



**Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe**  
**Galway County Council**

**Coiste Polasaí Straitéiseach Gnóthaí Forbairt Eacnamaíochta & Fiontraíochta**  
**Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)**  
**Cruinniú /Meeting**

**Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018**  
**Council Offices, Galway County Council, Galway**

**Members in attendance**

Cllr. Peter Feeney	Galway County Council
Cllr. Mary Hoade	Galway County Council
Cllr. Joe Byrne	Galway County Council
Dan Dowling	Community Representative

**Present**

Alan Farrell	Galway County Council
Brian Barrett	Galway County Council
Kieran Coyne	Galway County Council
Lisa Glynn	Galway County Council

**Apologies**

Cllr. Tom Healy	Galway County Council
Cllr. Karey McHugh	Galway County Council
Kevin Kelly	Galway County Council
Breda Fox	Galway County Council
Paul Quinn	Trade Union Representative

## **1. Minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018 and matters arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018 were approved on the proposal of Cllr. Mary Hoade and seconded by Mr. Dan Dowling.

Cllr. Joe Byrne requested that the presentations given at the last SPC on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018 be re-circulated to members.

Mr. Alan Farrell stated that he would remind SPC members of the importance of attendance at meetings.

There were no further matters arising.

## **2. Ireland West Food Innovation and Incubation Hub – BIA Innovator Project**

Mr. Alan Farrell stated that the BIA Innovator Project had recently accepted the offer of funding from Enterprise Ireland and agreed KPIs with them. He stated that the Part VIII Planning application is currently underway and it is expected to go before full Council in June 2018. Mr. Farrell stated that Momentum Consultants had been retained to carry out some work for the project in order to progress it and that in due course, staff would be hired. A Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) had been set-up and the membership of the board had been extended. Mr. Farrell further stated that costs for the project were recently reviewed and that while there was a shortfall in funding he was confident this could be met and that there were a number of funding streams being explored. Mr. Farrell outlined that the tendering process was being progressed for the procurement of a technical team to carry the project from the current stage to completion. He stated that it is expected that the build will commence in early 2019 and the Hub would open in 2020.

Cllr. Peter Feeney thanked Mr. Farrell for his update and stated that the BIA Innovator Project is a vital one given the current demands in the food sector, and it is important it succeeds. Cllr. Feeney then welcomed questions from the floor.

Cllr. Joe Byrne queried the planning and procurement process. Mr. Alan Farrell stated that Mr. Oliver Higgins brought the project to the current phase with Part VIII planning on the basis he was on a framework with Teagasc. He stated that it is necessary to go to the market for consultants to bring the project from its current phase to completion. This will be through an open procurement process. The successful tenderer for such a technical/consultancy team will procure contracts for the construction phase.

Mr. Dan Dowling queried the build design. Mr. Alan Farrell stated that it would contain 3 HPSUs, that would have high export potential, 9 units, a business engagement zone and a training area. The design was informed by the consultation process and the needs of the various stakeholders. He advised that the briefing document on the BIA Innovator Project would be re-circulated to members.

Cllr. Mary Hoade queried if there were any objectors. Mr. Alan Farrell stated that he was not aware of any.

### **3. LECP Review**

Cllr. Peter Feeney invited Mr. Brian Barrett, Galway County Council, to make his presentation (presentation attached).

The presentation highlighted that many key metrics contained within the LECP are on track to being achieved. A number highlighted include employment increased in County Galway from 51.1% in 2011 to 54.1% in 2016; the number unemployed in 2016 in County Galway was 4.3% a reduction from 2011 when it was 11.3%; Galway County Council were successful in securing the European Region of Gastronomy 2018 Designation along with the European Capital of Culture 2020 Bid. Further, there was a reduction in offences in County Galway by 27% from 5161 incidents in 2011 to 3787 incidents in 2016. It was highlighted that there was a slight decrease in the numbers living in our towns and villages between 2011 to 2016 by 0.3% but Galway County Council are providing support for same through Town and Village Renewal Scheme and the Community Support Scheme. Further, the PPN has 701 registered groups in 2018 and are on track for 750+ registered groups by 2020. The Council are currently preparing an overall review of progress across the actions in the LECP which will act as the basis for the departmental review, details of which are still to emerge.

### **4. Town and Village Renewal Update**

Mr. Kieran Coyne stated that the Town and Village Renewal Scheme is now in its third year. This year sees a reduction in funding from 2017 from €20m to €15m nationally. There is also a reduction in the number of applications each Local Authority can submit, down from 15 in 2017 to 12 in 2018.

The deadline for submission of the expression of interest for the 2018 scheme was 24 May 2018. Mr. Coyne stated that 39 applications were received and the team are in the process of assessing same. Once assessed, a number will be invited to stage 2 to complete full applications. 12

applications will be submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development by 30 June 2018. Mr. Coyne stated that there are many requirements that must be considered, such as drawdown from other schemes such as Town and Village 2016 & 2017, REDZ 2016 & 2017. This means that if a town or village has not fully drawn down funds for these scheme by 30 June 2018, Galway County Council will not be able to apply for their area due to this requirement as set down by the Department.

Cllr. Peter Feeney stated that the Department are aware of all projects nationally and is of the view that the Town and Village Renewal Scheme will continue for many years to come. He encouraged the Council to submit the maximum number for the maximum value. The Department are placing a greater focus on community and economic development type of projects going forward so he asked that the Council Executive consider same.

Mr. Dan Dowling queried the monetary grant amount available. Mr. Coyne stated that there is a maximum grant of €100,000 available and there would be a requirement for 20% matched funding in addition to same. For the matched funding, 10% may be in the form of benefit-in-kind (BIK). He further stated that the Council can apply for a flagship project with a maximum grant of €200,000 with a 20% matched funding requirement. Mr. Coyne advised that the team have previously provided BIK templates and procurement sessions for groups successful in obtaining a grant and will do so again this year.

Mr. Alan Farrell stated that town and village renewal is a priority for the Council and that the Council will work across directorates to prioritise key projects. He advised that it is a standing item on the Council's management team agenda and that the Council while having less than desirable resources will work with the various communities and stakeholders to maximise the opportunity available. He advised that the Council will appoint an Atlantic Economic Corridor Officer on a 3-year contract, and this role will further supplement the team.

## **5. Cleaner Communities Awards**

Mr. Kieran Coyne stated that Galway County Council ran the Cleaner Communities Awards as a pilot scheme in 2015 and it was due to run in 2017, however, due to resource constraints, it did not happen. The purpose of the Cleaner Communities Awards is for communities to extend the tidy towns season. By running same, Galway County Council achieve our objectives as set out in the LECF and can formally recognise and reward groups for their hard work in their communities. The Economic, Rural and Community Development Section are taking the lead on same and will work in conjunction with colleagues in the Environment Section. The closing date is 22 June 2018 with judging taking place between July and September and an awards ceremony in October 2018.

## **6. Enterprise Towns**

Ms. Lisa Glynn stated that Bank of Ireland approached Galway County Council again this year to nominate 4 town or villages for the BOI National Enterprise Town Awards. The competition aims to promote enterprise by bringing business and community groups together to showcase the spirit of enterprise in their local area. The competition is held in collaboration with the local authorities. Ms. Glynn advised that the Council nominated Ballygar, Kinvara, Connamara Láir and Athenry this year. The closing date for submission of applications is 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018. Judging will take place between mid-August and early October. The judging panel will visit each nominated town and village for a 3-hour session during the above dates. Ms. Glynn stated that there is a total prize fund of €157,000 available across several categories. The winners will be announced at the awards night on 28 November 2018 in Kilkenny.

Ms. Glynn advised that this year BOI introduced a new entry category, namely, the Rising Star Award, which has a prize fund of €20,000 for the winner. This award is aimed at towns or villages that are progressing plans and projects to create a social, artistic, creative, technological and/or enterprising space in their community to help enhance their area. The Council nominated Athenry for same.

Cllr. Peter Feeney wished the Council and all 4 applicants well in the process. Mr. Alan Farrell acknowledged that this competition was an opportunity for businesses and a catalyst for them to unite and drive enterprise forward in their respective areas.

## **7. Development of National Tourism Propositions in County Galway – Wild Atlantic Way and Hidden Heartlands**

Cllr. Peter Feeney invited Mr. Brian Barrett, Galway County Council, to make his presentation (presentation attached).

Key points highlighted in this presentation were:

- The New Horizons on the Wild Atlantic Way 2018 grants scheme will provide funding of between €30,000 and €200,000 to new and operating visitor attractions along the Wild Atlantic Way within the defined geographies of the Connemara Coast & Aran Islands and the Skellig Coast. Deadline for Expressions of Interest: June 20<sup>th</sup>. This scheme is managed by Fáilte Ireland.
- Role of Galway County Council in the Wild Atlantic Way is to develop and maintain tourism infrastructure, roads, piers, blue flag beaches, parks; Signage of Route; Development of Tourism Attractions i.e. Derrygimla, Clifden Heritage Trail, walking routes; Member of

implementation groups for destination plan for Connemara and Islands; Promotion of the area through Showcase/ERG 2018/Galway 2020; Funding Tourism initiatives

- Ireland's Hidden Heartlands will now become one of Ireland's tourism destination propositions with Fáilte Ireland allocating significant investment and resources across the region. An initial €2million has been allocated to start the development stage of the brand, with further funding and capital grants to follow.
- Galway County Council role in relation to the Hidden Heartlands is to support and work on the Lough Derg Strategy Marketing Group; RV Park in Portumna; Greenway in Portumna; Support for Hymany Way; Lough Derg Blueway; Showcasing East Galway as a Tourism Destination.

## **8. AOB**

Cllr. Peter Feeney thanked Cllr. Mary Hoade for chairing the previous meeting of the SPC in his absence.

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 11 September 2018 at 10am in the Centrepoint Boardroom Galway County Council Offices.