



UNLOCKING LOCAL: Lisa Finn, Senior Enterprise Development Officer, LEO Cork North & West; Keynote speaker Susan Hayes Culleton, Founder & Managing Director, HayesCulleton Group; Stuart Nelson Director of Operations & Program Development at Jigsaw Better Business and Jamie Cuthbert, LEO North & West pictured at the Local Enterprise Office Cork North & West event Unlocking Competitiveness for West Cork Businesses at Fernhill House Hotel & Gardens, Clonakilty, which presented a broad overview of the LEO's competitive programmes Lean, Green and Digital For Business and their impact on cost efficiency combined with strategies for establishing competitive advantage in business. PHOTO: ALISON MILES/OSM PHOTO

Ties blossom in cycle sector

Michael Olney

A major Dutch cycling trade mission rolled into Cork last week with an aim to strengthen economic ties in the cycling sector.

Hosted by Cork City Council on 11 April, the mission consisted of 16 Dutch businesses operating in various areas of the cycling sector, including bicycle suppliers, providers of bike parking solutions, and providers of infrastructure design and planning services.

The Netherlands has long been renowned for its bike-friendly infrastructure, with the country containing 35,000km of dedicated cycling paths along with an estimated 22.5 million bicycles.

In late January, a delegation from Cork City Council travelled to the Netherlands to learn more about Dutch cycling and transportation policy, and the Deputy Ambassador of the Netherlands to Ireland Nora Dessing said that Dutch businesses saw many opportunities in Ireland.

"Right now, road transport accounts for 29% of emissions in Cork city," said Ms Dressing.

"We know that there are major plans to expand cycling infrastructure in Cork, and the NTA's strategy targets an increase in the number of annual cycling trips to 19.5 million, as well as the development of large primary, secondary, inter-urban and green-



16 Dutch businesses within the cycling sector visited Cork recently.

way cycle networks," she added.

As cycling becomes ever more vital in transforming Cork's transportation system, Ms Dressing said there will be an enhanced need for companies which can provide the equipment and develop and operate the necessary infrastructure.

She said smart mobility will also be vital, and Dutch businesses with cutting-edge skills and solutions could be crucial in making this change a success.

Last week's trade mission was organised by the Dutch Embassy in collaboration with the Netherlands Enterprise Agency and the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management and the Dutch Cycling Embassy.

The Netherlands is now the sixth largest market for Irish goods, with the recent inauguration of

the new Dutch Honorary Consul for Cork, Dr Val Cummins, said to represent another landmark moment in Cork's long connection with the Netherlands.

Margot Daris, Project Manager at the Dutch Cycling Embassy, said she hoped the cycling trade mission would contribute to renewed growth in business ties while helping to share Dutch knowledge.

"It has been a great privilege to host visitors from the Cork City Council and many other Irish local authorities in the Netherlands, where they have learned how cycling creates a greener, safer, and healthier transportation system. Bringing leading Dutch cycling businesses to Cork has been the next step in a growing and fruitful relationship, and we look forward to many more in future," Ms Daris said.



Is é do vóta do ghuth

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ANOIS

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