

County Wicklow Public Participation Network

Representative Report

Please complete and return to countywicklowppn@gmail.com within one week after each meeting.

Name of Committee: Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC

Name of Representative: Kate Duggan

Date of Meeting Attended: 11th December 2017

Most important actions or issues to emerge from a County Wicklow PPN perspective:

The Agenda for the meeting was as follows:

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 18/09/2017
 2. Matters arising from the minutes
 3. Update: Proposed Blessington Greenway Project
 4. Update: LECP Process
 5. Update: County Wicklow Tourism Strategy
 6. Update: County Wicklow Economic Think Tank (CWETT): Implementation Stage
 7. Update: (a) LEADER/LAG (b) SICAP (c) REDZ (d) CLAR
 8. Update: Town and Village Renewal Scheme, 2017
 9. Update: Regional Action Plan for Jobs 2016-2017: Mid East Region
 10. To note the regulation of the Lobbying Act, 2015 – Transparency Code
 11. Correspondence
1. The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read, agreed and signed off.
 2. Matters arising from the minutes: Nothing significant
 3. Update: Proposed Blessington Greenway Project

A legal issue currently being addressed is likely to be resolved by Christmas. It is likely that this Greenway Project is next in line for funding, with agreement likely in 2018 but draw down of funds unlikely to happen before 2019.

Other Greenway updates included Aughrim to Arklow. There was a public meeting about this in November and the engineer is liaising with landowners. Blessington began to pursue this project in 2011 which gives an idea of timescales for all that needs to be done.

Greystones to Wicklow are also in discussions about a Greenway but this is in its infancy as a project. Major issues include Irish Rail are opposed to people walking close to railway line and the nature reserve in Kilcoole which has nesting ground.

Ultimately the aspiration is for a Bray to Waterford Greenway.

A member commented on the rapid coastal erosion on the Murrough Walk and that if this continues there will be no walk at all. Iarnrod Eireann have an interest in this and are in conversation with Wicklow County Council.

4. Update: LECP Process (Local Economic & Community Plan)

The Chair requested an update on the Councils landbank at Greystones. The IDA and WCC have a large landbank to the South of Greystones. The former CEO of IDA looked for a collaborative approach to the development of this land and the current CEO Frank Curran is moving this forward. The zoning of the IDA land is for office space and possible development of a hotel and the 12 acres belonging to the council is zoned for town centre. Stakeholders are keen for the development of a hotel on this land.

An update was given on the Florentine Centre in Bray. Tenders were opened last Thursday and a preferred bidder will be selected next week.

5. Update: County Wicklow Tourism Strategy

A statement of strategy has been developed. Bluesail Consultants have been selected to develop the strategy and the first meeting with Tourism Providers took place on 29th November. This was an initial workshop to identify key issues. A document from the Wicklow Town Team was sent into Bluesail as part of the consultation.

6. Update: County Wicklow Economic Think Tank (CWETT): Implementation Stage

The brand will be re-launched in January with the new web portal.

The South Eastern Creative Corridor is an initiative to support entrepreneurs and businesses that provide or could potentially provide products and services into the Creative industry including film and audio visual. The final event this year was a “big picture” conference in Druids Glen on the 17th Nov and a report will be circulated.

The development of a film hub has been costed and will be submitted as a funding application under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund.

An event aimed was held for retailers to encourage them to develop an online presence.

Town Teams have been established in Bray, Arklow, Greystones and Wicklow. Initial discussions have been held with Blessington and Rathdrum. A key objective of the Town Team initiative is to encourage more collaboration, communication and cooperation between the Local Authority, business and the wider community and to develop one voice from one team for each town.

Arklow, Blessington and Greystones entered the Bank of Ireland National Enterprising Towns Awards 2017 – Blessington was awarded the most enterprising town in Leinster in the 3,000 to 7,000 population category and Greystones was awarded runner up in the over 7,000 population category.

The WEB portal project has been a big piece of work and is likely to be launched towards the end of Jan 2018.

13 reps from County Wicklow travelled to China in November at the invitation of Vice Governor of Hainan Province. The purpose was to participate in the Hainan International Tourism Island Event attended by tour operators from China. The group included 6 performers from Wicklow who were very popular. 2018 is EU Chinese Tourism Year and the EU is promoting itself as a destination for the Chinese Market. Opportunities arising out of the visit include:

- Tourism contacts and understanding of the Chinese Tourism market – direct flights to Dublin and London.
- A wide range of options for the film industry including co-productions, film and cultural exchanges.
- Education in the areas of English language and tourism, hospitality and event management.
- Food and drink – unfilled demand from China.

The Maritime Business Devpt Group meets approximately every 6 weeks. There have been presentations on the review of offshore renewable energy and the development of aquaculture. Offshore renewable energy – significant opportunities for Wicklow especially in the East Coast South Zone. Wicklow County Council is coordinating a submission to the department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment by 19th Dec in relation to plans off the Wicklow Coastline. Discussion took place around technological devices allowing for farming of mussels and oysters in deep waters which have far less disease and does not contribute to over fishing. WCC is exploring ways of encouraging the development of the aquaculture industry and engaging in maritime special planning to avoid conflicts of uses of sea area. Discussion arose about seaweed also being an important food source and the need to develop foods the harvesting of foods which are not destructive to the natural environment such as krill.

7. Update: (a) LEADER/LAG (b) SICAP (c) REDZ (d) CLAR

8. Update: Town and Village Renewal Scheme, 2017

LEADER/LAG approved 10 projects for funding.

SICAP contract evaluation is completed. Neither of the two submissions were recommended to POBAL and a mentoring process will take place to support successful resubmission.

RAPID – The Dept of Community and Rural Development announced €64,500 in funding for disadvantaged areas in towns through local community groups. This will be administered by the LCDC.

REDZ – Tender process for design and build of Pottery Centre is complete.

CLAR – Update given on progress of funded projects.

The Dept will launch a suite of schemes in 2018 once the national allocation of is announced. The figures are likely to be as follows:

CLAR	€5,000,000
Town & Village	€15,000,000
REDZ	To be subsumed into other schemes
Outdoor Recreation	€10,383,000
LIS	€10,000,000

9. Update: Regional Action Plan for Jobs 2016-2017: Mid East Region

This group has only met once and the two projects in process are the South East Creative Corridor and the Regional Competitive Funds.

Discussion took place around development of creative shared office spaces and making Wicklow a leader in the development of this. Greystones is an ideal place to start due to the high number of commuters and the building space available.

10. To note the regulation of the Lobbying Act, 2015 – Transparency Code

This was noted.