

Kilkenny PPN Representative Report

Date: 8 th March 2019	Time: 11:00am	Venue: Tholsel, High Street
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Reporting Representatives Name: Theresa Delahunty

Committee: SPC 1 – Economic Development, Enterprise Support & Tourism

Please outline the key issues discussed at the meeting:

1. Update on Economic Actions of LECP
2. Local Enterprise Office Update
3. Update on the Tholsel
4. Abbey Quarter Update
5. Presentation to Mechanical Modular Solutions

Item 1. Update on Economic Actions of LECP (Economic Implementation Plan 2018-2021)

2019 Quarter 1:

LECP GOAL 1: Support the Enterprise Economy

Following on from the Christmas “Shoplocal” campaign, the Local Enterprise Office in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce and local retailers are developing a year-long campaign, commencing with a campaign in the run up to Easter,

As a follow on to the Retail workshop held in the latter part of 2018 a training programme in Visual Merchandising and Window Dressing took place on 7th March. Each participant received a guide on the essential elements of any shop display and window display.

The Local Enterprise Office in conjunction with Kilkenny County Council, Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders held an extremely successful training programme for 63 businesses who are participating in the Kilkenny Age Friendly Business County initiative in the past number of week. Age Friendly Business Certificates for same will be presented at a ceremony to be held in the Parade Tower in late March.

The Planning Department of Kilkenny County Council as part of the preparation of the Kilkenny County & City Development Plan have commissioned a Retail Strategy for the County. The Strategy will include an examination of: the transport and access measures that will be required (e.g. car parking, public transport etc.);

LECP GOAL 2: Facilitate Innovation and Entrepreneurship

2019 Quarter 1: The Urban Regeneration and Development Fund application was successful in late 2018 with an allocation of €4.76m funding announced for spend in 2019. This funding has been secured for a number of public realm /park and supporting projects. These public realm works will be carried out in tandem with the Brewhouse & Mayfair Building Developments. Progress to date includes: 2

- Tenders have been received for Works on The Brewhouse, Horse Barrack Lane & Brewhouse Courtyard and are currently being assessed. Work is expected to commence in May 2019.
- The River Garden /Park will go to tender in Q2 2019. Commencement date expected in late summer 2019 with an estimated finish date of spring 2020.
- Enabling works to relocate the ESB substation from the Brewhouse has commenced.
- 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.
- The new 100-bedroom boutique hotel 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 target completion date is Q1 2022 [Subject to Planning]
- Work on the design of the urban street has commenced.
- Archaeological test excavations have been undertaken throughout the site and the details of these excavations will now inform the detailed design of development proposals for the site

Strategy to promote and expand Digital Media, Animation and Design

Centre for Design – C4D

2019 Q1: Kilkenny County Council is in the process of preparing a County based Digital Strategy. It is due later in the year.

In late 2018 an application led by Carlow IT was successful in securing funding under the Enterprise Ireland Regional Enterprise Development Fund. €1,843,320 was awarded for the development of a National Design Innovation Hub t/a Centre for Design. It is envisaged that this facility will be housed within the Abbey Quarter. Partners involved are Kilkenny County Council, Design & Crafts Council of Ireland and Kilkenny Industrial & Development Company.

A formal letter of offer is expected to be issued over the coming weeks. A stakeholder meeting has taken place with potential customers of the Centre (including Glanbia and Cartoon Saloon) at which job descriptions for two employees of C4D were discussed. IT Carlow will now proceed with the recruitment of a Centre Manager and Technical Manager for the centre.

LECP GOAL 3: Visitor Experience Enhancement

2019 Quarter 1: KILKENNY GREENWAY: An application was submitted on 30th November under the National and Regional Greenways Funding Call towards the cost of developing the Kilkenny Greenway. An outcome is expected before the end of June 2019. As part of the evaluation process, the Project Assessment Board will undertake a study visit to the Kilkenny Greenway in early April 2019.

OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANT SCHEME APPLICATIONS:

Grant amount €337,000 awarded in late 2018 to Woodstock. Works commenced on 11th February 2019 in Woodstock Trails rehabilitation, concentrating initially on the identification and remediation of old drains, which are causing damage on lower ground. A full works schedule has been agreed and works are being undertaken by Council staff and hired in machinery.

In February 2019 the following grant allocations were approved:

€79,069 to Callan – Moate Fields 3

€124,000 to Graiguenamanagh Hub

€200,000 to Castlecomer Discovery Park

Medieval Mile Visitor Orientation Strategy: Further to a Fáilte Ireland 'Castles & Conquests' workshop held in Kilkenny, attendees requested a Familiarisation Trip be organised along the Medieval Mile. This was held on 15th January last with good attendance. Two more of such events are being scheduled.

In collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and Destination Kilkenny, The Visitor Experience Development Plan (VEDP) comprising four pillars of work was subsequently agreed, namely Evening Economy Plan; Medieval Mile / Visitor Orientation Strategy; Connect Kilkenny City and County Contemporary Culture and Arts. This VEDP, led by Fáilte Ireland, is well under way and will continue throughout 2019 to unlock the growth potential of both City and County.

The Medieval Mile/ Visitor Orientation Strategy: is a key element of this Plan and is being prioritised in light of the successful outcome of Kilkenny Council submission for the Abbey Quarter under the Urban Regeneration Fund. Fáilte Ireland recently devised a brief and commissioned a consultant. An initial inception meeting will be held on 12th March, and there will be a consultation process. Essential elements of the plan including information and directional signage, visitor flows, interpretation etc. will all be considered as part of the process. There will be a local stakeholder consultation as part of the process. The final plan will have short, medium- and long-term objectives.

Visitor Experience Plan and Interpretation Plans for Butler Gallery at Evan's Home – to be finalised by April 2019, in advance of opening the new Facility in Spring 2020.

Festival Grants

2019 Festivals grants were considered and evaluated and 16 Festival Grants were awarded by Kilkenny County Council members at their February 2019 monthly meeting, allowing as much time as possible to promoters to make financial planning decisions for 2019.

LECP GOAL 4: Enhanced Educational Attainment and Skills Development

Proposed Technological University of the South East (TUSEI)

2019 Quarter 1: Notwithstanding the progress made in 2018 in relation to establishing a Technical University for South East, it is noted that the TUSEI Steering Group have not yet finalised their submission. It is understood that the latest draft of same is currently being considered by the respective Governing Bodies of IT Carlow and WIT. Updates on the initiative can be found on www.tusei.ie.

National Design Centre of Ireland.

In the latter part of 2018, Kilkenny County Council appointed Mr. Jim Power, Economist to prepare a case as to why Kilkenny should become the home to the National Design Centre of Ireland. This work is ongoing

LECP GOAL 5: Develop the Rural Economy

2019 Quarter1: **Town & Village Renewal:** Work is progressing on the 5 projects (already outlined in last Report) approved for funding under Dept. of Rural and Community Development 2018 scheme. Funding is at a rate of 80% of project cost. The overall estimated spend on 2018 projects is €800,000. 4

Expressions of interest are now being invited for feasible projects under the 2019 Town and Village Renewal Scheme to allow sufficient time for applications to be developed with relevant community groups.

Town Centre Renewal.

Health Checks Report & Recommendations: Health Checks have been completed in 8 locations with the individual reports having been presented to communities in each village/Town as follows: Callan, Inistioge, Ballyhale/Knocktopher, Freshford, Ballyragget, Mooncoin, Gowran and The Rower. The composite Health Check Report is currently being finalised by the Consultants. When completed, a single report together with an online version will be provided to Kilkenny County Council by the Consultants.

The Council piloted the implementation of the Framework for Town & Village Renewal in Callan and Inistioge and as soon as both community based plans are finalised it is appropriate to review the process and this will be undertaken in Q2 2019. The review will inform the strategic direction in this area.

Community & Culture Facilities Capital Grant Scheme. The 2019 scheme is currently open for applications. The closing date for receipt of applications is Friday May 3rd. Decisions will be made by Kilkenny County Council at its July meeting.

Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. In 2018 Kilkenny County Council submitted a number of applications for funding to the Department of Rural & Community Development under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. The call for applications were divided into 2 categories

Category 1: “Ready-to-Go” proposals, or initial phases of projects which can be commenced in 2019, which have the necessary consents (e.g. planning) in place, are at an advanced stage of design and are procurement-ready;

Category 2: Proposals that have clear potential and quantifiable objectives but require further development to enable them to be submitted as Category 1 proposals in subsequent funding calls.

In November 2018 & February 2019 announcements by the Dept. confirm funding allocated to projects in Callan and Thomastown as follows:

CALLAN

Bridge St/Mill St Regeneration Strategy and Mobility Management Plan, Category 2 Not approved but €100k already committed through the Residential Occupancy Pilot Programme for Bridge Street

Friary Complex Condition Survey and Conservation Plan, Category 1 Not approved

Fair Green Redevelopment Category 2 & Motte Fields Amenity Category 1

Approved €561,750.00

THOMASTOWN

Community Centre Redevelopment 1 Approved in Full

Public Realm Lowe / Logan Street Category 1 Sessions House Redevelopment Category 1 Quayside Car park Works Category 1 & Maudlin Street Regeneration Design Category 2

Approved €2,080,486.00 5

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE/DEVELOPMENT WORKERS.

Castlecomer:

KLP through LEADER and Kilkenny LEO have appointed a person to take on the part-time role of Community & Social Enterprise Animator in the town; the previous appointee having moved to another position. The person commenced work in late-February. The role will be resourced for an additional year until February 2020. An initial work plan for the first two quarters of the year was agreed in principle. This will include:

- Overseeing of the branding and signage project;
- Liaison with broadband providers on the town's digital coverage;
- Development of the community centre business plan;
- Supporting Synergy on their representations on the 'Creamery Yard' development site.

The work agenda will be reviewed and re-prioritised by Synergy, other local stakeholders and the funding partners on a periodic basis. Other members of the KLP staff team will support the Animator and oversee other aspects of KLP's work that are relevant to the Action

Graiguenamanagh:

KLP through LEADER, continued to support the placement of a part-time Community & Social Enterprise Animator in the town with a specific focus on the Outdoor Hub and adjacent works. The Animator assisted Barrow Valley Community Development (BVCD) in their efforts to deal with the corporate and financial issues they face. Very good progress had been made by BVCD in that work. KLP led the resourcing of a major cross-border study on the combined Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch settlement- awarded to SLR Consulting. Carlow Local Authority and Carlow Local Development have agreed, in principle to cooperate with their Kilkenny equivalents on the project.

The Animator liaised with SLR and the wider community on the project. The study is now in late draft and Kilkenny County Council and KLP have agreed some immediate initiatives that will drive the action. These include approaches to optimise the presence of the River Barrow as a tourism and recreational resource building on the KLP objective of optimising the potential of the town in that sector. The draft plan also suggests radical improvements to the connectivity across the river and between key river-side and tourism sites.

Relatedly, KLP (with support from Kilkenny County Council) propose to support an application from BVCD to the LEADER Cooperation Fund to develop the internal site access road to the Hub building from the Brandondale roundabout entrance. This would have the benefit of allowing the building and site to optimise its potential as a training/ education and recreation tourism resource.

A public event to outline and explain the proposals in the SLR report and other initiatives will be hosted in the spring period.

FERRYBANK

Significant work on the social inclusion theme has taken place in Ferrybank. This was led by the KLP appointed part-time Animator funded through SICAP and led most of that work with the community. The work included:

- the establishment of a 'community allotment' project, which involves an application to LEADER for funding towards an on-site log cabin café. This is scheduled for completion this year;
- the organisation of a very-well attended (1,000 people) Ferrybank Family Fun Day in summer 2018;
- Participation in the YuleFest also with 1,000 people attending and participating in events;

Under SICAP the Animator has focused on: 6

- English language and social orientation initiatives for recent migrant groups- particularly the Syrian refugees. Other non-indigenous groups, such as the Sudanese refugees, are also now participating in these initiatives;

The elderly cohort was identified as being in need of supports in terms of isolation, and has organised a series of social and related events to address this need.

LECP GOAL 6: Improve Access and Communications Infrastructure

2019 Quarter 1: An Economic Study of the future potential of the three South Eastern Ports (Belview, Rosslare and New Ross) in the context of Brexit was commissioned by the 3 local authorities of Kilkenny, Wexford and Waterford in 2018. Work on this report is nearing completion with the final report expected by late Spring this year.

LECP GOAL 7: Leadership and Local Capacity

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).

See Item 1 Goal 2 for details

Western Environs Neighbourhood Plan for Development

Having secured funding under the Government's Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) to develop infrastructure in the Western Environs in Kilkenny The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government have subsequently given their approval to proceed to contract and a contractor, SIAC Construction Limited, has been appointed by the Council. Construction work is to commence in March 2019. The contract will be of 18 months duration. This infrastructure to be provided includes roads and amenity areas and will help activate the development of c800 new homes by 2021 and a further c2,500 homes over the longer term.

Planning permission has been granted for 54 houses under ref 17/801 in the Western Environs area. In addition, pre planning discussions have taken place with a landowner/developer for additional housing units.

Water Services

Kilkenny County council will work with Irish water to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is in place to deliver commercial and housing projects in areas of demand on zoned lands throughout the County. The upgrade of Kilkenny water supply is one of the projects that will start in 2019 together with a number of upgrades around the County.

LECP GOAL 9: Regional Growth and International Potential

2019 Quarter 1: Following the unsuccessful application to Enterprise Ireland under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund for funding towards the development of a Precision Agriculture Centre of Excellence (PACE) the stakeholders met to discuss next steps. There is commitment to progress the project although alternative funds have to be found.

Item 2

Update from Local Enterprise Office

(See also item 1 Goal 1) 7

2019 Quarter 1: Ms Fiona Deegan, Head of Local Enterprise Office informed the meeting that all targets for 2018 had been met. She circulated the highlights and said €942,000 in funding has been approved by Enterprise Ireland for 2019, with an additional €50,000 for Brexit Actions.

Some of the Highlights for 2018:

- 103 New Jobs created by LEO supported Companies
- €333,000 in direct financial assistance approved to 28 business projects
- 486 Clients received 1 to 1 mentoring
- 39 Businesses awarded Trading Online Vouchers
- 644 Students from 12 schools participated in the Student Enterprise Programme
- 1,257 People employed in 210 LEO supported Companies in Kilkenny
- 1,077 Clients attended training and management developing programmes
- 12 Businesses approved Technical Assistance for Micro Exporter Grants
- 12 Businesses assisted with MFI and Smart Options Loan Fund applications
- 3 LEO supported companies transferred to Enterprise Ireland

The Local Enterprise Office Team Plan 2019 Targets was proposed and adopted by the SPCI Committee. An objective of LEO is to create at least 100 jobs during 2019

Already 3 companies for 2019 have transferred to Enterprise Ireland, thus, achieving the year target for their supports.

It was noted that many businesses are not reacting to or preparing for Brexit, however, of the 210 local businesses who meet the Government criteria for the LEO portfolio, 50 have availed of specific Brexit supports. Ms Deegan circulated a brochure outlining the various Brexit supports offered by LEO to small businesses.

784 Students participated in the 2018/19 Student Enterprise Programme coordinated by the local LEO office. Finalists will go on to the National Awards in Dublin in May.

Item 3

Tourism Update

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

A presentation on the Tholsel was given by Tony Lauhoff and Brian Tyrrell from a historic, current and refurbishment perspective. The future plans for this iconic building include civic and visitor/tourism activities. There will be some upgrading required as the building does not comply with current regulations as regards mobility fire etc... Improving access, redressing some alterations which were not sympathetic to the era of the building and opening up the

basement section are all included in the plans. The Thoroughfare in front will not be affected and there will be separate entrances for tourist and civic functions.

Archaeological Survey and site investigations have been carried out and the design contract has been awarded.

Item 4

Abbey Quarter Update

This item was deferred to next meeting 8

Item 5

Presentation to Mechanical Modular Solutions (MMS)

This company is the National Enterprise Awards Kilkenny County Nominee. They will go forward to represent Kilkenny at the National Finals where there will be an announcement of winners from each region as well the overall winner.

Founded in 2016 by company directors Michael McGuire and Alan Finan and based in Castlecomer, MMS supply mechanical, electrical, engineering and specialist services in integrated prefabricated solutions to the construction and building industry.

The National Enterprise Awards were established by the national network of 31 Local Enterprise Offices (LEO's) formerly the County Enterprise Boards. The awards are designed to celebrate the achievements of Ireland's micro-enterprise sector and recognise the achievement of companies supported by the LEOs.

The absence of upgraded broadband was cited by one of the directors of MMS as an impediment to the further development and growth of this company and may even force the company to relocate their office to an area where broadband is fit for purpose.

Input and questions by PPN Representative

How can more small businesses be encouraged to prepare for Brexit in view of the apparent lack of preparedness, notwithstanding the support that LEO is already offering?

Date of next meeting: To be advised
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