

## **Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee (Economic Development & Enterprise Support) meeting**

**held 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025 @ 4pm in Council Chamber at MTek 1,**

### **In attendance:**

Cllr. Peter Conlon (A/Chair)	Monaghan County Council
Cllr. Colm Carthy	Monaghan County Council
Cllr. Niamh McCooey	Monaghan County Council
Cllr. Pat Treanor	Monaghan County Council
Mr. Peadar Black	PPN- Community and Vol or Social Inclusion Electoral College
Mr. Pete McMahon	Business/Commercial Reps
Ms. Eileen Collery	Business/Commercial Reps
Mr. Tom Treanor	Agri/Farming
Mr. Ciaran McEntee	PPN - Environment Electoral College
Mr. Cathal Flynn	DoS, Planning, Econ Dev, Fire, Building, Capital, Corporate
Ms. Angela Gallagher	Administrative Officer, Planning Section
Ms. Denise O'Neill	Assistant Staff Officer, Planning Section
Ms. Pamela Kerr	Head of Local Enterprise Office
Ms. Michelle Boyle	Senior Staff Officer, Finance Section
Ms. Siobhan McKenna	Revenue Collector, Finance Section

### **Apologies**

Cllr. Sean Gilliland (Chair)	Monaghan County Council
Cllr. P.J. O'Hanlon	Monaghan County Council
Mr. Adrian Hughes	Monaghan County Council

In the absence of Cllr. Sean Gilliland, Cllr. Peter Conlon was A/Chairperson for this meeting.

### **1. Welcome**

Cllr. Peter Conlon welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

### **2. Overview of SPC Committees and scope of Economic Development & Enterprise Support SPC**

Mr. Cathal Flynn gave a brief overview of the role of Strategic Policy Committees; outlining the significance and work of the Committee within Local Government.

### **3. Rates Vacancy Abatement Scheme & Waiver Scheme**

A brief introduction was provided by Ms Michelle Boyle on the background to the proposed schemes and advised that public consultation will take place regarding any new proposals/schemes. Ms Boyle advised that a draft Policy Document will be brought before this group at the end of April.

A presentation on the two schemes was carried out by Ms. Siobhan McKenna.

Ms. Eileen Collery asked if the ownership of the vacant properties were local, pointing out that advertising the schemes in the Local Paper might not be sufficient.

Ms. Michelle Boyle stated that the majority of the owners are local and that they will be contacting them regarding the proposed schemes.

Cllr. Pat Treanor asked for clarification on the Waiver and Abatement Schemes?

Ms. Michelle Boyle stated that Owners of Vacant properties currently pay only 20% of the rates and receive an abatement of 80%. The Waiver is given to new Rates Customers who are just going into business to help them starting out.

Cllr. Colm Carthy stated the Abatement Scheme was introduced in Monaghan not to raise revenue but to encourage owners of vacant properties to do something with their property, either rent it out or sell it on.

Cllr. Niamh McCooey asked how long can they access the waiver?

Ms Michelle Boyle stated 1 financial year.

Mr. Peadar Black referred to the number of poorly maintained buildings in the towns & county and asked is the onus on owners to keep them in good condition?

Mr. Cathal Flynn referred to the Derelict Sites Act and stated that some of the properties which have been issued with a Derelict Sites Notice, may end up being acquired by CPO by the Local Authority.

Mr Peter McMahon advised the group that it is costing 7% more to run a business than it did 3 years ago and that the last 5 shops to open in Castleblayney has been mobile phone shops.

Mr Cathal Flynn asked Michelle to circulate the draft schemes to the SPC Members 1 week before the next SPC meeting to enable the members to read over the document and make any suggestions/recommendation at the next SPC meeting.

Cllr. Pat Treanor asked that the public consultation go through the PPN, social media and the Community Groups to get the information out.

A copy of the presentation will be circulated to all members.

#### **4. Overview of the Local Enterprise Office**

Ms. Pamela Kerr provided the members with an overview of the Local Enterprise Office and a number of the Grant Schemes which are currently available for people considering going into business.

Ms. Pamela Kerr advised the group that Local Enterprise Week is on From Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025- Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and that they will be in the Peace Campus on Wednesday along with SEAI.

Cllr. Peter Conlon stated that the workshops are a good way of letting the public know what supports and grants are available.

Ms Pamela Kerr stated that they plan to run a workshop in each of the Towns over the year and are considering also hosting lunch & learns.

Ms. Eileen Collery asked if there is still a high volume of requests for grants?

Mr Cathal Flynn advised that there continues to be significant interest in the Local Enterprise Office supports. The Local Enterprise Office have 4 evaluation committee meetings per year for the Measure 1 Grant Supports (Business Expansion and Feasibility Grant) and hundreds of requests for the smaller grants.

Ms Pamela Kerr stated that there is a lot of work involved for the business-person starting out, however the Local Enterprise Office is with them every step of the way and get really involved with their clients.

Cllr. Colm Carthy emphasised the importance of Digital Marketing and how it can supplement income and can help businesses which are currently struggling.

A copy of the presentation will be circulated to all members.

#### **5. Suggested Dates of SPC Meeting for 2025**

Cllr. Peter Conlon advised the group that the following dates have been suggested for 2025,

- Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 4pm
- Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at 4pm
- Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 4pm

Ms. Angela Gallagher advised the Elected Members that she would insert these dates into Decision Time.

#### **6. AOB**

Mr Cathal Flynn advised that the Rates Abatement/Waiver Draft Policy will be on the next Agenda and asked if there was any other topic that the group would like?

Mr Cathal Flynn suggested that they receive an update from the Town Regeneration Team regarding dereliction and the Croi Conaithe Grant Scheme and provide the group of some examples of where the Policy has worked.

Cllr Peter Conlon stated that the Government are considering introducing a scheme to deal with apartments/properties above shops

Cllr. Pat Treanor referred to a joint committee which used to meet between ETB & Monaghan County Council to look at any skills gaps in the County, perhaps this is something that can be looked at again as there is a need for trades people in the County.

Mr Cathal Flynn suggested a presentation at a future SPC Meeting, be arranged with CMETB to demonstrate the range of training, development and support services available through CMETB.