

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

Council Chambers, County Hall, John Street, Kilkenny

Thursday 21st September at 3.00pm

Present: Cllr. Ger Frisby (Chair), Cllr. Maria Dollard, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Cllr. Michael Doyle, Cllr. Patrick O'Neill, Mr. Brian Hamilton, Ms. Eileen Moyles, Ms. Marion Acreman, Mr. Jimmy Duggan.

Apologies: Cllr. John Coonan; Cllr. Eugene McGuinness, Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, Ms. Fiona O'Neill, Ms. Deirdre Shine, Mr. Bill O Keeffe.

In Attendance: Mr. Sean McKeown, Mr. Martin Prendiville, Mr. Denis Malone, Ms. Aileen McGrath, Ms. Martina Comerford, Mr. Tony Lauhoff, Ms. Catherine Myers.

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

Item	
1.	<p>Declaration of Interest:</p> <p>Mr. Brian Hamilton reiterated his declaration of interest that he had made at past SPC1 meetings, concerning a number of property and boundary issues between Mr. Hamilton's residence and the Island Mill, which is leased by Kilkenny County Council to the Kilkenny and Carlow Educational and Training Board.</p> <p>Mr Hamilton wished to add a number of additional factors which he outlined to the meeting.</p> <p>Mr Hamilton also thanked Mr. Sean McKeown for his efforts to date in trying to find a solution to the above to which Mr. McKeown replied that he would in due course, brief the new Chief Executive.</p>
2.	<p>Confirmation of Minutes:</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 22nd June 2023 were proposed by Cllr. Michael McCarthy and seconded by Mr. Jimmy Duggan and agreed.</p>
3.	<p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>As agreed at the SPC1 meeting held on 22nd June, Ms Martina Comerford would present on the Draft Kilkenny County Council Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2028 under item 5 on the agenda.</p>
4.	<p>Progress Report:</p> <p>The Chair noted that the agenda and progress report were circulated and that the progress report was taken as read.</p> <p><u>Abbey Quarter Regeneration:</u></p> <p>Mr. McKeown advised that Phase 1 is now complete and Phase 2 will commence soon. Mr Tony Lauhoff has been appointed to the position of Development Director of Kilkenny Abbey Quarter Development Partnership.</p> <p><u>North Quays SDZ:</u></p> <p>Mr. McKeown updated on the North Quays SDZ advising there is a lot of preparatory work being undertaken at the moment.</p> <p><u>Project Office and Parks:</u></p> <p>Mr. McKeown gave an update on the following:</p>

South East Greenway - Phase One of the South East Greenway (New Ross to Glenmore -6km in length) was officially opened on the 25th July. Lot 5A (Ferrybank to Curraghmore) has gone out to tender with the construction works contract to be awarded later this year. Mr. McKeown also noted that the planning consultation process under Part 8 has now closed. There will be an update on this project at the next SPC1 meeting.

Kilkenny Countryside Park – Phase one of the Park was completed in June 2022. This project was completed with funding from ORIS, the Sports Capital Scheme and Kilkenny County Council.

Planning:

Mr. McKeown noted that applications through E-Planning are continuing to increase. The feedback from the public and agents is that the E-planning service is quick and easy to use.

Local Enterprise Office:

Ms. Aileen McGrath gave an update on LEO activities including the following:

Ms. McGrath presented the LEO KPIs as at Q3, noting that Enterprise Ireland provide the targets to LEO at the start of the year. The outcomes of 2023 will be presented to the committee at the March 2024 SPC1 Meeting. Ms. McGrath advised 624 people have availed of training, 112 of this is people participating in Starting a Business programmes.

Ms. McGrath also provided information on the Funding and Supports for Going Green Event which took place on the 14th September in Hotel Kilkenny. This event which was run by LEO Kilkenny in conjunction with Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Team and South East Energy Agency had the aim to inform entrepreneurs about the supports that are available to support the sustainable journey and to becoming greener. Guest Speaker, Duncan Stewart was joined by two local case studies, Ashling Raggett and John Ryan.

Ms. McGrath gave an outline on the new Energy Efficiency Grant for Small Enterprises (including the eligibility criteria and eligible costs) noting that the grant supports the investment in technologies and equipment of enterprises following on from a Green for Micro/Business Report, Green Start Report or a SEAI Energy Audit with 50% of eligible costs up to a maximum grant of €5,000.

Ms. McGrath updated the committee with details on the *'More Than Just a Desk'* Campaign which recently launched. This Campaign was designed to promote and bring awareness of the many remote hubs which are located both in the city and county. Adverts were placed in regional and national newspapers, local and regional radio stations and across social media.

Cllr Dollard asked if Disability Services could avail of the Green for Micro Programme, to which Ms. McGrath said no, as only commercial entities could avail of Green Supports, however, Ms. McGrath is going to speak to Cllr. Dollard about possible mentoring for social enterprises.

Ms. Marion Acreman asked if there was a deadline for submissions for the Energy Efficiency Grant which Ms. McGrath replied there was none. Cllr. Maria Dollard asked if there was a Green for Micro Programme for Farmers and Ms McGrath said there was not, but all queries should be referred to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

	<p>Cllr. Michael McCarthy remarked that since the Greenway opened there has been great feedback from local businesses and asked if there was plans in place to record footfall.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Consideration of Policy Issues:</p> <p>(1) Briefing on Masterplan for Urlingford</p> <p>Mr Denis Malone provided a briefing on the Masterplan for Urlingford noting, that following public consultation and the drafting of the Chief Executives report, the masterplan was adopted by the Municipal District Members on Monday 18th September. This Masterplan will help to access extra funding and will be used as a template for other town masterplans.</p> <p>(2) Briefing on St Canice’s Masterplan</p> <p>Mr Malone advised that the draft Masterplan for St Canice’s has been completed in conjunction with the HSE. It will be presented to the Municipal District Members in October before it goes through the public consultation process.</p> <p>(3) Briefing on Abbey Quarter Masterplan</p> <p>Mr. Malone gave an update on the Review of the Abbey Quarter Masterplan, noting that the Council had prepared a draft Masterplan for an extended Abbey Quarter area (to include Vicar Street & Greensbridge Street) along with a review of policy and the Urban Design Code (2018). Following public consultation and the drafting of the Chief Executive’s report, the Masterplan was approved by the Elected Members at the Plenary Meeting which was held on Monday 18th September. This Masterplan will now be included in the City and County Development Plan.</p> <p>(4) Presentation on the Draft Kilkenny County Council Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2028</p> <p>A draft of the Kilkenny County Council’s Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2028 had been circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting and is taken as read.</p> <p>Ms Martina Comerford advised that Kilkenny County Council plays a significant role in promoting and developing tourism in Kilkenny. The Council is responsible for developing and implementing policies and initiatives that enhance the visitor experience to the County and promote the County as a world class tourism destination.</p> <p>The draft Tourism Strategy sets out the background, policy context, vision and strategic objectives around Tourism for Kilkenny County Council and the proposed action plan for the coming years.</p> <p>The plan presented at the meeting is a draft and once the draft was agreed upon, the next phase will publish the plan on consult.ie and taking consideration of feedback on the consultation process.</p> <p>The final Strategy will be presented for consideration to SPC1 before a meeting of Kilkenny County Council in December.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring of the Implementation plan related to the Strategy will be carried out by SPC1.</p> <p>It was noted that Ms. Fiona O Neill had submitted feedback from Social Inclusion and Access Group Contribution – notably Section 3 (part 3.2 & 3.5) and Section 4 (part 4.3 & 4.5). Ms. O Neill had outlined that the word “Universal Design” was not included anywhere in the document along with the words – disabled, disability, children, accessibility/accessible and</p>

	<p>universal. Ms. Comerford has confirmed that she has received Ms. O Neill's feedback and it will be noted in the changes to the document.</p> <p>Mr. Duggan asked if additional car-parking could be looked at for Graiguenamnagh as it is very busy in the summer months. He acknowledged that there was parking in the Fairgreen and Aldi, but this would need to be signposted better.</p> <p>Cllr. Dollard suggested that additional advertising is required to advise people that Kilkenny was named as World Craft Destination. She also expressed the need of a consolidated place for the selling of Kilkenny Craft. Mr. McKeown noted that Sessions House in Thomastown has been leased to DCCI for their Jewellery School. Also, the former Bank of Ireland premises in Thomastown was purchased by Kilkenny County Council and will be leased to DCCI for craft use.</p> <p>Cllr. Dollard also noted that the €12 entrance fee for the Medieval Mile Museum is expensive and she enquired about the proposed fee for the Museum of Medieval Kilkenny. Ms. Comerford noted that the Museum wouldn't have free admission.</p> <p>Cllr. Dollard also noted the we need to look at providing more facilities for Camper Vans and Camping.</p> <p>Ms. Marion Acreman asked was there any plans to renovate the derelict area of McDonagh Junction Train Station to which Mr. McKeown said that a Derelict Site Notice has been served on CIE and an Historical and Heritage Assessment needs to be carried out to ascertain what works need to be done to make it secure. CIE had looked at an option of using the space to extend the existing platform.</p> <p>Cllr. Michael Doyle advised that while Woodstock is an excellent Tourism offering in Inistioge, he expressed concern that there are no cafes and shops in Inistioge. He also advised that the River is not as utilised/promoted in the same way as it is in Graiguenamanagh. Mr. Duggan suggested that Campervan/Camping facilities and access for kayaking in Inistioge could be a great offering for the town. It was also noted that a link from the South East Greenway to Inistioge is being explored, funded by TII.</p>
6.	<p>Any Other Business:</p> <p>Monitoring of the LECP Implementation Plan Ms McGrath noted that there will be an Advisory Committee Meeting and a report on the Implementation plan will be ready for Q1 2024.</p>
9	<p>Date of Next Meeting: The next SPC 1 meeting will be held on the 7th December 2023 from 11.00am – 12.45pm in Council Chambers in County Hall. This will be followed by lunch in Langtons at 1.00pm.</p> <p>The meeting concluded at 4.30pm.</p>

Signed: _____

Date: _____

CLLR. GER FRISBY
Chairman