> <p>11 applications received to date in 2021 with a good spread across all towns/villages in the County.</p> <p><b>Stradbally Farmers Market</b></p> <p>The BSU has commenced a project with Stradbally Farmers Market. The project consists of several proposals designed to promote and develop the new outdoor market in Stradbally. The new market now operates out of the Market Square in Stradbally and there are currently 7 traders involved.</p> <p><b>Portlaoise Town Team</b></p> <p>The BSU is in the final stages of completing a marketing project with the Traders Association Downtown Portlaoise. The project consisted of the production of a marketing video for the Town, purchase of additional</p> |  |  |

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|  | <p>seasonal lighting, purchase of gazebos for festivals and events, design of new signage &amp; social media graphics, extension of the Sound System to new areas of the Town, provision of an artistic installation on Market Square and the erection of lamp post banners on JFL Avenue.</p> <p><b>Portarlinton Façade Enhancement Scheme</b></p> <p>This scheme is due to be launched later this month. The scheme will allow the owners of commercial and residential properties in Main Street, French Church Street and Market Square Portarlinton to apply for a grant to paint the front façade of their premises. The amount of the grant is €750 or 75% of the cost of the works whichever is the lesser.</p> <p><b>Tourism Destination Town Project Portlaoise</b></p> <p>The BSU is currently advancing the following aspects of the project –</p> <p>Façade Enhancement Scheme which involves a grant of €750 or 75% of the cost of the works (whichever is the lesser) being offered to the owners of residential and commercial properties in the areas of Lyster Square, Lyster Lane &amp; Bull Lane.</p> <p>Provision of Tourist Information Panels in the Town – A tender for the provision of the panels in the Town is being drafted.</p> |  |  |
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**Economic Development Update**

Evelyn Reddin (ER) provided an update on the works carried out by the LEO to date this year.

LEO Approved €174,426 in grant aid to 10 Laois Businesses with the potential to create 34 full-time jobs. A further 7 applications for funding will be considered at the next evaluation committee meeting at the end of June.

- Delivered 40 training programmes to-date with 689 participants.
- Delivered 8 Start Your Own Business Programmes with 120 participants.
- Provided mentoring to 118 Laois businesses in finance, marketing, exporting, HR, health and safety.
- Supported 30 tourism and hospitality businesses in preparation for re-opening in June focusing mainly on marketing
- Approved 50 trading online vouchers to the value of €108,547.

4 Laois Businesses currently taking part in the Lean for Micro Programme

9 Laois Businesses have applied for the Green for Micro Programme.

27 business currently taking part in the Client Stimulus package.

Over 40 companies have engaged with LEO around Brexit and the potential impact on their business going forward.

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| <p>5.</p> | <p><b>Tourism Update – Dom Reddin</b></p> <p>Dominic Reddin (DRed) provided an update on the following:</p> <p><b>Glenbarrow Carpark</b></p> <p>DRed advised that a planning application had been submitted to Laois County Council for the provision of a Car Park at Glenbarrow, Rosenallis, Co Laois. Further information was requested which included a requirement to carry out a Natura Impact Statement. This further information has been submitted and a decision on the granting of the application is due on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021.</p> <p><b>Car parking at The Rock of Dunamaise</b></p> <p>DRed advised the members that the Council were still pursuing options for the availability of a suitable site for the provision of Car Parking at the Rock of Dunamaise.</p> <p><b>Tourism Destination Towns:</b></p> <p>Works commenced in March 2021 on the resurfacing of Bull Lane as part of this project.</p> <p>The Council is currently evaluating tender documents received for Interpretation and Wayfinding signage at the Old Fort Quarter and at the laneways in Portlaoise.</p> |  |  |
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|  | <p><b>Wayfinding information - Portlaoise Digital Kiosks:</b></p> <p>Clear Channel is the company involved in turning two of the old telephone booths in Portlaoise into digital information kiosks. The work is expected to be completed in July.</p> <p><b>Barrow Blue Way:</b></p> <p>Works on the Blueway were temporarily stopped due to Covid restrictions but recommenced in March. Good progress has been made and will continue on the northern section from Glenaree to Rathangan and should be completed by early Q4 2021. Works on the southern section of the Blueway from Ballymanus towards Vicarstown will continue and be complete by the end of May 2021. All works are undertaken with the oversight of an independent Ecological Clerk of Works to ensure compliance with legislation and planning conditions and to provide advice, guidance and monitoring of the works.</p> <p><b>The Barrow Blueway Economic Plan:</b></p> <p>The Economic Plan has been completed and the final document is available on request. Louise Brown and Associates (LBA) were commissioned to write the Plan in consultation with the Steering Committee</p> <p>Points were raised by Cllr Aisling Moran regarding meeting with members of the Barrow Blue Way. DRed advised that a representative from Waterways Ireland would be addressing a meeting of the Portarlinton / Graiguecullen Municipal District members in June.</p> |  |  |
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|    | <p><b>Comhaltas Promotional Video</b></p> <p>PJ Phelan advised that Laois Comhaltas have applied for funding through Laois Partnership to produce a 1-hour video promoting Laois from early times to current day.</p>   |    |  |
| 6. | <p><b>Laois Chamber – Bernie Everard</b></p> <p>Cllr Conor Bergin advised the group that Bernie Everard was resigning her position as Chief Executive of Laois Chamber. He complimented Bernie on her outstanding work with the Chamber since her appointment. Good wishes were also expressed by Denise Rainey, Aisling Moran, Evelyn Reddin and Dom Reddin.</p> |    |  |
| 7. | <p><b>Community Wealth Building – Aidan Mullins</b></p> <p>Cllr. Aidan Mullins gave a presentation on Community Wealth Building</p> <p>It was agreed that the matter would be discussed with Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance as Cllr Mullins would like to see it being implemented.</p>  |    |  |
| 8. | <p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>Outdoor Seating and Accessories Scheme for Tourism and Hospitality Service – Denise Rainey to provide an update on this scheme at the next SPC meeting.</p>  | DR |  |
| 9. | <p><b>Next meeting</b></p> <p>Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021 @ 11am</p>   |    |  |