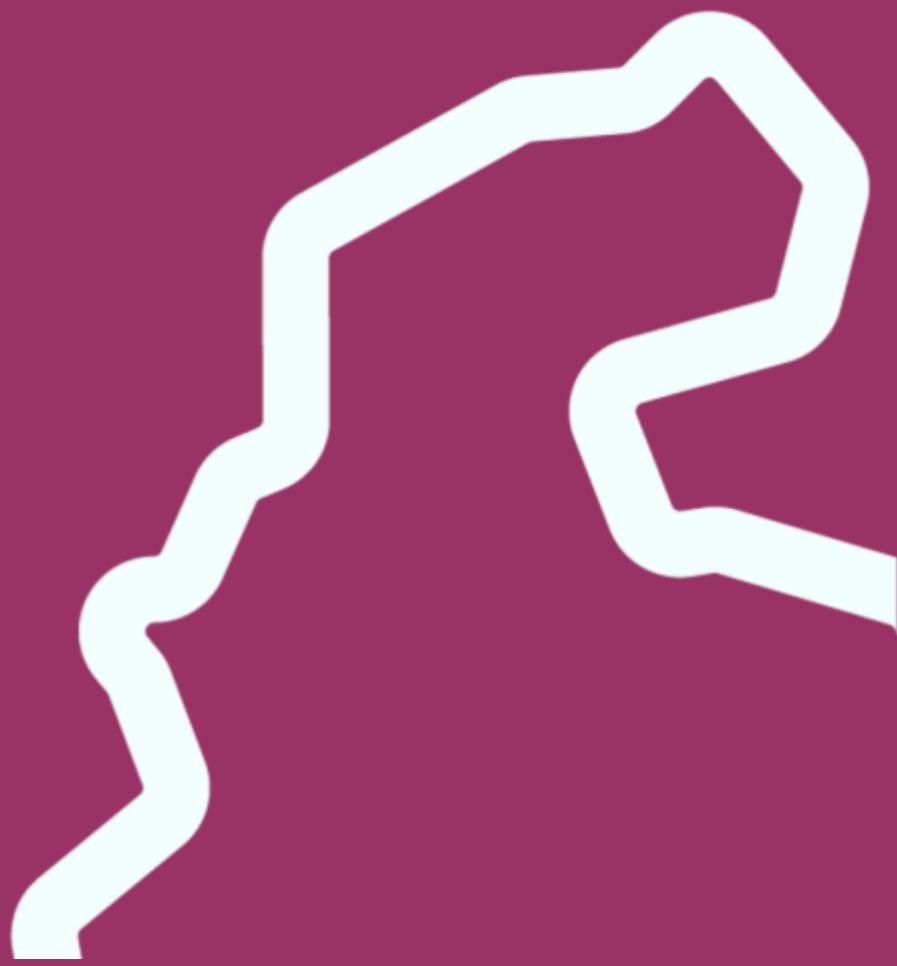


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County Carlow Business Support & Economic Recovery Action Plan

July-December 2020



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Cllr. Tom O'Neill
Cathaoirleach
Carlow County Council

Introduction

As Cathaoirleach of Carlow County Council , I welcome the development of the County Carlow Business Support & Economic Recovery Action Plan which is a short term local action plan which will be delivered from July-December 2020 to provide additional supports to our business community and provide a framework for future opportunity for the County. The plan has been developed by a collaborative approach with industry and key agencies and compliments the various supports already available from the state agencies, networks, public bodies and the community at large at present.

As Cathaoirleach I know the economic and human impact of Covid-19 will be remembered for generations and I believe that over the coming months and years as a County our greatest opportunity from an economic viewpoint is to build on our inherent DNA as County Carlow and support our businesspeople who have the ambition and determination to succeed in these challenges times and provide employment which is a fundamental part of the foundations of a balanced society. Part of this support comes from consumers and I'd encourage everybody to shop local and be local online also in your shopping.

Over the coming months, Carlow County Council will build on this plan with the development of a longer term economic forum chaired by our Chief Executive which will build a strategy for the coming years from 2021-2027 to ensure that we as a County have a framework for Business Support & Economic Development.

Personally, I'd like to thank the Industry Representatives, County Carlow Chamber, Carlow County Development Partnership, Carlow Tourism, Institute of Technology Carlow , Enterprise Ireland, IDA, South East Regional Skills Forum, Department of Social Protection who worked with the executive of Carlow County Council under the leadership of our Chief Executive, Kathleen Holohan & Director of Services, Michael Rainey to develop this plan.

Tom O'Neill

Cathaoirleach

Overview

The County Carlow Business Support & Economic Recover action plan is a collaborative Enterprise support response action plan has been developed to support the business community in County Carlow during the initial months (July-December 2020) of recovery from the economic impact of Covid-19. The plan has been developed to complement the supports already in place by a variety of local and national support bodies and is designed by a collaborative approach between industry and key support stakeholders.

The Action Plan has 5 key themes which have a solid focus on making a difference to the business community by (1) supporting sustainable employment (2) increasing sales (3) promoting customer experience (4) building for the future by examining opportunity for individuals and enterprises.

The actions include promotional campaigns new projects and programmes, development and delivery of a range of support programmes for existing entrepreneurs , networking opportunities , supports for the newly unemployed and development of a framework for future opportunities for County Carlow. Each action has a lead stakeholder who will co-ordinate the action.

The 5 actions are:

Action 1: Promotion of County Carlow as a Tourism Destination

Action 2: Supporting Entrepreneurial Challenges & Opportunities - Development of Industry/Agency Partnership approach to Support Entrepreneurial COVID-19 Challenges

Action 3: Utilizing the knowledge of industry to support Individuals who are unemployed in the development of new opportunities

Action 4: Promoting the County Carlow Consumer Experience - Promoting Online & Offline Retailing & Focus on marketing a safe customer experience

Action 5: Development a Framework for Future EU Opportunities for County Carlow

Economic Development & Business Support Action Plan 2021-2027

To compliment this project as part of its work for 2020 , Carlow County Council will develop an Economic Forum who will assist in the development an economic strategy and business support plan for County Carlow from 2021-2027 which will develop a framework and structure for the support of economic activity in the County post December 2021. This framework will provide a structure for the delivery of services and also the attraction of funding for the County by all partners involved.

Action 1: Promotion of County Carlow as a Tourism Destination

Overview

Action One is aimed to support the Tourism Industry and aims to development of variety of new visitor itineraries for promotion by Carlow Tourism and tourism industry members and a co-ordinated campaign to focus on the domestic market. Tourism remains Ireland's biggest regional employer and an important contributor to the economy of County Carlow, despite the impact of Covid-19. This campaign will highlight and profile the many aspects of Carlow's tourism offering with a view to inspiring staycation opportunities and day visitor trips, maximising opportunities for the second half of the year.

How will this action be delivered ?

This action will be delivered by:

1. Workshops focusing on cross-selling and dissemination of itineraries with a view to extending the length of visitors' stay
2. New Video production
3. New Digital promotional materials for itineraries for website, e-zine and social media usage by Carlow Tourism members and Carlow Tourism.
4. Digital Promotion & PR Campaigns

This Action is co-ordinated in partnership with Industry by



Action 2: Supporting Entrepreneurial Challenges & Opportunities - Development of Industry/Agency Partnership approach to Support Entrepreneurial COVID-19 Challenges

Overview

Action two is aimed at the general business community and aims to support enterprises in particular key owner/managers by the creation of peer networks and collaboration between industry and the state to develop new supports for County Carlow to promote innovation , development and collaboration. This action is time bound and in place for July-December 2020 and upon review relevant activities will be mainstreamed into the Carlow County Council – Local Enterprise Office Programme where required.

How will this action be delivered ?

This action will be delivered by:

- (1) Development of a new Peer Network Support Programme called “The Business House” for companies with greater than 3 employees by bringing together the business support knowledge of Carlow County Councils Local Enterprise Office , 10 Industry Experts and an industry experienced facilitator who will co-ordinate group sessions being complimented by peer support networking by the industry experts
- (2) Delivery of the “Business Picnic” International Networking Event linking Carlow Social & Economic Human Interest Stories with partners from Carlow Twinning & Diaspora Links
- (3) Development of an approach for the development of supply chain programme to get more B2B sales between County Carlow Companies which could be supported by Enterprise Ireland/Carlow County Council – Local Enterprise Office
- (4) Delivery of an Innovation Strategy Programme with IT Carlow to support Innovation , Challenge & Opportunity as part of preparing companies for Brexit.

This Action is co-ordinated in partnership with Industry by



Action 3: Utilizing the knowledge of industry to support Individuals who are unemployed in the development of new opportunities

Overview

Action three aims to map out existing supports for those unemployed with a view to creating a client led responsive network of stakeholders. To identify gaps in supports and seek to address same. The network of stakeholders to work together to offer those unemployed an integrated and holistic whole of person service, including both technical and well-being supports, that are job market and new opportunity focused. The network will include/receive regular inputs and direction from employers.

How will this action be delivered ?

This action will be delivered by development of a County Network.

The network will be established through a series of remote meetings at which the mapping exercise will be undertaken. This will result in the network members having a clear understanding of ;

- (1) experiences and circumstances of persons unemployed,
- (2) supports available from the network members for effective referrals,
- (3) employer needs

This Action is co-ordinated in partnership with Industry by



Action 4: Promoting the County Carlow Consumer Experience - Promoting Online & Offline Retailing & Focus on marketing a safe customer experience

Overview

Action four aims to promote shopping locally both online and offline. It has been acknowledged Buying from local businesses keeps money circulating closer to where you spend. Local shops use local services, accountants, insurance brokers, and suppliers, as well as employing local people, they also carry a higher percentage of locally produced goods.

How will this action be delivered ?

This action will be delivered by:

- Delivery of Online Campaigns around #BeLocalOnline #ShopSupportLocal #shopcarlow
- Delivery of Physical campaign around #BeLocalOnline #ShopSupportLocal #shopcarlow
- Redesigning of Love Carlow Website to become a full signpost for Carlow, showcasing stay, shop, entertainment & Lifestyle

This Action is co-ordinated in partnership with Industry by



Action 5: Development a Framework for Future EU Opportunities for County Carlow

Overview

Action five aims to examine the potential for future EU opportunities for business support and other programmes from the EU 2021-2027 Programme. It has been widely acknowledged that direct EU is a potential opportunity for Counties and this project will aim to examine the potential via a collaborative process between local government, education and a non-government body as potential anchors for future direct EU support for County Carlow.

How will this action be delivered ?

The project will be delivered by challenge and potential project mapping fund scanning and project consultation supported by Grants Europe. This will result in the development of an agreed map and framework for the partners to work individually or collectively on EU opportunities for County Carlow in early 2021.

This Action is co-ordinated in partnership with Industry by



Economic Development & Business Support **Action Plan 2021-2027**

It is now timely that a broader economic development strategy be put in place that is visionary, ambitious and deliverable which in turn will guide and inform future iterations of the County Development Plan and other local strategies. Carlow County Council will develop a broad Economic Development & Business Support Action Plan during 2020 for launch in early 2021 which will be supported by a newly created Economic Forum with membership from key industry and public and non-public sector bodies.

The strategy will examine and determine actions which take into account:

- The need to develop population centres of scale that can act as ‘pull’ agents to the benefit of the wider county and region as a whole.
- A growing realisation of the impacts of climate change and the need for local areas to show leadership and vision in developing decarbonised regions.
- Increased awareness of the benefits of regional collaboration and the potential associated with developing a regional approach to economic development.
- The trend towards remote working and the need to create the underpinning infrastructure to facilitate it.

The strategy will:

- Identify employment sectors and spatial distribution within and throughout the county.
- Identify future employment growth sectors / opportunities together with a series of goals and objectives to facilitate the delivery of the Strategy, with clearly defined short- and longer-term actions.
- Seek to build on the economic opportunities arising from the physical assets of the county:
- Be underpinned by a strong evidence-based logic.
- Include recommendations as to how the County can align its economic development activities with the thrust of the Future Jobs Strategy.
- Include policy recommendations to support alignment of the economic strategy with the spatial aspects of the forthcoming County Development Plan.
- Identify actions targeted at different elements of the local economy including the FDI, SME & micro sectors (including export and non-export focussed).
- The ‘profile of enterprise activity’ element of the work should clearly identify which Carlow companies are exporting, profiling their key products, markets and exports value.
- Identify opportunities for additional collaboration with the 3rd level sector in the region.
- Identify additional collaborative projects with the potential to drive local and regional economic development.
- Identify objectives to significantly enhance the digital capacity of communities and businesses in Carlow and which supports an environment that is adaptive to the opportunities presented by Industry.
- Maintain a focus on the identification of approaches and initiatives that can be affected at the local level (i.e. micro rather than macro level initiatives).

The development of the strategy will be led by the Director of Services for Economic Development , Head of Enterprise & Senior Enterprise Development Officer in partnership with the Strategic Policy Committee.

Acknowledgements

The plan has been developed with thanks and the support of Kathleen Holohan –Carlow County Council , Michael Rainey – Carlow County Council , Eileen O’Rourke –Carlow Tourism , Declan Doyle – Institute of Technology Carlow ,Edmond Connolly – South East Regional Skills Forum , Brendan Mc Donald – IDA Ireland , Brian Fives – Enterprise Ireland , Mary Lawlor – Carlow County Development Partnership , Noel Barry – Department of Social Protection , Eileen Brophy – County Carlow Chamber , John Brophy – Fairgreen Shopping Centre , Rowena Dooley – Dooley Motors , Martin Meagher - Institute of Technology Carlow , ,David Walsh – Netwatch Group ,Rachel Doyle – Arboretum ,Fergal Doyle – Arboretum ,Michael Walsh – Seven Oaks Hotel ,Rebecca Smith - Lorum Old Rectory ,Brian O’Farrell – County Carlow Chamber ,Pauline Hctor – Carlow County Council ,Kieran Comerford – Carlow County Council and the Design Core Team - Institute of Technology Carlow

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