

**Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee
Business Support inquiry
Dublin visit
26 November 2018**

Fingal LEO

Meeting hosted by: Oisín Geoghegan

Members in attendance: Jackie Baillie, Gordon MacDonald and Andy Wightman

Local Enterprise Office (LEO)

In April 2014 the existing 35 County Enterprise Boards were dissolved under primary legislation and the functions, assets and liabilities were transferred to Enterprise Ireland (EI) with the Local Authority structure agreeing to carry out these functions on EI's behalf in Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs). With 31 dedicated teams set up as offices within each Local Authority in Ireland, LEOs offer a wide range of experience, skills and services. LEOs also aim to promote enterprise and entrepreneurship and foster a culture of enterprise.

Meeting

Clients can be confused about whether to seek support from EI or the LEO. When services transferred from County Boards there was concern about lack of autonomy and flexibility, but this hasn't been the reality. Targets are set nationally, but there is still flexibility to do things differently depending on local needs. The economic development budget is allocated by the local authority and is separate.

There has been a big emphasis on promoting the "first stop shop" message.

LEO metrics are determined by the Centre of Excellence. LEOs consent to these targets which aim to be fair, achievable and ambitious. The relationship between EI and the LEOs is not seen as competitive since they have a different client base.

The LEOs felt that local programmes are often more effective than nationally run programmes.

Cult drinks

Members spoke to Sarah-Jane who set-up Cult drinks, a Dublin-based drink company, specialising in brand innovation. Sarah-Jane talked about EIs [Be Prepared Grant](#). The Be Prepared Grant offers up to €5,000 to assist in the cost of developing a strategic response to Brexit. The grant is intended to provide support to clients to use external resources to undertake a short assignment to determine how the company could respond to the threats and opportunities of Brexit. To be eligible for the Grant you must be an Enterprise Ireland client who is directly or indirectly exposed to the UK market.

