

Waterford City & County Council
Minutes of the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC
Wednesday 2nd December 2020
Via MS Teams

In attendance: Cllr Lola O'Sullivan (Chair), Cllr Mary Roche, David Walsh, David Lane, Garrett Wyse, Cllr Pat Nugent, Cllr Eddie Mulligan, Cllr Pat Fitzgerald

Staff: Michael Quinn, Billy Duggan, Lisa Grant, Finn Brophy, Hugh O'Brien, David Quinn

Apologies: Gerty Murphy, Jen Harris

Minutes & Matters arising – 28th October 2020

Cllr Roche asked that the minutes be amended to read 'preventing landlords from benefitting from the scheme and not passing on the benefits to their tenants'.

Michael Quinn updated that the Failte Ireland board will be meeting in mid December to make a decision on the funding application for the Epic Voyage attraction.

The minutes were proposed by Cllr Pat Nugent and seconded by Cllr Mary Roche.

Waterford Retail Strategy

John Spain and Stephen Blair joined the meeting and gave a presentation on the Waterford Retail Strategy. A copy of the presentation was circulated with the minutes.

Following the presentation the Consultants relied to a number of queries raised:

- Statistics re online shopping show that approx. 4%-5% of the population nationally are shopping online and that almost 25% of those in the under 35 age group shop online. Detailed statistics are not available, although the CSO have started to incorporate online retail activity into the Retail Sales Index.
- Re expansion opportunities flagged for Dungarvan, it was suggested that this could be achieved through infill/ backlands sites or at the edges of the town centre core near the shopping centre.
- In terms of tackling vacancies, while having a Special Area of Planning is an option to discourage lower order retail, it was suggested that schemes which incentivise higher order retailers to the city/ town centre might be more successful.

Review of Casual Trading Byelaws

An updated draft of the Casual Trading Byelaws was circulated in advance of the meeting and a number of queries and comments were raised in relation to the revised draft for Finn to consider before putting the draft on public display.

- There is an allocation policy in relation to vacant pitches, but Finn noted that in most areas there is limited demand or competition for pitches. Where an existing trader wishes to continue to trade, they will have first refusal if they have been continuously trading.
- Finn is the only Authorised Officer in terms of Casual Trading. This role is supported by the local area engineers and GSS who monitor casual trading across the county and flag any issues with Finn. The Gardai also have a role in relation to casual trading and liaise with Finn on any issues they have which generally relate to roadside strawberry sellers who are not covered under casual trading legislation. The Gardai will move on these sellers if they are causing a road hazard.
- Traders are responsible for their own waste removal under the Waste Regulations and this is enforced by the Litter Wardens.

- Standard of pitches – Finn advised that there is currently a preference for fixed trailer units and that others utilise 3*3 branded pop ups. Gazebo still units are not permissible.
- Operating hours – the days a trader can operate at each location are prescriptive as the fees increase significantly if a trader operates more than 190 days. Each additional day is charged at €25 per day resulting in a trader potentially paying €3,000 for a year round pitch which would be prohibitive for many traders.
- Priests Road market – Finn advised that he would allow the current licence for sale of firewood to be extinguished once the current local trader ceased trading and this would not be allowed in the future. A query was raised whether there could be reduced fees for those that trade less frequently?
- Newtown Cove – Property Management are currently addressing the land ownership of this site and this will be considered before issuing a licence for this site.
- Annestown – Cllr O'Sullivan queried if there was a need for two additional units given the Scout Unit is in place. Finn advised that there is an issue with the ownership of the Scouts unit.
- Grattan Quay/ Greenway – Finn advised that this was not identified by the Trails Officer as a location for casual trading on the Greenway. He also advised that the District Council has the power to re-allocated an unused pitch within their district without amending the Casual Trading Byelaws. Michael Quinn recommended that this location can be kept under review until after the works are completed and that there would be a preference for local operators to meet the demand in this area.
- John Roberts Square – protection for permanent food providers in the area is covered by the reference to 'no hot food' traders being allowed at this location, with the exception of a crepes stall and Dinky Donuts. The area is designated for baked goods and artisan products.
- Ballymacabry/ Melody's – following a site visit, Finn advised that there is no alternative site in the area and that Roads would not permit trading on another location for road safety reasons. Finn cannot designate the Community Hall as a casual trading area as it is not in the public realm and their planning permission may not allow for them to operate a retail/coffee offering.
- Helvick – this has been removed as there is no demand from the area.

Cllr Mulligan thanked Finn for his work on preparing the recommendations on the Casual Trading Byelaws.

Billy Duggan briefed the members on the next steps and timelines:

Step	Key date
Report to Council to commence process	10 th December 2020
Advertise draft proposals for public comment	15 th December 2020
Closing date for public comment	29 th January 2021
Report on public engagement process to SPC	4 th February 2021
Recommendations from SPC to Plenary on adopting the revised Casual Trading Byelaws	11 th March 2021

It was agreed that 30 days on public display would be sufficient for the scheme.

Economic Incentive Schemes

Lisa updated members on the Economic Incentive Schemes which were adopted by the Plenary Council at their November meeting. The scheme is currently being reviewed by solicitors before being launched in January 2020.

Cllr Mulligan requested a report on the previous Rates Incentive Schemes. Lisa advised that a full report on the scheme will be prepared following the scheme closing on 31st December 2020 and this can be presented to the SPC at their next meeting.

AOB

Cllr Roche noted that the focus of the SPC over the last number of meetings has been on retail/city/town centre. She asked that for future meetings the wider economic agenda could be considered and agencies such as Waterford LEO, Enterprise Ireland and the IDA invited to present.

Cllr Roche asked if support can be given to get art groups open again. Michael Quinn will ask Michael Walsh to raise with the CCMA at national level. He also advised that the Arts Council has responsibility for ensuring communications regarding re-opening etc., are communicated to this sector.

Calendar of meetings for 2021

All meetings to start at 9:45 and to be held on MS Teams

- 4th February (changed from 21.01 to align with Casual Trading Byelaw process outlined above)
- 31st March
- 26th May
- 28th July
- 29th September
- 24th November

The minutes were proposed by Cllr Pat Nugent and seconded by Cllr Eddie Mulligan on 4th February 2021.