

**Notes from Economic Development & Enterprise SPC meeting taken by Huw O'Toole  
PPN rep.**

New rateable proposals from Wicklow county council to benefit SMEs.  
This is particular to vacant properties throughout County Wicklow.  
A reduced rate payable to Wicklow county council reduced over three years.  
To be proposed at next budget meeting.

The new LECP plan envisages the landbank in Greystones coming into use next year.  
Legal negotiations have been advanced.  
Expecting a planning application for New Year on the land.

Town teams should communicate to all meetings of the council via their local administrator.  
Huw O'Toole advised all town teams to communicate with their local administrator what they're  
doing so their activities are included at meetings such as the EDES.

Blessington Greenway has received 5 million of the 8.5m granted .

The site at Claremont Rathnew is planned to accommodate a new state-of-the-art supplementary  
facility for the film and visual industry.  
This is subject to a grant application which should be made known if successful prior to the New  
Year.

Wicklow social enterprise section LCDC is the decision making body for leader.  
There are some funds still remaining in later which can be applied for.  
The new leader program is currently being worked upon.  
It is envisaged that it will be focused on climate change, smart towns and environmental  
improvement.

The Wicklow county council smart village program is now being set up and villages have been  
shortlisted for it including Newtownmountkennedy.

Next meeting set for EDES space SPC will be held Monday ninth of December 2019 in the  
boardroom of Wicklow county campus commencing at 10 am.

Reports of meeting of 21.10.19 are attached.

**LECP UPDATE OCTOBER 2019**

**Goal 1: Develop community capacity in disadvantaged communities and engage in urban and rural regeneration**

**Rural Regeneration Development Fund 2019**

**Applications submitted – Awaiting Decision**

Area	Overview of Proposal	Project Cost
Glendalough	Provision of e-hub digital visitor information points at Laragh, Rathdrum, Roundwood and Hollywood. Public Realm /Roads enhancements at Glendalough Green, Glendalough Village, entrance to visitor centre. Roads, junctions and traffic improvements between Lynhams and the Wicklow Gap Road. Enhanced facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.	€3,499,931
Baltinglass	Restoration of the Courthouse reuse as a library/Heritage and Digi-hub with outdoor event space Public Realm enhancement, parking improvement, pedestrian crossings, ramps, boardwalk and riverside fencing	€3,566,968
Blessington	Greater linkages to the villages on the Greenway; Signage & access, resurfacing of original 6.5 km of greenway, enhancement of 6 car-parks, provision of charging points. Restoration of tunnel to Russborough House	€3,546,834

**Town & Village 2019**

**Applications Submitted – Awaiting Decision**

Area	Overview of Proposal	Funding Sought
Redcross	Streetscape works	€80,000
Aughrim	Recreational amenity	€95,600
Avoca	Public realm and recreational enhancement	€125,600
Dunlavin	Healthcheck plus public realm works	€20,973
Coolkenno	Public lights and rails	€24,000
Delgany	Community plan	€29,600
Laragh	Smart village	€30,560
Barndarrig	Footpath and friendship tree	€50,000
Kilcoole	Community building enhancement	€60,000
Shillelagh	Community development plans	€72,000
Roundwood	Community building enhancement	€148,000

**CLAR 2019 - The following three projects were approved for funding by DRCD**

Area	Overview of Proposal	Funding awarded
Knockananna	Footpaths	€50,000

Knockananna	Sensory Garden	€34,000
Rathcoyle	Multi-Use Games Area	€50,000

## Outdoor Recreation 2019

### Applications submitted – Awaiting Decision

Area	Overview	Funding Sought
Co. Wicklow	Maintenance and Upgrade	€20,000
Co. Wicklow	Maintenance and Upgrade	€20,000
Co. Wicklow	Maintenance and Upgrade	€7,200
Co. Wicklow	Maintenance and Upgrade	€7,840
Co. Wicklow	Maintenance and Upgrade	€8,800
Co. Wicklow	Maintenance and Upgrade	€14,720
Co. Wicklow	Maintenance and Upgrade	€10,000
Kilcoole	Maintenance and Upgrade	€16,000
Co. Wicklow	Maintenance and Upgrade	€190,700
Baltinglass	Development of walkway	€156,560
Arklow		€114,800
Greystones		€160,000
Arklow		€500,000
Co. Wicklow	Wexford, Waterford Wicklow partnership for Blueway	€475,856

## Goal 2: Promote Active Citizenship and Public Participation to improve governance, participation and enrich decision making

### Comhairle na nOg:

- Conducting a Drugs Attitude Survey – focus on attitudes towards drugs
- AGM 15<sup>th</sup> November – the Comhairle na nOg Youth Summit

### Age Friendly:

- In July 2019 41 businesses in Arklow got their Age friendly business recognition certificates and window stickers. Each business has signed up to three age friendly commitments for example: have seating available, adjust music volume, keep spare glasses at hand, clearer signage etc.

The age friendly business launch took place in the Arklow library and was launched by Dragons Den star Gavin Duffy.

- Three Age friendly car spaces have been assigned at County Buildings and it is hoped to roll out the age friendly car spaces across the local authority spaces

- Kildare and Wicklow are working together with the HSE to create national age friendly guidelines for Primary Care Centres beginning with the Athy PCC and the Baltinglass PCC. A draft set of guidelines has been created and a commitment has been given by the estate management section that the next 50 primary care centres will have the guidelines built in to them

**Goal 3: Strategic Direction – Develop high quality integrated services, available to all communities, in particular, disadvantaged communities and vulnerable groups**

1. Healthy Wicklow Strategy - Round 3 of Programme submitted and awaiting approval
  - Recruitment of Co-ordinator
2. Food Strategy – Branding process completed; Implementation partners contracted
3. Digital Strategy – adopted by Wicklow County Council
4. RSES adopted – LECP to comply; Review of Guidelines expected soon

**Goal 4: Develop a vibrant and innovative community and social enterprise sector**

The National Social Enterprise Strategy was launched by DRCD in July 2019. It focuses on

- Building awareness
- Growing and strengthening social enterprises
- Achieving better policy alignment

This reflects the themes that emerged in the County Wicklow Social Enterprise Strategy, following which, supports for social enterprises in the county have been put in place.

Nationally, supports have also been put in place through the Dormant Accounts Fund. Both County Wicklow Partnership and Bray Area Partnership have applied for funding to run training and mentoring programmes for social enterprises.

LECP 2016 – 2022 - Guidelines to issue soon on review of the LECP. There is no point in a full review at this stage but an internal review is to be done as part of the planning for new LECP.

## **Wicklow County Council**

### **New Business Rates Incentive Scheme Draft Proposal**

The New Business Rates Incentive Scheme will provide a grant on commercial rates for the first two years of a new business when it re-occupies a property that has been vacant for a long period of time. Wicklow County Council wants to encourage thriving and diverse business centres and wants to see the number of vacant retail/ commercial properties decrease. This grant is intended to incentivise and encourage reoccupation of vacant retail/commercial properties.

#### **Objectives of Scheme**

- To reduce the number of vacant properties in County Wicklow.
- To encourage new commercial ventures.
- To assist in job creation and ongoing employment.
- To provide rates income to Wicklow County Council that otherwise may be written off
- To facilitate the development of commercial activity, with the aim of helping to enhance the vitality, vibrancy and the economic welfare of the County.
- To demonstrate the Council's commitment to the economic development and regeneration of County Wicklow.

#### **Scheme Criteria**

- 2 Year Incentivised Scheme
- 50% reduction in rates liability in Year 1, 25% reduction in Year 2, Full rates are due for payment in Year 3
- Applicable to premises which have an annual rates liability of no more than €20,000 per annum
- Available to new businesses that have not traded in the county during the previous 12 months
- The unit must be rated or rateable
- Property must be vacant for a minimum period of 12 months
- Excluded are fast food outlets/arcades/bookies/nightclubs/private member's clubs/head shops/money lenders (except recognised financial institutions) etc.
- There can be no outstanding commercial rates or any other local authority charges due on the subject premises.
- Must sign up for a Standing Order for minimum of 12 months

Finance Directorate, 21 October 2019

## **UPDATE ON COUNTY WICKLOW ECONOMIC THINK TANK IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIONS**

### **Report to the Economic Development and Enterprise Support SPC 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

#### **FILM**

Wicklow County Council has submitted an application for Regional Enterprise Development Funding for the Development of a Screen Content Enterprise Hub at Wicklow County Campus. This will feature refurbishment of part of the existing Courtyard buildings, a new 2 storey building, refurbishment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the main building into high end private office space refurbishment of the Chapel to provide high tech meeting/ conference/ sound recording and screening facility.

The proposed development of the Hub is in response to the demand for content creation arising out of the growth of streaming and new forms of media consumption. The Hub will develop the potential of entrepreneurs, emerging and established businesses. Support growth and internationalisation of established businesses. Liaise with the various colleges and training agencies to ensure a skilled workforce.

The Council has appointed Bluett and O'Donohoe Architects to prepare the Part 8 application and to develop the plans for the Hub; this will be put before the elected members late 2019/early 2020.

#### **RETAIL**

##### **Progression of Bray Town Centre**

Work continues on the Florentine Site and it is on target for practical completion by December this year. The developer is at an advanced stage of negotiation with the main anchor tenant.

#### **TOWN TEAMS**

Some of the many and varied works carried out by each Town Team is included below.

##### **Arklow**

- Flower baskets
- Town Centre Health Check
- Destination Town Audit
- Design and Development of Parade Ground/ business hub
- Ronnie Delaney Commemorative Statue
- Halloween Spooktakular
- CCTV
- Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway
- Shop Front Painting Scheme
- Applying for charitable status
- Considering Purple Flag application

##### **Blessington**

The Town Team was built on the success in being selected as Leinster's Most Enterprising Town in 2017. It shows a strong collaboration between Blessington & District Forum and WCC/Blessington MD.

Phase 1 of a Health Check has been carried out which focused on infrastructure and the public realm, with Phase 2 focussing on retail currently being undertaken. Following the completion of Phase 2, the process will lead to a Vision Statement and Action Plan for Blessington.

A comprehensive application has been submitted for Community CCTV.

As part of the Town Team, a number of Working Groups have been established:

- Blessington Greenway and Tourism
- Public Realm and Tidy Towns
- Planning and Infrastructure
- Healthy Blessington
- Business
- Culture and Heritage

### **Bray**

Built on the success of the Purple Flag Team achieving accreditation for Town Centres offering improved evening /night time environment, Bray also participated in an Age Friendly Business Recognition Programme.

The Town Team have worked on a number of projects including:

- Production of a guide to doing business in Bray.
- Applied for Failte Ireland Destination Town Funding
- Working on a Town Centre Health Check

### **Greystones 2020**

Greystones 2020 was initiated by local business leaders and have worked on numerous projects including:

- Christmas Lights/Festival
- Greystones Train Station – plans to landscape the exterior and both platforms and to exhibit portraits of famous Greystones residents
- A New Website for Greystones
- Public Realm Plan

### **Wicklow**

Established following the "Kickstart Wicklow" report prepared by Wicklow & District Chamber of Commerce. Some projects include:

- Improvement of public realm
- Town Centre Health Check
- Working to develop a Digital hub to attract start up businesses to Wicklow.
- Proposals to develop a Greenway/Blueway from Greystones to Wicklow.

- Development of a park and ride facility close to the M11 aimed at reducing commuting times.
- Development of a high quality Heritage Trail
- Online retail survey /retail plan for the town
- Parking survey

### **National Enterprise Town Awards**

Ashford and Rathdrum entered in to the Bank of Ireland Enterprise Town Awards with judging taking place on 30<sup>th</sup> September. The communities of both towns got together and with the support of Wicklow County Council showcased their towns, their community, local businesses and the unique features of their areas. The results are eagerly awaited.

### **URDF Funding**

In 2018 Wicklow applied for funding for 9 projects under the Urban Regional Development Fund. The following projects were awarded funding in the first round:

Arklow Historic Town Core	€1,645,000
Wicklow Library and Fitzwilliam Square	€1,626,000
Bray Public Transport Bridge	€3,450,000

Wicklow Library is underway, Council officials are engaging with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in advance of awarding contracts for the remaining projects.

### **RRDF Funding**

Applications were submitted for projects worth over €10 million for Glendalough, Baltinglass and Blessington Greenway.

### **TOURISM**

Wicklow Tourism and Bray Tourism Staff are now employed by Wicklow County Council. Wicklow Tourism Alliance has been established and a number of working groups have been formed to roll out Wicklow's Tourism Strategy and Marketing Plan.

- Accommodation
- Towns as Visitor Hubs
- Thematic Experiences
- Marketing /Developing a common narrative
- Glendalough

Wicklow is awaiting a report on accommodation by Crowe Howarth commissioned by Failte Ireland.

## **MARITIME**

The blue economy is an important pillar of Wicklow's economic development strategy. With this in mind WCC engaged Gavin Doherty Geosolutions to carry out a Maritime Strategic Review.

The final version of the Maritime Strategic Review will be available in November and can be circulated to the members of the SPC once it becomes available.

The Review will:

- Identify maritime issues which have a remit in spatial / land use planning to allow better planning and management of the coastal / maritime area.
- Help WCC integrate planning policy and strategy.
- Provide WCC with a clear picture of its maritime area so that it is in a position to respond and / or provide input to higher level policy where / when necessary.
- Identify and focus stakeholders by engaging with them in an iterative process.
- Identify ways the economic base of County Wicklow could be strengthened through its ports and harbours.

Interest in the development of Offshore Wind Farms is increasing there are potentially 4 offshore wind farms at various stages of planning off the Wicklow Coast starting with the Dublin Array (Bray), the Codling (Greystones) The Arklow Bank (Arklow) and Kilmichael (North Wexford/Arklow).

The Maritime Business Development Group has formed a sub committee to examine ways to ensure that Wicklow is well placed to benefit from these developments in terms of investment, training and jobs.

## **Aquaculture**

The Maritime Business Development Group has formed an aquaculture sub group with a view to reinvigorating aquaculture off our coast. WCC has been awarded FLAG funding towards investigating the feasibility of redeveloping Wicklow's oyster banks and is working with a local company in this regard.

## **FOOD AND BEVERAGE STRATEGY**

Wicklow County Council in partnership with County Wicklow Partnership successfully applied for LEADER funding for the implementation of the Food and Beverage Strategy. Jonathan Birnie Associates have recently been appointed to work with the Food and Beverage Steering Group to implement the Food & Beverage Strategy. One of the key tasks under action 5 Business Supports will be to develop a feasibility study for the development of a Food Hub.