



Cork County Council

Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

**Chief Executives Management Report
to Council regarding
Economic Development, Enterprise and Tourism**

Report No. 2 of 2016

September 22nd 2016

Introduction

This is the second report of 2016 from the renamed Economic Development, Enterprise and Tourism Directorate. The report provides an update of Directorate activities since the submission of the last report in February of this year.

1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1.1 Local Economic and Community Plan.

The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) is provided for in the statutory Local Government Reform Act 2014. This Act requires that a six-year plan be adopted by Cork County Council, setting out high level goals, objectives and actions required to promote and support local economic and community development within the county. Cork County Council's first LECP was adopted by full council on July 25th last.

The strategic aim of this Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) is the *removal of barriers to facilitate individuals and organisations in achieving their ambitions, within a long-term and sustainable framework.*

While, by regulation, the LECP is to be developed within a six-year cycle, the first iteration of this plan will be reviewed and updated on publication of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the south-west region – expected to be published within approx. 12 months of this LECP. It is also recognised that the first iteration of this LECP is being developed whilst awaiting the publication of the National Planning Framework. It is hoped that this first LECP will assist in informing the work of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and, thereafter, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. This first LECP will be reviewed on publication of the NPF and the RSES, and will be amended to ensure comparability with same.

The LECP is not primarily a plan, but rather it is a *process*. Hence, to be effective it seeks the engagement and on-going support of all regional stakeholders. The 30 Key Assets identified in this plan, are offered as a focus for that engagement and as a vehicle for mutually-supportive collective interactions. The LECP is now moving into its implementation phase, lead within the Council by the Corporate Directorate.

On adoption of the final LECP, it is intended that Asset Management Groups – or similar vehicles – will be formed to progress and monitor the performance of each asset and a Cork Asset Index (Cork AI) developed. The Local Community Development Committees, as area based representative bodies, will have a key role in determining priorities for their respective constituencies, via interaction with the various Asset Management and Asset Management Co-Ordination Group identified. Similarly, the Economic Strategic Policy Committee will have a central role to play in informing and directing the management of key economic assets, again via their interaction with the various Asset Management and Asset Management Co-Ordination Groups.

1.2 Strategic Policy Committee

At a meeting of the full Council, the members referred a Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Sheppard calling on Cork County Council to establish a “New Business Start Up Grant Scheme” to the EED&T SPC for consideration. The members of the SPC reviewed the existing County Rate Scheme and evaluated the proposed scheme was detailed.

Whilst Members agreed on the principle of the overall proposal, their deliberation focussed on the equity, accountability, simplicity, compatibility, acceptability, buoyancy and cost effectiveness of the proposal, all of which are considered

necessary to ensure that the scheme would contribute to the economic development of the county.

The SPC concluded that;

- Unlike the existing Rates Grant Scheme adopted by Council in 2014 the proposed scheme would not benefit all existing rate payers as it would only be applicable in the core of towns and villages. The SPC questioned whether the NoM should stand as it is or if the scheme should be extended to promote the occupation of all existing commercial premises vacant and available throughout the county.
 - If the scheme remains applicable solely to the core of towns and villages; provisions should be put in place to ensure that displacement of existing enterprises, by new grant aided ones, does not occur.
 - The geographic constraints of the smaller towns and village's economic core would have to be further investigated. This exercise may be provided for in the draft LECP under Asset 4, Rural Cork.
 - The financial impact of the proposed grant was not established and implementation could reduce the rate paying base and have a negative effect on the Economic Development Fund and the Town Development Fund. It was considered that any change to the rates rebate scheme should not jeopardise the continuation of these two funds. As such, a more precise costing of the scheme should be established with the source of funding to finance it being identified.
- The nature of a qualifying applicant and restrictions, if any, relating to the type of enterprise/economic activity should be more clearly defined

The members of the SPC directed that Cllr Sheppard's NoM should be referred to the Corporate Policy Group to consider the issues outlined above and the merits of the proposal within the context of the existing scheme together with the impact it may have on the budget and the preparation of the estimate.

1.3 Economic Development Fund

The Economic Development and Enterprise SPC approved the adoption of a revised set of priorities for the allocation of support from the Economic Development Fund at their meeting in October 2015. The Economic Development Fund, in operation since 2011, continues to support the creation of jobs in Cork. However change in the Councils role and opportunities for job creation have lead to the development of revised priorities resulting in changes in the way that the Council promotes and supports Economic Development and Enterprise locally. It is proposed to review the EDF prioritises again following areas the adoption of the LECP. Current priorities are;

- Strategic Marketing and Tourism:
- Partnerships with Local and Regional Stakeholders
- Town Retail / Development
- Development of Food Production and Export Supports
- Co-Funding Initiatives

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This revised set of priorities will allow for a focussed, plan led, evidence based approach to guide the use of the funds for job creation and sustainable development. This new approach will better enable the Council to respond to the opportunities as they arise and ensure that the Fund is used appropriately to develop the enterprise ecosystem of the county.

1.3.1 Strategic Marketing and Tourism:

Refer to Section 3 below.

1.3.2 Partnerships with Local and Regional Stakeholders

IGNITE: The IGNITE Graduate Business Innovation Programme is an initiative that harnesses the resources of Cork County Council, Cork City Council, the Local Enterprise Offices of Cork City and County, University College Cork, industry partners and business leaders in the region to support recent third level graduates to start technology-based, export-orientated, scalable businesses in the region.

The Programme has supported almost 50 start-ups and over 60 founders since it launched in 2011. Of these, 32 businesses have gone on to employ 90 people. A number of the start-ups have grown to employ between 5 and 10 full time staff, have accessed international markets, have raised private investment of €250K or more and are poised for further growth. Cork County Council has agreed to continue its support for this initiative until 2018.

Cork Smart Gateway: This initiative, which builds on the existing assets, attributes and experiences in Cork and helps to position Cork as a 'World-Class Smart Region' was established by Cork County Council, Cork City Council, Nimbus Research Centre and Tyndall National Institute.

The Smart Gateway aims to enhance the reputation of Cork as an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest. A place where public infrastructure and public service provision utilise best in class technology solutions and one which allows all stakeholders to participate in decision making and enjoy an enhanced environment. This initiative will compliment and support the already large number of organisations in Cork who are working on smart solutions to improve the physical realm, from energy conservation to open data. The Smart Gateway will create a forum to allow these organisations to share and collaborate together while also marketing the Cork region as a smart destination internationally.

Cork Screen Commission. Cork Local Authorities have jointly procured the services of Pooleen Productions to manage the Cork Screen Commission for the period 2015-2018. The contract provides for Forward Planning, Production Support, Marketing and PR and training services for the promotion of Cork as a centre for screen productions.

Cork Science and Innovation Park: The Cork Science and Innovation Park (CSAIP) at Curraheen is an ambitious, long term project, which will deliver significant job creation

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and economic development opportunities. In developing this key element of infrastructure; Cork County Council together with its strategic partners, the City Council, UCC, CIT, IDA, EI, SFI, DJEI and the HEA will bring together researchers, entrepreneurs, academics and technology intensive enterprises to drive innovation, economic development and job creation regionally and nationally.

Much of the preparatory work for the development of a Science and Innovation Park in Curraheen has been completed. The Council will continue to work with parties proposing developments to ensure that any challenges encountered can be overcome so as to achieve a commencement of development at this location and begin the realisation of the vision for the Park.

In March 2016, UCC received Planning Approval for the development of a 4,000m² Innovation and Incubation Building, at its lands within the zoned CSAIP. This will be the first building on the University's 45 acre precinct which is one of 6 precincts in the park with a total area of almost 250 acres.

Asia Summit, Cork: Since the late 1990's all government departments have been embedding sector based strategies to promote bilateral relations with China and the other Asian countries. Nine of the 10 fastest growing mega-cities in the world are in Asia and by 2025, will account for almost half of the world's economic output, overtaking Europe and North America combined.

In 2015 and 2016, Cork County Council, Cork City Council, Cork Institute of Technology and Cork Chamber of Commerce partnered with Asia Matters, Ireland's leading centre of thought leadership in relation to EU-Asia trade, investment, economics and international relations to host the Asia Cork Summit in Cork. The 2016 summit, held in June, included the Asia Ireland Food & Agritech Forum with KPMG; a China Ireland Education Forum and a China Ireland Tourism forum. The summit provided Cork companies with an insight into sector specific opportunities that exist in the Asian and Chinese markets.

Cork Foundation: The Cork Foundation is a unique social enterprise fund to support social entrepreneurs and businesses to bring about positive social change in their local towns and villages. The Cork Foundation supports social enterprise, community and voluntary groups by providing funding to sustain viable businesses and job opportunities in Cork City and County.

Cork Convention Bureau (CCB): See section 3, below.

Water Systems and Services Innovation Centre: This is a partnership between Cork County Council, Cork City Council and CIT which seeks to respond to national and international demands for technically innovative solutions to a range of problems in the water industry. To date it has assisted companies to develop 'smarter' water systems and realise ideas for new products and services that have contributed to sustain / create jobs, increase sales, and generate export opportunities.

WSSIC, hosted at the Nimbus Centre at Cork Institute of Technology (CIT), is managed by personnel with water-sector expertise and draws on the skills of Nimbus personnel to carry out its projects. It has undertaken 35 projects, ranging from large scale Commercialisation Funds, to small scale €5k Innovation Vouchers. Industry has

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contributed in-kind contributions to projects. WSSIC has engaged with approximately 110 Irish water sector companies and a number of foreign based companies. WSSIC consider that their interventions have created or sustained 35 jobs and estimate that 80 - 100 additional jobs may be created over the next three years, based on the solutions already delivered to companies.

1.3.3 Town Retail / Development

Beacon Retail:

The programme has been delivered in 16 towns to date and has just commenced in both Kanturk and Bandon. The last programme was delivered in Skibbereen and the feedback from the participants is positive. Thus far 230 Retailers have participated in the 16 programmes and another 30 are expected between Kanturk and Bandon.

Cork County Council is examining options to expand the Beacon Programme to include the provision of a continuous series of Continuous Professional Development workshops for retailer unable to commit to participating in a full programme, a Beacon Follow up programme for other retailers in the towns where the programmes was previously delivered and a Beacon On-line programme.

1.3.4 Development of Food Production and Export Supports

See report on progress of Taste Cork in Section 2

1.3.5 Co-Funding Initiatives

Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ)

REDZ operates on the principle that a rural economic zone exists around all centres of population and the zone is an economic driver in its own right. In the case of Charleville / Kilmallock the REDZ exists around a polycentric driver of more than one town.

A pilot initiative was launched in May 2015 and an allocation of €2 million euro was provided to fund a number of pilots of varying scale and on a regional basis. Such was the response to the call for project that the Department increased the funding allocation to almost €4m. The Pilot project funding provides for 75% department funding, 10% BIK and 15% cash funding locally either from the project partners or Cork County Council.

Cork County Council applied for funding under the REDZ Pilot initiative on behalf of the project promoters. Three of the REDZ projects were wholly within Cork and a fourth, in Charleville and Kilmallock, was applied for by CorkCoCo with Limerick City and County Council. The total grant value for the three projects wholly in Cork is €119,000 and the Cork County Council / Limerick joint venture was grant aided to €150,000 of which 50% was spent in Cork. The grant provided for 75% of the project value and the balance was made up of 15% cash cofounded by Cork County Council and 10% as Benefit In Kind from the promoter.

Project Ref	location and title	Details of project	Partners	Grant (75%)
REDZ South 12	Charleville / Kilmallock	A series of business projects including broadband, online trading, green energy, clustering and tourism related public realm development	Limerick City and County Council, Cork CoCo, Charleville Chamber, Ballyhoura Development	€150,000

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Project Ref	Location and title	Details of project	Partners	Grant (75%)
REDZ South 05	Horse trail C'townbere	Development of a public horse trail in Miskish Mountains North of Castletownbere	Cork CoCo, Beara Tourism	€44,500
REDZ South 06	LUDGATE Skibbereen	Development of training facilities and visitor information infrastructure in Skibbereen	CorkCoCo, LUDGATE	€50,000
REDZ South 07	Kanturk/Newmarket	feasibility study for off street car parking, greenway and tourist accommodation	Cork CoCo, IRD Duhallow	€24,500

1.4 Infrastructure

Industrial Estates & Business Parks

Cork County Council provides a range of property options to support economic development initiatives for existing and emerging enterprises and appropriately zoned lands which are available to respond to new opportunities as and when they arise; as set out below;

Towns	Industrial Units	Food Units	Serviced Sites	Development Land	Incubation Kitchens
Ballincolliig	☐	☐			
Blarney				☐	
Carrigaline	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Carrigtwohill				☐	
Glanmirre				☐	
Midleton				☐	
Mallow			☐	☐	
Bandon	☐	☐	☐		
Fermoy	☐	☐			
Macroom	☐		☐		
Buttervant			☐		
Charleville			☐		
Mitchelstown	☐	☐	☐		
Newmarket			☐		
Bantry	☐			☐	
Schull	☐	☐			

Towns	Industrial Units	Food Units	Serviced Sites	Development Land	Incubation Kitchens
Skibber een	□	□	□		
Killeagh				□	

Occupancy of Industrial Units.

Location	Number of units	Occupancy % Sept '16	Occupancy % Sept '16
Ballincollig		4	100%
Bandon		4	100%
Bantry	12, excluding hot desks and meeting room	11	92%
Carrigaline		12	75%
Fermoy	9, excl offices meeting room and hot desks	8	88%
Fermoy offices		5	80%
Mitchelstown		4	100%
Schull		4	100%
Skibbereen		4	100%

Food Production and Marketing

- **Upgrading of existing Industrial Units to Food Grade standard.**

To date nineteen Units have been converted to Food Grade standard providing food producing or processing businesses with cost effective production space.

- **Provision of two shared fully equipped Food Grade Commercial Kitchens to facilitate producers.**

The facility is now operational and provides food start up businesses with state of the art facilities with flexible and affordable letting arrangements. The Council has procured the services of a professional external operator to manage the project and bookings are completed through an online booking website.

Currently five companies are using the facility on a regular basis, the official launch of the centre will take place on Oct 10th. Demand for the units is very encouraging and the project is expected to be a major success, particularly as the facilities are available on a 24 hour basis.

- **Organisation of local and international food events and other export led initiatives.**

Cork County Council in conjunction with the Local Enterprise Offices will facilitate participation of 10 export ready food businesses at the International Food Event in Birmingham in March 2016. The businesses will also undertake a Food Export Training Programme in preparation for the event, which will provide access to over 29,000 attendees and worldwide buyers. This will be the fourth successive year which has been supported by Cork County Council and the Local Enterprise Offices and the level of business generated to date exceeds €1.5 million. 2016 will be the fourth successive

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year this programme has been funded by Cork County Council/Local Enterprise Offices bringing the number of Companies supported to 40, with the estimated value of business expected to exceed €3m.

Hot Desking and Training Facilities

Cork County Council provides Hot Desking facilities, own door offices and training / meeting rooms in our E-Centres throughout the County. Cork County Council supports the E Centre project both through direct provision in Bantry and Fermoy and in conjunction with bona fide community organisations in five other centres across the County. We are currently in the process of reviewing operational aspects of the project, with particular emphasis on requests by a number of towns seeking support to establish E Centres. The table below outlines the current occupancy levels and we will ultimately review the offerings in light of the demand for own door offices in preference to hot desks, in certain locations. Whilst take up in some locations is not as significant as was anticipated, it should be kept in mind that the project was set up to serve as a socio-economic driver.

Centre	No. of Hot Desks	Occupied	No. of Desks	Occupied
Fermoy	10	3	16	12
Bantry	6	3	2	2
Charleville	7	5	n/a	n/a
Millstreet	7	2	n/a	n/a
Bandon	6	6	17	13
Mizen	5	1	n/a	n/a
Macroom	6	6		
Bere Island	2	Seasonal	n/a	n/a

- The training facilities are utilised by CorkCoCo and LEO Clients. In Bantry the facility also provides a cost efficient backup for the 30 remote workers employed by Amazon. This level of redundancy provide a security for those jobs than just the occupancy levels.
- Supporting and partnering National and International Business Fora such as IFE, Futurallia International Forum and CorkMeet has provided enterprises with opportunities to develop initial business contacts. We continuously review our engagement in such events to ensure an effective return on investment.

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2. ENTERPRISE**LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICES (SOUTH CORK and CORK NORTH & WEST)**

	South Cork 2016	Cork North & West 2016	Total Cork County 2016 YTD
No. of Grants	27	23	50
Value of Grants Approved:	571,417	349,686	921,103
<i>Feasibility</i>	16,005	29,993	45,998
<i>Priming</i>	246,437	130,350	376,787
<i>Business Expansion</i>	308,975	189,343	498,318
			-
Value of Grants Paid:	237,855	377,931	615,786
<i>Feasibility</i>	32,487	14,825	47,313
<i>Priming</i>	102,957	127,910	230,867
<i>Business Expansion</i>	102,410	235,196	337,606
No. TOV's Approved	32	42	74
Value of TOV's Approved	57,750	68,531	126,281
No. of TOV's Paid	11	14	25
Value of TOV's Paid	18,393	21,451	39,844
No. of SYOB Courses	7	8	15
No. of SYOB Participants	74	88	162
Value of Expenditure	27,735	32,000	59,735
No. of Mentoring Assignments (Include advice clinics)	152	128	280
No. of Businesses Availing	68	265	333
Value of Expenditure	39,440	52,227	91,667
No. of MFI Processed	2	7	9
No. of MFI Approved	0	4	4
Value of MFI Approved	0	99,485	99,485
No of Females	314	454	768

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	South Cork 2016	Cork North & West 2016	Total Cork County 2016 YTD
Participating - in all 89 training events			
No of men	291	314	605
Total participating	605	768	1,373
No of Schools Engaging	14	15	29
No. of Students	651	520	1,171
No of offices	1	2	3
LEO Staff (FTE)	5	5.55	10.55
EI Graduates	1	1	2
CCC Graduates	1	1	2
Total	7	7.55	14.55

TOV: Trading Online Voucher | **SYOB:** Start Your Own Business Course | **MFI:** Microfinance Ireland

Highlights June-Sept 2016

- Throughout the summer the core activity of the LEOs continued and there remains strong demand for financial support from start-up and growing micro enterprises. This was evident in the number of meeting requests sought from each of the LEO offices. Additional funding to support this level of demand was sought through Enterprise Ireland and €340,000 extra has been gained for County Cork applicants seeking financial support from the LEOs.
- There are currently 29 bookable training programmes available on the LEO websites in Cork County. There continues to be a very healthy demand for business learning amongst owner managers of small business and from those aspiring to start their own ventures.
- Going South - In partnership with Intertrade Ireland and the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council 15 companies travelled from Northern Ireland to Cork on 12-14 September. Each of these companies was provided with an individual meeting schedule listing meetings with a range of companies from this region (average 5 meetings each). A reciprocal visit is now arranged in which 17 Cork companies will travel north on October 2-4 next, with the meetings schedules for these businesses currently being set up. In discussions with executives and elected representatives from LCCC there is certainly an opportunity to develop long term ties both economically and in the Tourism area with our counterparts from Northern Ireland.
- Other activities and events in period: Food Academy/Planning for presence at National Ploughing Championships/Participation in European Projects such as RATIO and Erasmus/Cork Summer Show/Hosting National Student Entrepreneur Bootcamp and Dinner/National Enterprise Awards/Launch of Irelands Best Young Entrepreneur 2016-17 (IBYE)/Launch of Enterprise Europe Network (EEN)/Greenshoots awards/Asia Matters/UCC Ignite Showcase and Awards/SMILE strategy Planning/LEO Network Meetings/New Frontiers participation/

Taste Cork in partnership with Economic Development Fund and LEOs

- **'Taste Cork'** is a local government backed initiative supported by the Local Enterprise Offices Cork, Cork County Council and Cork City Council to establish a

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regional brand for Cork food producers and provides a network to develop micro food enterprises in Cork.

- **Taste Cork 2021** is an integrated strategy led by business and underpinned by governmental and academic support. The all-encompassing aim is to drive forward the food sector in Cork over the next five years. The strategy has been developed in an effort to support and grow the industry within the region. This strategy exists as an inspiring starting point to guide all initial projects. The goals and objectives will evolve over time in order to sustain and support the industry.

The Taste Cork 2021 Strategy has Four Key Areas of Focus.

- The Development of Strong Consumer Communications
- The Provision of Supports for Cork's Food & Drink Sector
- The Positioning of Cork as a Leading Food Tourism Destination
- The Development of Clear Routes to Market for Producers

Territorial coverage

- Taste Cork represents Cork city and county.

2016 Achievements

- Full-time project coordinator for the Taste Cork initiative appointed in January 2016 on an initial 12 month contract.
- The Taste Cork 2021 strategy was launch in June 2016, with a work plan outlined for 2016 - 2021.
- The development and ongoing marketing of the Taste Cork brand.
- The development of a Taste Cork presence at key local events. (*eg. the Taste Cork food demonstration tent at Cork Summer Show, the Cork & Kerry Food Forum, Macroom Food Festival, Taste Cork Week festival in October, Glow Christmas Market, Taste Cork themed menus at various stakeholder events throughout the year etc.*)
- The creation of links with all relevant food agencies and bodies, at both a local and national level, to ensure regional strategy is effectively supporting national strategy.
- Throughout 2016 Taste Cork has been building meaningful relationships with agencies and bodies such as Bord Bia, Failte Ireland, CIT, UCC, Cork Chamber, Cork Airport, FSAI, Teagasc, BIM and Enterprise Ireland.
- These relationships are creating collaborative approaches towards many food related projects, such as infrastructural developments within the region and educational supports.
- Taste Cork is developing a food network through the recruitment of Taste Cork members. The aim is to build a network between producers, restaurants, cafes, hotels, distributors and retailers, and to become an umbrella brand for those passionate about the provenance and quality of the products they make, serve or sell.
- Developing a food network for the region creates a solid foundation upon which new projects and strategies can be effectively communicated and implemented, eg. the development of food tourism.
- For local authorities, Taste Cork provides an 'on the ground' link to food SMEs which, over the coming years, will act as effective route to involving the SMEs in the local decision making process.
- In April 2016, Taste Cork brought ten food companies to exhibit under the Taste Cork umbrella at the UK's largest food & drink trade show, the *Food & Drink Expo*.
- Taste Cork has collaborated with Cork Chamber, UCC and CIT to exhibit under the Taste Cork umbrella at Food Matters Live (22-24 November), the UK's leading multi-

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sector event that brings together the food and drink industry, retailers, food service providers, government, and those concerned with nutrition and health.

Taste Cork Objectives

- The all-encompassing aim is to drive forward the food sector in Cork over the next five years.
- To create a strong regional food brand identity
- To create an integrated approach involving local and national agencies to ensure
- a comprehensive support structure is in place
- To create a food network for Cork's producers, retailers, foodservice outlets
- and hospitality outlets to encourage communication and collaboration
- To promote regional food products at home and abroad
- To increase the consumer profile of Cork food producers
- To attract additional food tourism to the Cork region
- To optimise routes to market for producers and food entrepreneurs
- To encourage and support market-led food entrepreneurship and the creation
- of new employment
- To develop regional support for the Cork food sector in the areas of education, training and upskilling
- To promote food innovation and commercial opportunities for primary food producers
- To quantify and benchmark local output from the region

Website for additional information

- <http://tastecork.com/>

3. TOURISM

The Tourism Section continues to work closely with Fáilte Ireland, Local Development Companies, Tourism Service Providers, Local Communities and other Directorates within the Council to maximise the economic return from tourism to Cork in terms of overseas visitor numbers, revenue and employment.

3.1 Cork Tourism Strategy:

Led by a high level Tourism Strategy Group; Cork County Council, Cork City Council Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland funded the development of a Cork Tourism Strategy to develop a vision and action plan which will direct the future growth of tourism in Cork and maximise the economic potential from tourism in Cork in relation to overseas visitor numbers, revenue and employment. The development of this strategy is now complete.

The Tourism Strategy Group is also charged with the development of the supporting Action Plans to ensure the Strategy will be delivered. This will include the establishment of a public/ private stakeholder led Brand Management and Marketing support unit to be known as Visit Cork.

3.2 Tourism SPC

Trails Policy - A Policy to maximise the economic benefit to the County

Members of Full Council adopted the Trails Policy - ***A Policy to maximise the economic benefit to the County in December, 2015***. This policy focuses strongly on maximising the economic benefits of existing trails, and, in doing so will establish Cork as an attractive trails destination. The Tourism Section has developed a template to analyse the seven pilot trails identified in the policy and their immediate hinterlands using a common set of criteria. The criteria will include areas such as access, available services and potential for further economic activity.

Motorhome Policy

The current policy being developed by Members of the SPC is a Motorhome Policy with the ifinal draft to be presented to members at the October meeting. It is intended that this policy will assist in the development of motorhome facilities in areas identified where there is a gap in the provision of such a facility.

Growing Tourism in Cork - A Collective Strategy

Following on from the launch of the strategy the board of Visit Cork has been constituted. This is the entity to be established under which the actions of the strategy will be delivered over the next five years working closely with relevant stakeholders.

The positions of Cork Tourism Destination Manager and the Sales and Marketing Manager have been filled. The successful applicants will commence their roles in the coming weeks. The role of the Tourism Destination Manager is to lead and manage the implementation of the strategy and the role of the Sales and Marketing Manager is to manage the development and implementation of sales and marketing strategies. These roles are considered critical to the successful implementation of the strategy.

3.3 Cork Convention Bureau (CCB)

Cork Convention Bureau estimates a €5 million boost for Cork and the Irish economy is expected in the second half of 2016 bringing the total business secured in 2016 to over €11 million euro. This will be as a direct result of the conferences and meetings secured to date through the work of Cork Convention Bureau, its ambassadors, members, and regional and national stakeholders. Cork will have hosted in excess of 3,500 delegates

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within the city and county since July by December 2016. Some of the confirmed events include the International Chromatography Symposium in August; the EU Commission Agricultural & Rural Development Conference Cork II, ECI (Advanced Membrane Technology) conference in September; the Barbershop Singers Association convention in October, PD Forra and EU Pat conferences in October, the 2016 Start-Up Nations Summit in November, the Elite Travel Group annual conference, and the REACH conference also in November. The Elite Travel Group is a UK consortium comprising of over 70 independent travel agents. Their annual travel industry conferences not only attract valuable and quality travel agents to the region but also tour operator and industry suppliers. Over 120 international delegates are expected to attend this year's conference at the Rochestown Park Hotel from November 4-6.

The Irish Association of Barbershop Singers (IABS) is bringing its annual international convention to Cork from October 7-9, and plans to return again in 2017 as a direct result of its positive experience with Cork Convention Bureau and Cork partners. This event will attract over 600 delegates from Canada, USA, Holland, Spain, UK and Irish members. It offers an extensive programme for delegates, and evening concerts are also open to the general public on October 7 & 8, providing international entertainment from award-winning international barbershop groups.

3.4 Tourism Infrastructure

Beara Breifne Way: The construction of the pedestrian Bridge over the River Blackwater at Millstreet has been completed which is the final part of the Cork section.

Blueways: The development of a Blueway, a recreational water activity trail, between Skibbereen and Baltimore was officially opened in July and is the first Blueway developed by Cork Co Council.

Beara Horse Trail: The development of the first Horse Trail in Ireland covering the area from Castletownbere to Allihies and on to Urhan is nearing completion. This project has been financially supported through the REDZ (Rural Economic Development Zone) funding.

Wild Atlantic Way: Cork County Council continues to work closely with Fáilte Ireland. Currently the installation of interpretative panels and photo points at 34 sites in Cork is being completed.

Ireland Ancient East: As with the development of the Wild Atlantic Way product to date, Cork Co Council is working closely with Fáilte Ireland in the development of the brand and the roll out of required infrastructure.

Whale/Dolphin Trail: Cork Co Council is currently working with Fáilte Ireland and the Irish Whale & Dolphin Group in establishing a Whale/Dolphin Trail at key locations throughout the county which will include the development of interpretative panels and a detailed brochure.

North Cork Heritage Trail: The development of a Heritage Trail in North Cork is currently in the early stages of development in conjunction with the Heritage Unit using Ireland's Ancient East thematic areas. This will be used as a pilot for the consideration of the development of further Heritage Trails in Cork County. As a partner in the **Munster Vales Marketing Group** with local development companies and Councils of Waterford and Tipperary, Cork County Council proposes to maximise the opportunity for marketing the attractions and experiences of North Cork.

3.5 Submissions to the Fáilte Ireland Grants Scheme for Large Tourism Projects 2016 - 2020

In line with Fáilte Ireland's Tourism Investment Strategy 2016 - 2022, €65m will be made available over the period 2016 - 2020. The closing date for the initial call for funding applications was August 22nd with the next call being January, 2017.

Cork Co Council submitted the following applications:

Dursey Island Cable Car & Visitor Centres

- Dursey Island is one of the 15 Signature Discovery Points on the Wild Atlantic Way and one of 3 in Cork.
- Proposal is to construct a 2 car aerial tramway system from the mainland to Dursey Island, a Visitor/Heritage Centre at the departure point on the mainland and a further small visitor centre on the Island.

Kinsale Wild Atlantic Way Plaza on the Short Quay incorporating interpretation of the Battle of Kinsale & Lusitania Tragedy

- Connection of three important spaces within Kinsale with pedestrian priority which will lead visitors from their arrival point on the quay where a depiction of the Lusitania is proposed along Market Lane to the proposed Wild Atlantic Way Plaza at Short Quay, currently the Market Square, and, onwards to the Museum where a depiction of the Battle of Kinsale will be inscribed in the paving.

Upgrading of Streetscape - Main St, Kinsale

- Proposed refurbishing of Main St which will enable visitors to enjoy a circular route commencing in Market Lane, onwards to the Museum and then back along Main St.
- The intention is to improve the visitor experience by improving the quality of materials on the paved surfaces with appropriate lighting and all above ground services will be undergrounded.

Spike Island - Phase 2

- Phase 1 included substantial investment in essential infrastructural facilities and services
- Phase 2 project designed to complete the interpretation within Fort Mitchel of the story of Fortress Spike Island to significantly widen and deepen the visitor experience, including;
 - Extend the scope of interpretation of Fortress Spike Island by adding a significant exhibition on the British military history of Spike Island and its role in the defence of Cork Harbour
 - Widening the visitor experience to make better provision for families
 - Enhancing visitor access to and from the Island
 - Increasing capacity for tours and temporary exhibitions

Buttevant Medieval Heritage Experience - Medieval Town Trail

- Tourism Section provided assistance to Buttevant Community Council with the support of Avondhu Blackwater Partnership
- Project will include the development of a 1km trail incorporating 6 national monuments including reconstruction of the medieval town wall, planting & interpretative signage accessible from the centre of the town.

3.6 Marketing supports Cruise Tourism in West Cork

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Cork County Council has engaged the services of Lorraine Grainger, Tourism Consultant for a two year period to work on our behalf to encourage additional cruise liners to visit West Cork. Successes to date include:

- First cruise call to Bere Island by a German Cruise Liner Hapag Lloyd Cruises
- First call to Kinsale - U.S cruise company National Geographic/Lindblad called twice in 2016
- A total of seven cruise ship calls scheduled for West Cork Harbours in 2017
- New harbour areas in West Cork such as Glandore, Baltimore and Schull will be presented to prospective cruise liners at Seatrade Mediterrean Cruise Trade Show in late September
- Ongoing development of new shore excursions being customised for discerning cruise passengers

3.7 Camden Fort Meagher

Cork County Council is establishing a new legal entity to manage the project and progress it into its next phase. This will entail the procurement of a firm of specialists to devise and prepare a Masterplan as well as an Interpretative template for the future of the fort which will establish Camden Fort Meagher as a premier tourist destination within Cork Harbour. This will involve significant investment from the Council. It is hoped that the community will continue to play a significant role in the facility.

3.8 Support to Cork Airport Marketing

Cork County Council has committed €100,000 to a €1m Co-operative marketing programme led by Tourism Ireland for the Cork Airport destination and airline offerings. Financial assistance has been provided towards the marketing of the Dusseldorf to Cork route with the route performing well. Aer Lingus has announced it will continue to offer this service next summer. Lorraine Grainger, Tourism Consultant is also assisting in this area.

4 OTHER

4.1 Action Plan for Jobs

Alma Murnane has been appointed as the full time Programme Manager to lead the implementation of the South West Action Plan for Jobs, effective from September 5th 2016. Formerly, Director of Policy & External Relations with Cork Chamber of Commerce, she will be based at Cork County Council offices. Prior to joining Cork Chamber, Ms. Murnane worked with the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC) and has over 13 years' experience in the area of policy formulation, strategic communications and management of governance structures. She comes to the position with a BSc, MSc from University College Cork, a PgDip from the University of Ulster and a Certificate from the Boston College Center for Irish Programs in Sustainable Civic Government.

Currently an Implementation Committee (IC) (with reps from all of the key stakeholders responsible for the implementation of in the South West APJ) is in place and chaired by Bob Savage. An effective implementation structure is critical to the success of the APJ and for ease of implementation, the IC have proposed a number of sectoral groups to have the best potential for jobs creation in the region and thematic groups critical for business investment and growth to be established. A strategic mapping of the 261 actions will be conducted in the coming weeks to provide an evidence base on which to agree the key strategic priority industry clusters which will be focused on. The sectoral working groups will be industry led and industry driven and chaired by appointed industry champions.

The First Progress report on the SW APJ is due to be finalised by the end of September 2016 and subsequently presented to the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Mary Mitchell O'Connor T.D. The first Progress Report will cover all actions to be delivered during the period from Plan launch in 2015 to end of Q2 2016.

Engagement with South West Regional Skills Forum: A reciprocal arrangement is now in place between the SW APJ Implementation Committee and the SW Regional Skills Forum with respective representation by Programme Managers'.

4.2 Skills Forum

Action 202 of the South-West Region Action Plan for Jobs requires the South West Local Authorities, LEOs, UCC, CIT, ITT, ETBs, Skillnets, DES, Solas, Business Representative Bodies, the IDA and EI to establish an Employer and Education Skills Forum to anticipate and ensure that the provision of education and training is meeting the future skills needs of the region through greater employer input, better information for employers on the skills supply, for potential recruits on opportunities and career pathways and provides a mechanism to collaboratively address barriers identified by employers and providers.

This Forum has potential to effectively and collaboratively address these issues and be a key resource and enabler in the region to support economic

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development. The objective for the Forum is to serve as a mechanism to cluster and connect skills for the region and strengthen the regions talent pool by:

- Enhancing the planning of education and training provision to meet future skills needs with greater employer input;
- Providing better information for employers on the skills supply from the education sector;
- Highlighting opportunities and career pathways to potential employees;
- Enhancing SME engagement with education providers;
- Helping to improve how SMEs can recruit available talent; and
- Understanding and overcoming current barriers to greater engagement.

Budget 2016 provided an allocation of €1m to support Regional Skills Fora across the country. Dr. Siobhan Bradley has been recruited to be the South West Regional Forum Manager.

4.3 China

Cork County Council continues to deepen its relationship with Jiangsu, an [eastern coastal province](#) in China, and with Xuzhou, a major city in the province. On February 28th and 29th last a delegation from Xuzhou city consisting of public representatives, business people, and officials visited Cork. In order to maximise the potential opportunity from that visit; Cork County Council hosted a Business Forum to provide the delegates with an overview of the relevant economic sectors in Cork. The Forum included presentations from Cork Chamber and leaders in the Education, IT, Pharmaceutical and Food sectors. At the Forum, the Mayors of the County and Xuzhou signed a Memorandum of Understanding committing to promote cooperation in the areas of Economic Development, Education, Culture and the Arts.

In May, County Mayor and the Chief Executive led a delegation to Jiangsu Province. Members of the delegation include representatives from UCC, CIT, CETB, IDA, Cork Chamber, it@Cork, Green Ireland International and officials from the County Council. This visit was a response to the visit of Chinese delegates to Cork earlier in the year. The purpose of that visit was to seek Economic Development, Educational and Cultural exchange opportunities between Cork County and Jiangsu Province and to build on the good relationship established during earlier exchanges.

The itinerary for the visit included meetings with representatives of Xuzhou City Government, Xuzhou, Institute of Technology, Phoenix Publishing and Media Group, TUNI.U.Com, Shanghai Chamber of Commerce, our Consulate in Shanghai and the local IDA, Enterprise Ireland and Bord Bia Offices.

During the visit Working Groups with representatives from the County Council, CIT, CETB and other relevant stakeholders met to consider, develop and implement Economic Development, Cultural and Educational initiatives that are of mutual benefit to both regions.

The report of this mission will be submitted to the International Affairs committee for consideration.

4.4 EU Projects

4.1 Cork County Council is participating in the following EU Co-Funded projects;

E lighthouse:

Programme: Northern Periphery & Arctic | **Duration:** April 2016 - March 2019 | **CCC Budget:** €243,389

Focus: Promote energy efficient public building.

Actions: Support increased energy efficiency in public buildings and increase the uptake of renewable energy and decrease carbon dioxide emissions.

Destination SME

Programme: INTERREG Europe | **Duration:** January 2016 - December 2020 | **Project Budget:** €196,058

Focus: To improve SME competitiveness in the tourism sector by supporting the implementation of destination management policies. By sharing experiences, the project will identify and transfer good territorial policies or instruments developed by Managing Authorities and dedicated to the tourist destination management, with a strong focus on the involvement of the SMEs in the local decision making process.

Erasmus - Net

Programme: Erasmus + | **Duration:** February 2015 - February 2018 | **Project Budget:** €102,748

Focus: To help entrepreneurs enrich their experiences, through learning and networking, and by spending periods of time in enterprises run by experienced entrepreneurs in other countries. The project also seeks to enhance entrepreneurship, internationalisation and competitiveness of new and established micro and small enterprises within the EU and in other participating countries.

Bridge: Intelligent Bridge Assessment Maintenance and Management Systems.

Programme: FP7 | **Duration:** Jan 2014 to Dec 2018 | **Project Budget:** €1,418,821.63

Focus: To improve bridge maintenance and management across the EU through standardisation, the development of software and apps for tablets or phones and through case studies, with a strong industry partnership. (www.bridgesms.eu)

4.2 Cork County Council has applied to participate in the following projects;

INTERREG VA - Cross border: Ireland Wales Programme

Celtic Food Cluster (Final Submission Stage)

Heritage Trails (Submitted)

INTERREG Europe - VC - interregional
Eco Systems Services-IP (waiting decision)

4.3 Other Applications Submitted / Funding Secured

Designated Urban Grants Scheme (DUGS): Priority 5 of the Regional Operational Programme

Mallow Town Hall - €1 million grant (50% of capital cost)

Rural Economic Development Zone (REDZ)

Funding of €270,000 achieved for the following projects:

Beara Horse Trail

Ludgate @ Skibbereen

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Kanturk/ Newmarket
Charleville/Kilmallock

Progress on EU projects is being reported to the Councils International Affairs
Committee.