

Minutes of the Meeting Strategic Policy Committee (SPC1) Economic Development, Enterprise Support, Tourism, Planning & Development Policy

Held via MS Teams

Friday 25th March 2022

Present: Cllr. Ger Frisby (Chair), Cllr. John Coonan, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Cllr. Eugene McGuinness, Cllr. Maria Dollard, Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, Brian Hamilton, Paul Brophy, Marion Acreman, Deirdre Shine

Apologies: Cllr. Michael Doyle, Cllr. Patrick O'Neill, Eileen Moyles, Bill O Keeffe, Fiona O Neill
Martina Comerford

In Attendance: Sean McKeown, Martin Prendiville, Fiona Deegan, Denis Malone, Catherine Myers.

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

Item	
1.	<p>Declaration of Interest: Brian Hamilton declared that he would raise the proposed Thomastown Town Plan as prepared by Turley Planning Consultants under Item 7 of the Agenda as the Plan contained a recommendation in respect of his private property which he indicated would be unacceptable to him.</p>
2.	<p>Confirmation of Minutes: The Minutes of the previous meeting held on the 3rd December 2021 were proposed by Cllr. Michael McCarthy, seconded by Cllr. John Coonan and agreed.</p>
3.	<p>Matters Arising: None</p>
4.	<p>Progress Report: The Chair noted that the review of the current Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) was circulated to all committee members along with the agenda and is taking it as read.</p> <p>Mr. Sean McKeown reminded the committee that the current LECP (2016-2021) is set to expire and a new 6-year LECP will be finalised for adoption for March 2023. There are two elements to the plan - Economic (SPC1 have an oversight on this element) and Community (LCDC have an oversight on this element). The overall plan has to be approved by Kilkenny County Council (Reserved Function of the Elected Members). The focus of the plan will be on social and economic issues that can be addressed at community level and also climate action.</p> <p>The economic element of the current plan comprises of a total of 66 actions across 9 high level economic goals and an update on same was provided in the Review of the LECP document which was circulated. Mr McKeown added that all of the actions are either complete or still ongoing due to their strategic nature.</p> <p>Mr. McKeown gave an update on the following sample actions from the current LECP:</p> <p><u>LECP GOAL 2:</u> Facilitate Innovation and Entrepreneurship Action 2.6 <i>To agree a phased development strategy for capitalising on the potential of Brewery Site as the Abbey Quarter, the development of which is provided for by the Kilkenny City development plan and the Abbey Quarter Masterplan, with particular emphasis on 3rd and</i></p>

4th level education provisional, incubation and advance office space, innovation and research. This action will include investigation of the development of an innovation hub to assist businesses develop innovative and creative ideas.

Mr McKeown stated that the Abbey Quarter is in the process of being re-generated into a multi-use retail, residential, 3rd level educational and commercial space.

Phase 1 is almost complete and funding had been received from the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Failte Ireland. This funding covered the Public Realm, the Riverside Park including a skatepark and the redevelopment of the public realm around the Brewhouse.

Phase 2 is about to commence and funding has been received for the Urban Street and Park through URDF funding.

60% of the overall footprint will be public realm when it is finished which will be circa. 10 years. There is a total of 7 phases in the masterplan.

LECP GOAL 3: Visitor Experience Enhancement

Action 3.6

Develop a strategy for Festivals as an economic driver, building on the very successful range of existing festivals programmed throughout the year in County Kilkenny.

Mr. McKeown advised that Tourism is critical to Kilkenny City and County. Currently, there are 6,000 people employed in Tourism and Hospitality in Kilkenny. Festivals attract visitors to Kilkenny and Kilkenny County Council supports Festivals through the Festival Grants Scheme which provides funding for festival organisers to assist with the development and promotion of Festivals. This scheme was formed as a result of the current LECP. In 2022, a total of 14 Festival received funding under this scheme. Mr. McKeown also noted that for small scale community events, there is a scheme available under the Community Events Scheme.

LECP GOAL 4: Enhanced Educational Attainments and Skills Development

Action 4.6

Support the establishment of the proposed Technological University of the South East.

Mr. McKeown advised that the South East Technical University (SETU) will be formally launched on the 1st May, a merger of Carlow IT and Waterford IT and Kilkenny has an ambition to secure a campus of SETU based on the Case for Third Level in Kilkenny which was presented in 2018.

LECP GOAL 6: Improve Access and Communication Infrastructure

Action 6.2

Develop a walking, cycling and waterways trail strategy to include the potential of enterprise related activities and job creation potential and linked to tourism actions.

Mr. McKeown advised that the South East Greenway on the disused Iarnrod Eireann train line is well underway and is envisaged to be fully open by Summer 2024. The plan for the future is to link the South East Greenway with the existing Waterford Greenway and also to the Barrow Way at St. Mullins, which in turn will provide opportunity to link up with the Dublin to Galway Greenway.

LECP GOAL 7: Leadership and Local Capacity

Action 7.2

Ensure that is the revision of the Core Strategy (and subsequent Development Plans) that sufficient land for residential development, industrial development and infrastructure is provided consistent with the regional population targets. The designation of zoned land is

undertaken by land use plans, and must comply with higher level planning objectives and is informed by SEA and AA processes as appropriate.

Mr. McKeown noted the Core Strategy of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 (Chapter 4 of volume 1) with regards to zoned land.

Ms. Fiona Deegan gave an update on the following actions from the current LECP:

LECP GOAL 1: Support the Enterprise Economy

Action 1.1

Engage with local businesses to address sectoral needs, whilst simultaneously facilitating strategic collaborations, networking and innovation, this will include supporting and facilitating existing businesses to sectoral networks.

Ms. Deegan provided an update on the #ShopKilkenny initiative which is in conjunction with Kilkenny Chamber to support local retail, saying that a lot has been achieved. Along with various advertisements on social media, radio, newspaper and signage, a series of Outside Broadcasts were organised with KCLR96FM in various locations across the county to promote the #ShopKilkenny initiative by encouraging shoppers to shop local. This Roadshow gave local businesses the opportunity to promote themselves for free on the Radio. This type of campaign will continue.

Ms. Deegan advised that #TasteKilkenny is a Food Tourism initiative which supports local Food Producers, Hotels, Restaurants, Gastro Pubs and cafes. A county-wide road trip with Jackie Tyrell and Jacqui Hurley took place last year and the footage from same is being used to nationally promote Kilkenny as a Food Tourism Destination. Ms. Deegan also noted that a lot of restaurants now use local produce and advertise same on their menus.

Ms. Deegan also noted that there is a dedicated Marketing person in the Local Enterprise Office who visits the shops/food producers/restaurants to take pictures and videos of local retailers and promote them on social media. This ensures good coverage for these businesses. Both #ShopKilkenny and #TasteKilkenny are under the website www.kilkenny.ie which promotes Kilkenny under the pillars of visit, invest, shop, taste and craft.

Ms. Deegan added that the Local Enterprise Office continues to support manufacturing businesses and have put a lot of focus on the Green for Micro and Lean for Micro programmes. These programmes assist businesses to implement green strategies to allow them to reduce costs and improve resource efficiency.

Action 1.6:

Build on Kilkenny's strength as a hub for craft businesses and develop centres of excellence for ceramics and jewellery. This action will also include the introduction of a bursary scheme to support start-up businesses.

Ms. Deegan advised that KCC had received funding under the Rural Regional Development Fund (RDDF) to upgrade the Sessions House in Thomastown with a view to it becoming the National Centre for Excellence in Jewellery and Goldsmithing. The DCCOI has moved from a Level 7 to a Level 8 and this may attract students.

The Local Enterprise Office in conjunction with the Abbey Business Centre developed a Bursary for start up craft businesses and Aisling McElwain Ceramics was the successful candidate. Aisling, who trades on the international market, had an incubation space in the Abbey Business Centre for 2 years and received mentoring and training from the Local Enterprise Office.

	<p>Ms. Deegan advised that she is currently working with KIDCO and DCCOI to promote Kilkenny as the World Craft City and County. Design Week will take place in November which will feature international guest speakers.</p> <p>Ms. Deegan advised that she is currently working on an application for the Creative Fund in relation to promotion of the Designation of Kilkenny as a World Craft City and County.</p> <p>Action 1.10 <i>Develop a Retail Excellence Strategy and include cross-sectoral collaborations in areas such as shop frontage design, use of technology in sales and marketing (including online trading), and the use of local heritage and culture in marketing design. This action will also include promoting ecommerce opportunities and increasing the number of Trading On-line Vouchers drawn down in particular by retailers in the County.</i></p> <p>Ms. Deegan advised that a Retail Strategy has also been prepared for the County which is contained within Appendix A of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 which outlines the Council’s policy on retail in both Kilkenny City and throughout the County. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Ms. Deegan said that 578 businesses have been approved for Trading on line Vouchers totally €1.3M. The Local Enterprise Office continues to provide training for businesses to sell online to national and international markets.</p> <p>Following questions from Cllr. Maria Dollard with regards to a 3rd Level campus in Kilkenny and the governance structure for the redevelopment of the Abbey Quarter, Mr. McKeown said that a campus in the Abbey Quarter will be a strategic objective in the next LECP. The new president for the South East Technical University (SETU) should be in situ, possibly in the summer and when appointed, Kilkenny County Council will meet with them to discuss this issue. Mr. McKeown further stated that the Chief Executive of Kilkenny County Council, Ms. Colette Byrne and Mr. Martin Prendiville are on the board of the Abbey Quarter Partnership and that good structures and transparencies are in place. Mr. Prendiville further added that the Abbey Quarter Partnership also includes 2 members from the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA)</p> <p>Mr. Paul Brophy asked Ms. Deegan would there be supports available for any Ukrainian people that would like to set up a business in Kilkenny. Ms. Deegan confirmed that there would be. Ms. Deegan acknowledged that the Educational Training Board (ETB) are doing great work on providing educational supports and assisting in placing Ukrainian Children into schools. Cllr. Coonan further asked would traditional skills such as Stone Masonry be included to which Ms. Deegan replied that this could be looked at and she will keep it on the agenda.</p> <p>The review of the current LECP was proposed by Cllr. Coonan and seconded by Cllr. Dollard.</p>
5.	<p>LECP 2023 – 2028: LECP Project Plan.</p> <p>Ms. Deegan took the committee through the draft LECP Implementation Plan for the preparation of the LECP (2023 -2028) and noted that it will be developed within the context of the UNs 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals.</p> <p>She noted that the Framework Plan alongside the first 2 year Implementation Plan would be ready for adoption by the Council members in Qtr 1 2023, with various consultations taking place throughout the process with wider stakeholders, SPC and MD members.</p>

	<p>She noted that the Council had gone out to tender for consultants to work alongside KCC on the process and that she would update the members at the next meeting of the SPC in relation to the outcome of same.</p>
6.	<p>LECP Advisory Steering Group Nomination:</p> <p>The Chair advised that a member of the SPC Committee with business background would be required to sit on the Advisory Steering Group for the next LECP which will be made up of the Chief Officer, Ms. Annette Fitzpatrick; Director of Services for Economic Development, Mr. Sean McKeown; staff from the community and economic development section of the Council; a representative from the LCDC (with community background) and a representative from the SPC (with business background).</p> <p>The role of the Advisory Steering Group is to have regard to the need to integrate the economic and community elements of the LECP, to ensure they are co-ordinated and to avoid duplication. They will assist in the preparation, drafting, adoption, implementation and monitoring of the LECP.</p> <p>Marion Acreman was proposed by Cllr. Frisby, seconded by Cllr. Coonan and unanimously agreed. Ms. Acreman accepted the position and stated that she looked forward to working with the Advisory Committee in the development of the next LECP for Kilkenny.</p>
7	<p>Consideration of Policy Issues:</p> <p>Mr. Denis Malone provided an update on the City and County Development Plan which came into effect last October.</p> <p>With regards to Rural Development, Mr. Malone went through the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - guidance is to be prepared on serviced sites in rural areas, with both the Rower and Inistioge being piloted. - Town Centre First Policy will be a priority - The brief for the regeneration of Urlingford has gone out and consultants to be appointed. - Brief to be carried out for the future development of the villages of Mullinavat and Kilmacow. <p>With regards to the City, Mr. Malone provided an update on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Masterplan for Loughmacask – This project has been delayed due to Covid-19 and will go out for public consultation in April 2022. - St Canice’s Campus – This project is at the midway stage. <p>Mr Malone also added that the current Abbey Quarter Masterplan requires revision to address the need for mixed uses to be achieved, the housing elements and how they will be achieved. In this regard, Mr Malone said that a tender will go out in a few weeks’ time for a review of the Abbey Quarter Masterplan.</p> <p>Cllr. Coonan asked Mr. Malone would there be a delay in finalising a masterplan for St Canice’s Campus, to which Mr Malone replied that it is envisaged to go out to public consultation in early May and then go back to HSE with findings and a draft document to be done. Cllr. Coonan also added that Cois Nore are looking at a site on St Canice’s.</p> <p>Mr. Brian Hamilton raised a question in relation to the Thomastown Town Plan and value for money with the appointed consultants. Mr. Malone confirmed that the consultants had been appointed through an open competitive tendering process.</p>

8	Any Other Business: None
9	Date of Next Meeting: The Chair advised that the remaining SPC 1 meetings would need to be rescheduled: <u>The following new dates were agreed:</u> Thursday 9 th June – 3.30pm to 5.00pm. Thursday 8 th September – 3.30pm to 5.00pm Thursday 8 th December – 3.30pm to 5.00pm. The next meeting of SPC1 will take place on Thursday 9 th June 2022 at 3.30pm. The meeting concluded at 5.00pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____

CLLR. GER FRISBY
Chairman