



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann  
Tipperary County Council

**Minutes of the Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee Held on  
5<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at 2.30pm in Nenagh MD Office and by Zoom.**

<b>Members of Council in Attendance</b>	<b>Sectoral Interests in Attendance</b>	<b>Staff in Attendance:</b>
Cllr. Marie Murphy <b>Chairperson</b>	Mary Spillane, PPN	Brian Beck, Director of Services
Cllr. John Carroll	Sean O Farrell, Environment North Tipp Association	Kathleen Prendergast, Economic Development Officer
Cllr. Siobhan Ambrose (Zoom)	Pat Carroll, Farming Pillar (Zoom)	Donough Leahy, Clerical Officer
Cllr. Liam Browne (Zoom)	Thomas Cooke, Development Construction Pillar (Zoom)	
Cllr. Kay Cahill Skehan (Zoom)	Thomas Reidy, Development Construction Pillar (Zoom)	
Cllr. Roger Kennedy (Zoom)	Michelle Aylward, Business Pillar (Zoom)	
Cllr. Declan Burgess (Zoom)		

**Apologies:** Cllr. Louise Morgan Walsh, Anthony Fitzgerald; Head of Enterprise,

**Absent:** Cllr. Joe Hannigan, Adrien Barlett; Business Pillar.

**1. Chairperson Designate takes up appointment**

Cllr. Marie Murphy took up the position of Chairperson for the Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee.

**2. Welcome**

Cllr. Marie Murphy, Chairperson, opened the meeting. Marie welcomed everybody to the first Economic Development & Enterprise SPC meeting of the 2024 to 2029 Committee. It was then confirmed by all members that there was no conflict of interest from anybody present at this SPC committee. Each member of the committee then introduced themselves, informing the group of their background and what they hope to achieve while involved in the Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee. Marie mentioned that Cllr. Michael Murphy will no longer be part of this SPC after being elected to the Dail and she wished him well in his new role as a TD. She stated that there will be somebody co-opted to replace him at the February 2025 County Council meeting.

**3. Briefing on the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC Role and Functions**

Kathleen Prendergast, Economic Development Officer, provided a detailed presentation where she gave a briefing on the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC Functions. Kathleen advised of the process of the SPC, including the purpose of the committee and why they were established, identifying them as a supporting role to the Council. The purpose of the committee is to bring together both elected members and people actively working or involved with social, economic, cultural and environmental areas to develop and review policies related to council services. Kathleen informed the group that the EDE SPC is a mandatory SPC and she outlined that one very specific functions of the committee is the preparation of the economic elements of the Local Economic and Community plan which is now in place from 2024-2029. The SPC is also responsible for oversight of the Local Enterprise Office in its delivery of its work programme both current work and what it will focus on for the future.

Kathleen then provided a graph of where the Strategic Policy Committees structure fits into the organisational structure of Tipperary County Council.

Kathleen presented an outline of the wide-range of topics discussed throughout the previous 5 years of the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC and she explained that the topics for the coming year will be decided at a later date, with a survey being sent out in the new year. Kathleen advised she will also email the induction pack which will include details of the Strategic Policy Committee scheme, a glossary of terms & acronyms, a protocol for the committee, a draft of the standing orders, a set of previous SPC minutes, and the code of conduct that all elected members work under.

In relation to the principles and standards within the Code of conduct, all members of this committee to be invited to sign up for the principals within that code, when at meetings and speaking about the committee. Kathleen then advised that this can be considered at the next meeting once reviewed by all.

Chairperson Cllr. Marie Murphy thanked Kathleen for the comprehensive piece of work and opened it up to the floor for questions.

Cllr. John Carroll welcomed everybody, especially the non-Councillor members, advising that they can bring forward a variety of different ideas from their specific backgrounds and he stated that he looks forward to working with all throughout the term of the committee. Cllr. Carroll asked if a copy of the LECP document can be circulated to the community members of the committee, as it would be beneficial to them. He was advised that it would be circulated with the Minutes.

#### **4. Consideration of Standing Orders & Agreement of Dates for 2025 Meetings**

Chairperson Cllr. Marie Murphy advised that a Draft of the Standing Orders was circulated with the Agenda and Kathleen Prendergast went through a brief overview of the Draft Standing Orders. She advised if anybody has any ideas on this, they can provide them as feedback and they will be brought back to corporate services, who will consider and if appropriate will include them in the proposed standing orders, which will be presented to the Elected Members to be formally adopted for all the SPC's in County Tipperary. Some of the items Kathleen highlighted included:

- The Strategic Policy Committees members shall hold office for the period of the life of the Council.
- In the event of a member failing to attend 2 consecutive meetings of the Committee without reason, a warning shall be issued to the member.
- In so far as practicable, the meetings of the SPC may be held at any of the Civic Offices, MD Offices or such other alternative location as agreed by the Committee and may be held in person, remotely or hybrid.
- SPC meetings should be conducted in a much less rigid and formal way than plenary council meetings to create an informal & collaborative atmosphere that would allow honest views and opinions on policy issues.
- The Committee shall, as far as possible, arrive at all decisions and recommendations by consensus. Voting, if required, may be by a show of hands or by roll call vote. The Chair shall have a casting vote, if required.

The Committee shall be entitled to establish sub-committees (working groups) to examine particular policy issues at any one time. These sub-committees are to have a timeline for completion of their work. The members will then provide a report of their work and findings to the SPC.

- A Strategic Policy Committee can recommend an amendment to, or review of, Standing Orders for consideration and decision by the Corporate Policy Group. The proposed amendment must have the agreement of the majority of the total membership of the Committee.

Kathleen invited comments either at the meeting or by email over the next week and she would be able to get them to the corporate section for consideration of inclusion in the Draft that would be presented to the members of Tipperary County Council for adoption.

Chairperson Cllr. Marie Murphy opened it to the floor for questions.

Mary Spillane of the PPN asked in relation to the topic of attendance - if people were not able to attend for legitimate reasons, what would happen? Cllr. Murphy advised that they could use the option of Zoom if they could not travel to the meeting but on the occasions that they were not available they should provide apologies in advance of the meeting.

Sean O'Farrell, Environment North Tipp Association asked in relation to standing orders what the protocol was for inviting a guest speaker to a meeting. Kathleen Prendergast referred to Draft Standing Orders under the topic of "Attendance of public and media". Where it advised that a guest can be invited if it is relevant to the topic and the protocol of the Standing Orders was adhered to.

### **Agreement of Dates for 2025 Meetings**

There was a number of suggested dates sent out prior to the meeting for the meetings of the SPC in 2025. These were discussed and it agreed, subject to change in exceptional circumstances, that the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC meetings would take place on the following dates for 2025;

- Tuesday February 11<sup>th</sup> (Morning)
- Tuesday May 6<sup>th</sup> (Afternoon)
- Tuesday September 9<sup>th</sup> (Morning)
- Tuesday December 9<sup>th</sup> (Afternoon)

It was agreed to alternate between morning and afternoon meetings in order to best suit everybody, as certain members had difficulties attending at specific times. Cllr Murphy confirmed the first meeting in February will take place in the morning, with the May meeting then taking place in the afternoon.

Mary Spillane noted that she would not be able to attend meetings on Tuesday afternoons as she has another meeting she must attend. Kathleen Prendergast advised a number of factors will dictate times and dates such as room availability etc, however she asked the people who are having any difficulty with a proposed time/day to email her today, so she can be made aware. Cllr Murphy suggested to hold the meetings in the different Municipal District offices as it would give people a chance to view the different offices and meetings would be spread throughout the county. Cllr Roger Kennedy confirmed this would be a good idea.

Cllr. John Carroll suggested to have a set location to make it as amenable for people to physically attend the meetings. He appreciates that it is not always possible and suggested Thurles as an ideal location. He was aware that the facility of Zoom is currently out of action there so it is not suitable at this time.

Cllr. Liam Browne agreed with Cllr. Murphy's proposal to move across the different MD's over the 5 years to show that the Committee is working for the whole county.

## **5. Tipperary Local Enterprise Office 2024 update**

Kathleen Prendergast gave an update on the work carried out by the Tipperary Local Enterprise Office in 2024 on behalf of Ita Horan, LEO Senior Enterprise Development Officer with Tipperary County Council as Ita was unavailable and had sent her apologies.

Kathleen explained the Local Enterprise Office is an organisation that sets out to work with entrepreneurs and small businesses, helping anybody looking to create employment throughout the County of Tipperary. The range of supports available includes; Business information and advice, business grants, training & development, mentoring and research and innovation support.

Kathleen went through the different types of Measure 1 Grants available (Feasibility, Priming, Business expansion and Export support), identifying the criteria required for businesses to avail of these grants. She also advised of the Lean, Green and Digital grants that are available for businesses through the Local Enterprise Office, as well as the Grad Start, Research & Development and Intellectual Property Grants. Kathleen also informed the committee of some of the other services available through the Local Enterprise Office, such as the Micro Finance Loan, 1-1 training, business advice clinics, subsidised training programmes and specialised mentors.

Kathleen then gave a breakdown of the figures for 2024 up to November, detailing both the number of grants approved in each area and amount of money paid out through grants by the Local Enterprise Office in Tipperary. These included;

- 9 Feasibility Study grants to the value of €116,199
- 7 Priming grants to the value of €255,962
- 10 Business Expansion grants to the value of €380,258
- 12 Export grants to the value of €26,678
- 66 Trading Online Voucher grants to the value of €138,659
- 8 Energy Efficiency grants to the value of €57,934

Kathleen informed the committee that 20 micro finance loans had been approved to date for 2024 which has supported business of over €300,000. She also advised of the statistics for training and development, which included 1,486 participating in the 80 training programmes provided. There was also 135 business which were provided mentors in the year and 473 business received business advice from one of the business advisors. Kathleen finished by outlining the priorities for the Local Enterprise Office in 2025 which include; Job Creation, Sustainability, Exporting, Cyber-security and AI.

Chairperson Marie Murphy thanked Kathleen for the presentation and opened it to the floor for questions.

Cllr. Roger Kennedy advised that the slides circulated with the agenda were most difficult to read and asked if they could be in a better format in the future.

## **6. Commercial Vacancy Incentive Scheme**

Cllr Murphy advised that the current Commercial Vacancy Incentive Scheme is due for a review and she was seeking an agreed approach to oversee the implementation of a review within a specified time-frame. To achieve this, she advised that a sub-group would need

to be formed and she requested suggestions on how many members would be required for such a sub-group.

Brian Beck, Director of Services recommended that 6 members for the sub-committee should be sufficient and he also recommended that it would be broken down as 3 Councillors and 3 members from the sectoral areas. Brian also advised that the Chairperson of the SPC would be an additional member should they so wish to attend.

Cllr. Murphy informed that the role of the Commercial Vacancy Incentive Scheme Sub-group is to review the current scheme in place in County Tipperary, to assist in developing a new scheme that addresses any issues, challenges or opportunities identified in the old scheme or part of the research and to ensure that there is a consultation process relating to the devising of the new scheme.

Kathleen Prendergast presented a scoping paper advising on the extent of the consultation process including; people who have made enquiries or availed of the scheme previously, members of the planning section, town centre revitalisation officer, Municipal Districts, the Local Enterprise Office and Finance Sector including revenue collectors within Tipperary County Council. Kathleen advised that a full research, review and examination of the current scheme would be undertaken and also a look at national, regional and county policies, as well as existing schemes from other councils throughout the country. This research would provide greater information on how to proceed best with a new scheme.

Cllr. Murphy offered to participate on the Sub-group and she then asked for volunteers to join the sub-committee. Cllr Siobhan Ambrose, Cllr. Liam Browne, Cllr John Carroll and Michelle Aylward all expressed interest in joining the committee. Brian Beck then suggested that other members of the SPC not in attendance be contacted to try and fill the remaining positions.

The terms of reference for the sub-committee was then proposed by Cllr. John Carroll and seconded by Cllr. Roger Kennedy. Kathleen Prendergast advised that the first meeting would take place on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> of December at 2pm by Zoom. The scoping paper and the process for review therein was then proposed that by Cllr. Liam Browne and seconded by Cllr. John Carroll.

## **7. A.O.B**

Sean O Farrell, Environment North Tipp Association informed the committee of a farm diversification event which is taking place in the TUS campus in Thurles on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> of January. He stated that he will forward the information to Kathleen once he has more details on the event and he requested that this information be circulated to the SPC committee.

Cllr. Marie Murphy thanked everybody for their attendance.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: 

Date: 11/2/2025

