



## Miontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

### **Planning, Economic Development, Enterprise and European Affairs SPC 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024, Buvinda House and Hybrid**

**Attendees - Councillors:** Cllrs. Stephen McKee (presided), Brian Fitzgerald, Helen Meyer (online), Alan Tobin (online), Joe Fox, Tommy Reilly, Aishling Dempsey (online)

**Apologies:** None

**Attendees - Sectoral Representatives:** Sean Boyle, Fergal Hennessy

**Officials:** Des Foley, Majella Farrell, Pdraig Maguire, Joe English, Michelle Goodwin, Alison Condra

Item	Discussion / Action
1.	<p><b>To adopt the minutes of the meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2023 were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Joe Fox and seconded by Cllr Brian Fitzgerald.</p>
2.	<p><b>To receive a presentation on compliance with the Ethical Framework for Non-Councillor Members of Committees</b></p> <p>Standing agenda item regarding Part 15 of the Local Government Act and in particular Sections 168, 169, 170 177(4) and 177.</p> <p>Majella Farrell highlighted to all present, that a member of a committee may be required to disclose a pecuniary or other beneficial interest at a meeting and the Committee Administrator should then advise a member of the appropriate course of action and record such a disclosure in the meeting minutes.</p> <p>An explanation in relation to the requirements under the Ethical Framework for Non Councillor members of the committee was provided.</p>
	<p><b>It was agreed, through the chair, to take Item 3 on the Agenda at the end of the meeting</b></p>
4.	<p><b>To receive a presentation on European Affairs Projects</b></p> <p>Joe English, Head of Enterprise in the LEO gave a presentation on the current ongoing European Projects. He confirmed that these projects are successful due to engagement with countries that are active and engaged. JE also outlined that some projects result in funding for Irish businesses.</p>

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	<p>The SPC Members acknowledged the excellent work that is going on behind the scenes in this area. It was stated that financial literacy is a big thing for Irish companies and that mentoring and training in this area is very welcome.</p>
5.	<p><b>To receive a presentation on the Development Levies Waiver Scheme</b></p> <p>Majella Farrell gave a brief presentation on the introduction, purpose and eligibility criteria of the Waiver Scheme. She also gave some metrics on the numbers of beneficiaries and the resulting impact on Commencement Notices in the County since the introduction in April 2023.</p> <p>Members enquired about the likelihood of the scheme being extended, specifically for ne off houses, and the monetary value of the recoupments to date. Pdraig Maguire, Senior Planner confirmed that one-off houses were not the main focus of the scheme. MF gave details of the contributions recouped at this stage from the Department, as well as the latest claim to be lodged for January 2024.</p>
6.	<p><b>To discuss the development of an Action Plan for the Economic Development Section &amp; Meath Economic Development Forum</b></p> <p>Michelle Goodwin gave an update on the recent work of the Economic Development Team and the Forum Members, structured by the Workstreams they are working in. Current focus is on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Completion of the Skills Audit</li><li>• Compilation of a Business Profile of the County</li><li>• Engagement with all key stakeholders, especially IDA, EI, DKIT &amp; Maynooth University</li><li>• Development of a communications and marketing plan</li><li>• Progressing plans for an Economic &amp; Enterprise Hub which will provide a collaborative approach to business supports in the County</li></ul> <p>The ED team outlined their intention, with the agreement of the SPC, to develop an Action Plan for the short to medium term, to give the team and Forum direction over the next two years or so. This would outline actions and objectives which can be pursued straight away, without having to wait on the development of a new Economic Development Strategy.</p> <p>Members made the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Given the week that it was in it, it was important to acknowledge the good work of John Bruton on the previous Meath Economic Development Forum, may he rest in peace.</li><li>2. IDA should be asked to share the list of companies that they are dealing with, and the types of industries that they represent</li></ol>

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. It's important that MCC has lands available that is ready for development to ensure that companies have options when considering Meath – a lot of development is moving out of Dublin to free up land for housing etc. MCC needs to be able to monopolise on this.</li><li>4. Proximity to the airport can not be underestimated, this was one of the factors that caught the interest of Shire.</li><li>5. The results of the skills audit will be interesting, particularly when identifying gaps and potential for importing the necessary skills, particularly in the technical and construction industries.</li></ol> <p>MCC responded as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The key is to establish with the IDA what exactly is the criteria of the companies that are looking to locate in Ireland/Meath</li><li>2. Through the Forum, MCC is making contact with the diaspora, particularly in North America, to see what opportunities exist for attracting their businesses to the County.</li><li>3. Meath County Council is actively pursuing the purchase of appropriately zoned lands in strategic locations</li><li>4. ED team will report back to the SPC when the results of the Skill Audit are available.</li></ol>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>To receive a presentation on vision for Bremore Port</b></p> <p>Des Foley gave the presentation provided by Bremore Ireland Port, which had recently been shared with the Laytown Bettystown and Ashbourne Municipal District Members.</p> <p>Des stressed that this was at the very early stage and that the progression of the Port will ultimately be a Government decision. The presentation outlined the vision which includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A World Class Port</li><li>2. Part of the EU TEN-T Core Network</li><li>3. An Energy Hub</li><li>4. A Connected Gateway</li><li>5. An Economic Boost</li></ol> <p>Members made the following observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This would be a positive addition, but that there were a number of hurdles to this development the first time around which will have to be addressed to ensure that it can progress this time</li></ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Meath has the benefit of the space to develop as well as the deep waters</li> <li>• This project can not be progressed to the detriment of the surrounding environment. It is essential that a very high bar is set in relation to the protection of the coast and the surrounding area. The project will need to meet high environmental constraints and go through a full planning process.</li> <li>• Impact on locals and existing industries must also be considered</li> </ul> <p>MCC responded as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bremore Ireland Port hope to be in the Planning phase by 2026</li> <li>• Main change from last time the project was discussed is the need for sustainable energy sources, energy provision is a major issue now. A development such as this will happen, as it is needed, the question is where. It will create a new town almost and all surrounding towns will also grow.</li> <li>• Support for the Port is included in the County Development Plan. All environmental issues will be taken into consideration.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Brian Fitzgerald raised the need to consider the implications of Tourist accommodation being used to house IP clients when MCC does not allow log cabins to be used as residences. Developers intentions when applying for tourist accommodation will need to be investigated to protect ourselves as the Planning Authority. Des Foley confirmed that MCC had provided a report to the Department clearly outlining the grant of permission for tourist accommodation and Padraig Maguire confirmed that the planning exemptions put in place by Government means that the Department can determine if these developments meet the criteria.</li> <li>2. Consideration to be given when it comes to Town Twinning proposals from the MDs for the year ahead for working with specific towns in Europe, potentially those that are partnering on some of the European Projects mentioned.</li> </ol> <p>The meeting concluded at 3.30 pm approximately</p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Next Meeting</u></b> - Provisional date for next meeting – Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May @ 2pm</p>
	<p><b><u>Recommendations from SPC Committee to Corporate Policy Group.</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agreed to proceed with developing an Action Plan for the short to medium term Economic Development of the County. Actions to be assigned to the Economic and Enterprise Team and the Meath Economic Development Forum Members through the various Workstreams.</li> </ol>