

SPC 1 - Economic Development, Enterprise Support & Tourism
Meeting in Abbey Quarter on 20th December 2018 at 11.00am

Report

(4th meeting held year to date)

PPN Representative - Theresa Delahunty

Issues Discussed:

- 1. Tourism Development Update**
- 2. Update on Economic Actions of LECP**
- 3. Local Enterprise Office Update**
- 4. Presentation Abbey Creative Quarter**

Item 1. Tourism Update

The five year programme aims to address the imbalance between City and County with emphasis on further product development and a strategic marketing plan, using new images i.e. Castlecomer Discovery Park. January 2019 will see the official launch of the new Web site “Dig a little deeper” and “One Kilkenny”. Kilkenny as a foodie destination will also be heavily promoted. The promotion and marketing is being spearheaded by Purcell & Masterson Consultants.

The business plan for Woodstock has been signed for the whole estate including a Memorandum of Understanding with Coillte. It is envisaged that this will be pivotal to the regeneration of Inistioge and its hinterland.

Kilkenny county Council are working with Failte Ireland to develop the Tholsel as a tourist and visitor experience destination.

Please see below LECP updates for further information

Item 2. LECP Economic Implementation Plan 2018-2021
High Level Strategic Actions – Quarter 4 Updates.

LECP GOAL 1: Support the Enterprise Economy

2018 Quarter 4: LEO Kilkenny in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce and local retailers delivered the #shoplocal campaign in the run up to Christmas promoting Kilkenny as a shopping destination for Christmas and into the New Year

LECP GOAL 2: Facilitate Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Kilkenny Abbey Quarter Development

2018 Quarter 4: Kilkenny County Council secured grant funding of €4.764 Million towards the regeneration of the Abbey Quarter under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF).

The grant funding secured under the URDF is for a number of ‘shovel ready’ infrastructure projects that are essential to stimulate and enhance commercial development on the Abbey Quarter. The URDF grant funding is towards three distinct yet inter-related elements that

form part of Phase 1, namely: 1. the Abbey Quarter Core Project; 2. Abbey Quarter Key Enabler Project; and 3. Abbey Quarter Enhancing Project.

The Abbey Quarter Core Project is comprised of 7 public realm infrastructure, community and cultural projects. These projects in turn will leverage investment for the other part of Phase 1, namely the redevelopment of the Mayfair and Brewhouse Buildings on the Abbey Quarter, to deliver circa 1,600 square metres and circa 6,500 square metres of unique office space respectively.

The Enabler Project comprises of a number of projects that are located adjacent to the Abbey Quarter site and will be key to ensuring full access and integration within the existing Medieval fabric of the City.

The Enhancing Project comprises a number of projects that are complementary to the Abbey Quarter and will improve connectivity and enhance tourism routes surrounding the

Works on The Brewhouse, Horse Barrack Lane & Brewhouse Courtyard go to tender in mid-December with work commencement date expected in Q1 2019. The River Garden /Park will go to tender in early 2019. Commencement date is expected in summer 2019 with an estimated finish date of spring 2020.

The Mayfair Building is now being earmarked as the location for the new city library. Part VIII planning consent is in place for renovation and reuse for offices – a revised planning consent will be required for the proposed library use. Planning is in place for the Mayfair Public Realm area. Work on both is expected in late 2019 with an expected completion date of late 2020. A new 100 bedroom boutique hotel is being proposed for the Abbey Quarter site. Lisney have been appointed to bring to market by end of Q1 2019 with proposals being sought from Hotel Investors/Developers to lease, develop and operate a High Quality “Boutique Hotel”. The need for additional hotel capacity in the city is outlined in a Fáilte Ireland report, highlighting the shortage of accommodation in the city to cope with the growing number of tourists, The target completion date is Q1 2022 [Subject to Planning]

Develop a strategy to promote and further expand Digital Media including ‘Design Thinking’ initiative to deliver enterprise skills to young people

Kilkenny County Council are in the early stages of development of a County based Digital Strategy.

EI REDF Application update: The National Design Innovation Hub DAC t/a Centre 4 Design was successful in its application to Enterprise Ireland under the REDF and was allocated €1,843,320 towards the development of the project. The project will develop a design innovation hub that will enable companies to conceptualise, innovate, build and test new products and services through critical problem-solving methodologies and the standardisation of the design process as a commercial enabler. A not for profit venture, it will focus on the creation of high economic value jobs through business development, research and talent generation. It is envisaged that this facility will be housed within the Abbey Quarter. Partners involved are Carlow IT, Kilkenny County Council, Design & Crafts Council of Ireland and Kilkenny Industrial & Development Company.

LECP GOAL 3: Visitor Experience Enhancement

2018 Quarter 4: An application has been submitted on 30th November under the National and Regional Greenways Funding Call. An outcome is awaited.

Outdoor Recreation Grant Scheme applications:

- Woodstock (Measure 3) was successful. Grant amount €337,000 has been awarded
- Callan, Moate Fields(Measure 2) – now part of Rural Regeneration Development Funding
- Graiguenamanagh Hub (Measure 2) – Awaiting decision on funding
- Castlecomer discovery Park (Measure 2) - Awaiting decision on funding

In 2018, grants were awarded centrally to the Tourism Festivals, and through the Area Offices for the community grants. Kilkenny County Council budget was agreed on 23rd November last. Applications for 2019 will issue early in January 2019 on the same basis as 2018. Work will continue with Tourism festivals to ensure that they are integrated into the cultural offering of Kilkenny during 2019. Opportunities for Fáilte Ireland funding / mentoring / supports will be pursued.

LECP GOAL 4: Enhanced Educational Attainment and Skills Development

2018 Quarter 4: The Technological University of the South East Ireland (TUSEI) consortium has made its formal application for Technological University designation.

Andy Shenstone was appointed as external Chair of the TUSEI project steering Group during the summer months.

A university will assist in attracting high quality FDI investment. It will assist existing industries in attracting and retaining high quality and specialist senior staff, which is a challenge facing many businesses right now.

In October, Minister of State for Higher Education, Mary Mitchell O'Connor T.D. announced an additional allocation of €6.8m in funding in support of the ongoing restructuring of the higher education landscape. €1m of this is specifically allocated towards the Technological University South East Ireland (TUSEI).

The report being prepared by Mr. Jim Power on building a case for Kilkenny as home to the National Design Centre is awaited.

LECP GOAL 5: Develop the Rural Economy

2018 Quarter 4: ***Town & Village Renewal.*** The Council has submitted seven applications to the Department of Rural and Community Development under the 2018 Town and Village Renewal Scheme. All seven were developed in collaboration with local communities. The applications were assessed by the Department through a competitive process and 5 were successful as follows:

Ballyhale Knocktopher - Build a 500m footpath with lighting € 100,000

Castlecomer - Brand development for Castlecomer € 52,280

Coon - Completion of a parking area near the playground & recreational area, and the rebuilding of 50m of heritage wall €100,000

Inistioge - Restore and improve the appearance of The Square and the River Park in Inistioge €200,000

Thomastown Conversion of an unused Community Hall into a custom built library with business incubation space with hot-desking facilities. €200,000

It is intended to invite expressions of interest shortly for feasible projects under the 2019 Town and Village Renewal Scheme so that applications may be developed with relevant community groups in a timely manner.

Other Villages: Ballyhale - The local KBK Committee will consider the suite of Health Check recommendations and prepare its own plan.

Freshford and Gowran – The local meetings will be arranged with the view to forming a local community task force and Kilkenny County Council will provide facilitation to both meetings.

Ballyragget - Local communities are to consider the matter further and liaise with the Council with regards to their intentions.

Mooncoin - Health Check report feedback meeting was poorly attended. It is now proposed to identify all local community and business leaders and invite them to a further information meeting with the view to forming a local Village committee. It is expected that each Town/Village Team will manage the implementation of their Town/Village Action Plans.

Community & Culture Facilities Capital Grant Scheme. As per Q3 report.

All 8 projects awarded funding are at various stages of development and will be progressed through 2018/19

Social Enterprise/Development Workers.

Castlecomer: Significant progress was made on a number of community and social enterprise issues and funding secured for projects. The presence of the Development Officers was crucial to this progress- as was the support by other KLP and local authority staff. Lack of quality high speed broadband was identified as a particular barrier to economic and social life in the town. The Social Enterprise Development Officer led a process that included presentations to the Council's Municipal Committee and meetings with various broadband providers.

Graiguenamanagh: Considerable progress had been made. The Outdoor Hub was established with the necessary commercial and agency partnerships developing well on the creation of the learning and outdoor recreation services.

The extent of coverage will change in 2019, as the LEO funding will cease for the Social Enterprise Development Officer, but KLP will retain at least a day a week from a dedicated Officer in the town

With the agreement with its partners KLP took over the lead on the asset based and development plan process for the town. SLR Consulting are currently in the process of delivering the first draft of the plan. Progress has also been made on the development of visitor accommodation for the town

Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.

Kilkenny County Council has submitted applications for funding to the Department under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. The call for applications included both Ready to Go proposals and Proposals requiring further development.

The submitted applications were from:

Callan, Thomastown, Castlecomer, Graiguenamanagh and Pilltown

LECP GOAL 6: Improve Access and Communications Infrastructure

2018 Quarter 4: The Economic Study on the future potential of the 3 ports of the South East is nearing completion and is expected in Spring 2019.

LECP GOAL 7: Leadership and Local Capacity

2018 Quarter 4: Kilkenny County Council has been successful in its application for funding under the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund for enabling infrastructure to serve the Western Environs in Kilkenny City which will deliver in excess of 3,000 homes over the next 10 years. At the same time Kilkenny County Council sought and was successful in an application to Irish Water of funding for network extension for water service in the area. Planning for this network extension commenced in May 2018.

Kilkenny County Council has been in discussions with Irish water regarding the installation of a new sewer line to serve the Loughmacask area of Kilkenny City. No timelines have been set as yet but agreement has been reached on a temporary solution which will free up existing permissions for housing in the area.

Discussions are ongoing with Irish Water with regard to further expansion in the Belview port area in partnership with Port of Waterford, IDA and Waterford City & County Council.

Kilkenny County Council continues to engage with Irish Water in areas where the absence of sufficient water and waste water services is hampering development.

LECP GOAL 9: Regional Growth and International Potential

2018 Quarter 4: An application submitted to Enterprise Ireland under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund for funding towards the development of a Precision Agriculture Centre of Excellence was unsuccessful in securing funding. KCC will explore other potential funding avenues with WIT.

Item 3. Update from Local Enterprise Office

2018 Quarter 4: Ms Fiona Deegan, Head of Enterprise, reported that all targets set out had been achieved or exceeded. She circulated images from 2018 with a synopsis of achievements. A more detailed report will be available for next meeting.

Achievements for 2018

- 644** Students from 14 secondary schools participated in the Student Enterprise Programme 2018
- 486** Entrepreneurs participated in 43 LEO training programmes
- 483** Clients received one-to-one mentoring support
- 415** Clients attended 5 seminars ranging from GDPR to Brexit
- 154** Prospective entrepreneurs attended 9 Start Your Own Business Training
- 34** Trading Online Vouchers were awarded enabling small businesses to develop an e-commerce strategy to sell their products
- 12** Businesses approved a total of €313,419 in grant aid leading to projected creation of 85 jobs over the next 3 years
- 12** Clients were approved Technical Assistance for Micro Export Grants
- 12** Small Businesses were assisted with applications under the St. Canices Credit Union Smart Options Loan Scheme and Micro Fiance Ireland Loan Scheme

Item 4 Abbey Quarter Update

Mr Jason Clerkin CEO gave a video presentation to show progress to date and to illustrate the concept for the Abbey Quarter's integration with existing city streetscape and infrastructure.

Please see Item 2 Goal 2 for further details.

Input and questions by PPN Representative

Strategies for accommodating tourists for longer stay outside of city

Next SPC1 Meeting Friday 8th March 2019

Any Matter you wish to have raised at this meeting, please email to PPN at ppnkilkenny@kilkennycoco.ie

Signed 

16th January 2019

Theresa Delahunty - PPN Representative

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