



MINUTES OF MEETING

Project Name	Strategic Policy Committee Enterprise, Economic Development & Tourism	
Purpose of Meeting		
Location of Meeting	Microsoft Teams	Date and Time
		11.00 am 3 rd March 2022
In attendance	Name	Representing
	Cllr. Conor Bergin Cllr. Aidan Mullins Cllr. Aisling Moran Caroline Hofman Pat Culleton Gerry Murphy (GM), Head of Finance Mark Clancy (MC), Business Advisor, LEO Denise Rainey (DR), Administrative Officer BSU Dominic Reddin (DRed) Administrative Officer Sheila Cahill (SC), Staff Officer BSU Michael Timmons (MT), Graduate BSU	Chairperson SPC Member LCC Member LCC Business/Commercial Rep Dev/Construction Rep LCC LCC LCC LCC LCC LCC
Apologies	Deirdre O'Connell-Hopkins Pat Hennessy P.J. Phelan Cllr Seamus McDonald	Trade Union Rep Agriculture/Farming Rep Community/Voluntary Rep Member LCC

Item No.	Description	Action By	Date for Completion
1.	<p>Confirmation of minutes</p> <p>Minutes of meeting of 2nd December 2021 were proposed by Cllr Aidan Mullins and seconded by Pat Culleton.</p>		
2.	<p>Role of SPC</p> <p>Gerry Murphy outlined the role of the SPC and circulated an Extract from the SPC Scheme adopted by LCC on 30th September 2019. (Attached).</p>		
3.	<p>Support to Business (Covid 19) – Gerry Murphy</p> <p>Gerry Murphy (GM) acknowledged the role of LCC, LEO and the BSU in helping businesses over the last two years during the Covid pandemic.</p> <p>Commercial Rates Waiver Scheme</p> <p>The final figure for 2021 was €3.828 million under the Commercial Rates Waiver Scheme.</p> <p>The waiver will remain in place for the first quarter of 2022 for the hospitality, leisure, entertainment and tourism related sectors (estimated cost €420k). GM confirmed that this includes cafes, bars and restaurants.</p>		
4.	<p>BSU Update</p> <p>Denise Rainey (DR) provided an update regarding the current projects being carried out by the Business Support Unit (BSU). (Attached).</p> <p>DR advised that the closing date for the Streetscape Enhancement Scheme was 14/3/2022.</p>		

	<p>DR advised that there has been a poor uptake of the Streetscape Scheme in Ballylinan despite advertisement of the Scheme on social media, etc.</p> <p>DR outlined the terms of the new “Vacant Commercial Building Incentive Scheme” and advised that it is a pilot scheme for Portlaoise.</p> <p>DR advised that the eligible area for the Streetscape Scheme in Mountmellick has been extended to include O’Moore Street and Emmet Street.</p>		
<p>4.</p>	<p>LEO Update</p> <p>Mark Clancy (MC) provided an update on the works being carried out by the Local Enterprise Office (Attached).</p>		
<p>5.</p>	<p>Tourism Update – Dom Reddin</p> <p>Dominic Reddin (DRed) provided an update on Tourism. (Attached).</p> <p>Cllr Bergin and the members complimented the great work and projects being undertaken by the Tourism Section.</p> <p>GM advised that a Public Draft Engagement Programme will be organised after Easter by Waterways Ireland. The CEO of the company stated that they will meet with elected members, stakeholders and people living along the Blueway.</p> <p>DRed advised that Mountain Bike Trail/Slieve Bloom camping and lodges will be investigated and that he will give an update at the next meeting.</p>		

	<p>DRed advised that Laois County Council do not have sites to provide motor homes parking. However, grants could be made available (subject to planning permission) to support businesses interested in setting this up. GM further advised that it is not feasible to set aside car parking spaces for this purpose.</p> <p>Cllr Bergin noted that the Leinster Fleadh was coming to Laois this year.</p>		
<p>6.</p>	<p><i>Laois Chamber – Caroline Hofman</i></p> <p><i>Caroline Hofman provided an update on the current activities of the Laois Chamber:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Return to in-person networking</i> • <i><u>Laois Women’s Networking Lunch</u> - Tuesday, 8th March: LEO Laois in collaboration with Laois Chamber. Special guest is Louise Phelan, in conversation with Ronan Berry.</i> • <i><u>Laois Jobs Fair</u>: Tuesday, 12th April 2022, 12pm to 8pm The Midlands Park Hotel, Portlaoise: LOETB and LEO Laois are the main sponsors.</i> • <i><u>Shine 2022, Saturday 21st May 2022</u>: Official launch of SHINE 2022 took place on 24th February. This is an event that will bring sport, business and tourism together.</i> • <i><u>Ploughing Championships September 20th – 22nd</u>: Laois Chamber looking forward to being part of the Laois tent.</i> • <i><u>Inaugural Laois Chamber Business Awards</u>: November 2022 in The Heritage Hotel, Killenard; To be launched in June.</i> • <i><u>Commercial Vacancy Incentive Scheme</u>: Collaborative Project between LCC and Laois Chamber. Initially being launched on Monday 14th March.</i> <p><i>Cllr Bergin and the members acknowledged the great work being undertaken by Laois Chamber.</i></p>		

	<p>AOB</p> <p><i>DR advised that the Community Section will be engaging with the members of the SPC in the review of the LECP 2016-2021.</i></p> <p><i>Clr Bergin advised he is on the LECP Steering Group and that any feedback regarding the LECP should to be sent to him prior to 21st March.</i></p>		
7.	<p>Agreed Dates for remaining SPC meetings for 2022:</p> <p>Thursday 2nd June 2022 @ 11am</p> <p>Thursday 1st September 2022 @ 11am</p> <p>Thursday 1st December 2022 @ 11am</p>		

