

**Minutes of the Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee Held on  
11<sup>th</sup> of February at 10.00am in Chamber, Tipperary Municipal District, Civic Offices,  
Tipperary Town 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 (Zoom)	Brian Beck, Director of Services
Cllr. Roger Kennedy	Sean O Farrell, Environment North Tipp Association (Zoom)	Anthony Fitzgerald, Head of Enterprise
Cllr. Ann Marie Ryan Shiner	Adrien Barlett, Business Pillar (Zoom)	Kathleen Prendergast, Economic Development Officer
Cllr. Eddie Moran	Thomas Cooke, Development Construction Pillar (Zoom)	Clare Lee, Climate Action Co-ordinator (Zoom)
Cllr. Siobhan Ambrose (Zoom)	Thomas Reidy, Development Construction Pillar (Zoom)	Donough Leahy, Clerical Officer
Cllr. Declan Burgess (Zoom)	Michelle Aylward, Business Pillar (Zoom)	
Cllr. Liam Browne (Zoom)		
Cllr. John Carroll (Zoom)		

**Apologies:** Cllr. Louise Morgan Walsh

**Absent:** Cllr. Joe Hannigan, Cllr Kay Cahill Skehan, Pat Carroll, Farming Pillar and Seamus Hoyne, TUS.

**1. Welcome**

Cllr. Marie Murphy, Chairperson, open the meeting. Marie welcomed everybody to the second Economic Development & Enterprise SPC meeting under this committee. Maire advised the meeting of three new members, Cllr. Ann Marie Ryan Shiner, Cllr. Eddie Moran and Seamus Hoyne from TUS. who have joined since the last meeting. She welcomed Cllr Ann Marie Ryan Shiner, who was in attendance today.

**2. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The Minutes of the last meeting were considered. The adoption of same was then proposed by Cllr. Roger Kennedy and seconded by Michelle Aylward. There were no matters arising.

**3. Adoption of: Code of Conduct & Protocol for meetings**

Cllr. Marie Murphy advised that the code of conduct was sent out in advance of this meeting for review and consideration. A briefing on the Code of Conduct & Protocol was given at the last meeting. The adoption of the Code of Conduct and Protocol was proposed by Cllr. Declan Burgess and seconded by Cllr. Roger Kennedy.

**4. Consideration of work program for 2025**

Kathleen Prendergast, Economic Development Officer thanked the members of the committee who completed the survey on the topics which they would like to be considered on the work program for 2025 under this SPC committee. Kathleen presented the outcome of the survey, highlighting that "Agriculture" and "Town Centre First- Our Rural Futures" being the most requested topics which the committee would like covered. Other popular topics included the Lisheen Bio-Economy, the Local Economic Community Plan Economic Update, County Development Plan, County Tipperary Tourism and the Tipperary County Council Climate Action Plan.

Kathleen advised these would be the main topics that will be covered in 2025 and if something comes in which must be dealt with, such as the Local Enterprise Office Reports, or new information of interest to the Economic Development and Enterprise sphere, they will be agreed with the Chairperson and brought to the SPC, as appropriate.

Brian Beck, Director of Services thanked the committee for high level of responses to the survey. He noted that there are seven SPC's within the Council as follows:

1. Economic Development and Enterprise
2. Housing
3. Infrastructure
4. Environment and Climate Change
5. Planning and Emergency Services
6. Social Inclusion, Community and Rural Development
7. Library Services, Culture and Biodiversity

Brian advised that any matters raised that related directly to the theme of the other SPC's would have to be referred to them. In this regard, relating to the additional suggested topics from the Survey he recommended the following:

- Developing rural roads will be covered by the Infrastructure SPC.
- Disability Equality and Inclusion will be dealt with by the Social Inclusion, Community and Rural Development SPC.
- Brian advised that the water infrastructure would be an Uisce Eireann matter dealt with by the Infrastructure SPC.

In regard to the topics of the Circular Economy, Green Public Procurement and Short Food Supply Chains, Brian advised that the Council could draw from its staff to present on these topics as appropriate. Along with this, he stated that there is an option for a joint SPC meeting with another SPC in circumstances where an important issue would benefit both committees.

Kathleen Prendergast addressed the results of the training identified to assist in the role of SPC members as follows:

- Training in strategies to make Tipperary Food Secure, Energy Secure & Water Secure. Kathleen advised that this SPC will have an oversight on the Local Economic Community Plan (LECP) whereby a number of actions address these key areas. As appropriate to our SPC, we will get the opportunity to have training/information on strategies as they are being developed, consulted on or implemented.
- The 'Role of the Chairperson' and 'Structuring of Meetings to Facilitate Better Interactions' will be covered in a special training event about to be organised nationally. Details will issue to the members once they are confirmed.

Kathleen advised she would notify members of the committee of any other training opportunities as they arise.

Cllr. Eddie Moran stated that he believes that some areas are being left behind in regard to Tourism. He highlighted the fact that we need to keep people in the locality for longer periods of time. He provided the example of where, 6<sup>th</sup> year students visited Templemore Garda college recently and there would have been a great opportunity to package the visit with a visit to Templemore Town Park and into Semple stadium afterwards. Brian Beck agreed it was important to have multiple attractions and linkages within an area to sell a trip to groups as a package. He advised that there is work on-going in the area of Tourism.

He noted that the Tourism officer will be able to discuss the Marketing Strategy that is in place for all areas within the County when they attend a future meeting.

Thomas Cooke, Development Construction Pillar, referred to the infrastructure of rural roads and advised we still need to have some sort of emphasis with that. He highlighted the complete collapse of the rural economy following the recent bad weather and that the lack of an emergency plans and contingencies caused major issues for all. He also mentioned the rural roads and people not being able to cycle on them with the way they are being maintained. However, he acknowledged this is an issue for the Transportation and Infrastructure SPC, but asked if the information on this topic can be brought to the SPC at some future time.

Sean O Farrell, PPN advised that 'Tipperary Heartlands Tourism Group' operates out of 'Lár na Páirce' in Thurles and provides a network for the wider area. He advised that he is seeking a way to provide more support to this group and gave an example of practical support in the form of a supported mini-bus for this kind of tourism group would be very beneficial.

Cllr. Roger Kennedy asked if it was possible for the Cathaoirleach of Tipperary County Council to give a report to this committee after he visits New York for St. Patrick's Day, from an economic point of view. Cllr Declan Burgess confirmed he would be happy to do so, mentioning he along with the Chief Executive of Tipperary County Council will be attending a number of meetings with the IDA, Failte Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and other bodies while on this invited trip.

## **5. Climate Action**

Clare Lee, Climate Action Co-ordinator gave a presentation on the Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 (LACAP) and delivering on the actions of the plan, focusing on economic developing actions. Clare advised that the LACAP was adopted in February 2024, with 100 climate actions in it and there are also actions for the De-carbonising Zone (DZ). The Department of the Environment monitor the delivery of the climate action plan and they have a set of annual key performance indicators.

The DZ is a concept from the Department of the Environment, with the Local Authority being required to identify one zone, where they would work with stakeholders to deliver on the vision for the DZ. The focus in Tipperary is on the bio-economy campus, which is located in Lisheen in Thurles and the broader rural area around it.

The LACAP has three focuses; 1). Reduction of the council's own greenhouse gas emissions - with the target of 51% by 2030. 2). An external and community focus, where the County Council assists and supports all sectors to meet their climate action targets. 3). Commitment to deliver on the DZ.

Clare then advised on the governance of Climate Action and on how it all works. The County Council adopts the LACAP, which is prepared by the Directorate of Environment & Climate action. A high-level steering group then manages the role out of the plan and the climate action office co-ordinate the plan on the ground. She also spoke about the internal Climate Action Team, who are senior people across all sections and this team is responsible for delivering on the climate actions. Clare advised Climate action is a cross sectional issue to be delivered across all council services. She mentioned some schemes such as "reduce your use" and "Please switch off when not in use" where the council educate their own staff on ways they can help with Climate change. She discussed Climate Change adaptation, highlighting Biomethane capacity building, bio-diversity, emergency response

services and other European projects which the local authority are involved in as measures which help achieve climate action.

In regard to the Community & Enterprise section of the Local Authority, Clare then advised that there are 36 actions allocated to them in the LACAP. It has been very progressive so far, with all but three in progress or completed which highlights to amount of work being done. She also advised there are 22 DZ actions with 12 already completed and 9 currently in progress. There is an annual progress report on the delivery of the climate action and this is now available online to showcase the achievements of the plan and Clare encouraged all to have a look. She went through three individual actions which are enterprise related and gave a brief overview on them, these were the EU JTF Funded Bio-Scale Up at Lisheen, Tourism & Sustainability and the Circular Bio-economy.

Chairperson Cllr. Marie Murphy thanked Clare Lee for providing the overview of the Climate Action Plan and mentioned the significant costs attached to this from the Council and highlighted that if targets are not met by Ireland as a country, it could cost up to the €20 billion. Marie stated that costs for these changes should be borne by government as it would be a lot cheaper in the long run to fund now and have what needs to be done, rather than paying the larger sum in the future.

Brian Beck gave an example of the work being done, advising through the Just Transition Fund, they have managed to get €5 million for the bio-economy campus, noting its location in the Tipperary Decarbonising Zone. Brian advised that this is all money without a match funding requirement brought in by Tipperary County Council and it will be beneficial for the county in the long term and will create many more opportunities.

Cllr. Marie Murphy asked if it was possible to explain why it is only the Carrick on Suir and Thurles MD's in the EU Just Transition Fund area. Brian explained that the EU Just Transition Fund area was defined at European level and these two MD's were areas deemed to have had significant impact as a result of the closure of the peat industry.

Cllr. Liam Browne thanked Clare for the presentation and mentioned that €200,000 was removed from the Budget in December from Climate action and asked what effect that would have on the delivery of climate action that the council would like to implement as this would be a loss of €1 million over 5 years. Cllr. Browne also asked about the delivery of housing in County Tipperary, citing climate action conditions being put on the return of houses as an issue in slowing down this process. In response Clare advised that the funding and staffing of the Climate Action Office is provided centrally from the Department of the Environment in a 5-year Service Level Agreement. Clare advised that each section of the council is responsible for delivering climate action themselves including budgeting for the actions and that any impact on budgeting for climate action is unwelcome noting that there are defined climate action targets in place for local authorities.

Sean O'Farrell thanked Clare for the excellent presentation and enquired if the County Council engages with local businesses in trying to get transport onto rail. He also asked about the circular economy, he mentioned a scheme whereby if furniture was being updated in an office, there would be a platform where the old furniture could be offered to other businesses so that it could be re-used. Sean asked if there was an opportunity to do that in Tipperary or in collaboration with other counties. Responding to Sean's comment on recycling, Clare advised that local authorities try and re-use as much as they can and have a Reduce Reuse Program in place. In addition, she stated that the Council participates in consultation processes with national transport providers to ensure that Tipperary can benefit from new schemes/routes etc.

Thomas Cooke also thanked Clare for the presentation and spoke about the costs of not reaching the targets set out and the fact that most likely it would be the rate payer who

would have to meet the costs. Cllr Marie Murphy advised she was not talking about fines earlier but rather the cost of upgrading facilities, buildings etc. at a future and more expensive cost with the cost of living increases. In response, Clare stated that information on what might happen if a Council fails to meet national targets is not yet available from central government, however, stated that we should not think about fines but rather look to meet our targets in view of the reputation of Tipperary as a leader in positive climate action, noting the benefits arising from such investment and noting that 2030 emissions targets are clearly defined and available.

## **6. Tipperary LECP**

Kathleen Prendergast, Economic Development Officer gave an overview of the Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP), providing a broad background on how it was developed and looked at the implementation plan that is attached to the overall plan. The purpose of the LECP was to set out, for a six-year period (2023-2028), the objectives and actions needed to promote and support economic development and the local and community development in Tipperary, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders. The aim is to prioritise where we want the county to be in 6 years' time- through provision of services, skills and infrastructure. The LECP only includes collaborative actions - which are actions that require a number of organisations to work together for a common good.

She highlighted that as an SPC, we are the reporting body on the actions under the economic side of the plan. The bi-annual report will be sent to this SPC, where progress will be reviewed. Any issues identified can be considered by the SPC and we can seek to identify solutions to any blockages. This oversight on the actions of the overall plan will be in place up to the end of the LECP in 2028.

Kathleen advised the LECP was developed over a staged progression over an 18-month period and included several consultations stages and adoption stages with the public, community organisations and business organisations - including this SPC. The plan has two sections - Community and Economy. The Chairperson of this SPC sits on the oversight body for the implementation of the LECP.

The three high level goals are:

- Community Resilience and Wellbeing - That all communities in Tipperary would move forward in terms of their resilience and their capacity to contribute to the wellbeing of their members
- Economic Resilience and Innovation - That Tipperary would contain a diverse, innovative and environmentally aware economy in which enriching employment opportunities are available for all its citizens and the necessary education and training opportunities are easily accessible by all.
- Climate Adaptation and Environmental Sustainability - That Tipperary would, at a minimum, contribute its fair share to national targets for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, that its households, communities and businesses would be active in adapting to climate change and that environmental impact considerations would inform all decisions in the county

Actions that are going to be targeted for 2025-2027 have been identified and there will be another action plan created after these two years. The plan has 67 actions for the community elements which are called "Sustainable Community Objectives (SCOs)". There

are also 43 actions that will look at economic developments and they are called "Sustainable Economic Development Objectives (SEDOs)". There are also 11 Crosscutting Actions and Supporting Action (SA) that address key priorities for the LECP where the Community and Economic sections would work together.

Kathleen displayed the reporting platform on the screen which can be found on the Tipperary County Council website (<https://www.tipperarycoco.ie/LECP>) showing the status of each action, how far it has been progressed and then it indicates any barriers they have come across. This platform is very beneficial as it allows us to identify what is happening at any specific time, who is responsible and shows confirm that the action is being delivered.

Cllr. Marie Murphy thanked Kathleen for the informative presentation and invited questions or comments.

Thomas Cooke thanked Kathleen for the excellent presentation and queried actions that would be delivered by third parties and what influence the Council would have in regard to these. In response to Kathleen referred to page two of the Implementation plan which highlights that existing strategies and actions were not duplicated. Therefore, all the actions in the plan are collaborative work that named parties are agreeable to work on.

Sean O'Farrell enquired about the SCO 1.6 – to develop an Integrated Rural Development Strategy for County Tipperary and asked what did we benefit from the last rural development (SEDRA) report or was it just a report with no action. Kathleen advised that the SEDRA report was superseded by Our Rural Futures and any actions that were still live would have been picked up in the new Strategy. She would clarify this and report back if there was any further information in relation to same in due course.

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

Anthony Fitzgerald gave a brief synopsis of the work being carried out by Tipperary Local Enterprise Office. He advised that there were 149 net new jobs created. There are 268 companies actively being supported by the LEO and Tipperary LEO is one of the highest performers in the country. He advised they are now focused on continued deliver and aim to improve on their targets for 2025.

## **8. Date of Next Meeting**

Cllr. Marie Murphy confirmed the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2025 at 2:30pm.

Cllr. Marie Murphy thanked everybody for their attendance.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: