



# **The Councils of the County and City of Kilkenny Corporate Plan 2009-2014**

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## **Foreword –County Manager.**

Welcome to the Kilkenny County and City Council's Corporate Plan 2009 - 2014.

In publishing this Plan we hope to present a clear picture of our future plans as well as giving an insight into the strategies being pursued for the betterment of the county and improvement of service delivery.

In 1997 Kilkenny Local Authorities adopted the principles of the Strategic Management Initiative. We undertook a detailed review of our operations and identified the changes necessary to ensure that Local Government continued to be relevant, meaningful and a key catalyst for the betterment of the community moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> century

In 2001 we adopted a Corporate Plan which covered the years 2001 to 2004. This Plan which incorporated a Customer Action Plan was a follow on to the Strategic Management Plan.

The Corporate Plan for the years 2004-2009 was adopted in December 2004 following an extensive consultation exercise and in accordance with the template produced by the DOEHLG earlier that year. It is pleasing to record considerable progress in achieving many of the key aims of that plan.

In publishing this Corporate Plan we seek to produce a clear written statement on what objectives we aim to achieve over the period of the plan, the supporting strategies adopted to achieve these aims and the mechanisms for implementing, monitoring, review and adjustment. We are mindful that this Plan is being produced in unprecedented challenging times for the County and Borough and for the community we serve. Therefore, it is even more important for our core objectives and their supporting strategies to be realistic, achievable and focused on the needs of our customers.

This Plan has been prepared and adopted following consultation with our stakeholders through their participation on Strategic Policy Committees, the Corporate Policy Group, the County Development Board and our Workplace Partnership Committee.

The Management Team and Departmental teams focussed on specific supporting strategies within their areas. The contributions made by all those who participated through the submission of views and comments is acknowledged and appreciated.

The publication of the Plan represents the completion of the first step in a process. The next phase will include the production and implementation of individual annual Operational Plans through which the Corporate Plan can be implemented. We are anxious to ensure that the Corporate Plan is seen as a living document capable of change in response to customer needs and changing priorities. We welcome the submission of comments on the contents of the Plan and our actual performance against the objectives agreed.

I wish to express my appreciation to the elected members and staff for the time allocated by them to the process. In particular, I wish to thank all those involved in guiding the consultation process. I wish to thank all the members of the Council and the Cathaoirleach Cllr. Michael O'Brien, the members of the Corporate Policy Group, Chairman Cllr. Michael O'Brien and SPC chairs, Cllrs Maurice Shortall, Pat Millea, Paul Cuddihy, Marie Fitzpatrick and John Brennan and the chairs of the area committees, Cllrs. M.H. Cavanagh, John Coonan, Tom Maher, Pat Dunphy and Pat O'Neill

I also wish to extend my appreciation to the Management and Staff and look forward to working with them to meet the considerable challenges over the next 5 years.

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**J. Crockett,**  
**County Manager.**

## **MESSAGES**

### **CATHAOIRLEACH:**

As Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, I wish to welcome this Corporate Plan covering the period 2009-2014. This is the fourth such plan, and dovetails the period of the Council's up to the Local Elections of 2014.

The preparation of the plan has involved a high level of consultation across our stakeholders. This plan is structured around a core principle of delivering services in an open, equitable, sustainable and efficient manner within available scarce resources to all the people of Kilkenny.

We have to acknowledge that the Plan is being prepared for a period where Local Government faces difficult and unprecedented challenges. Therefore, the plan has to focus on our core objectives and to provide a template which our local authorities can use to position ourselves as leaders of social, economic and cultural development of the county.

As both Members and Officials we will face great responsibilities and at times difficult choices over the lifetime of this Plan. As someone who has been both a participant in and an advocate of local democracy and local service delivery for many years, I am confident that we can face these challenges and I would see this Plan as an invaluable road map for us to achieve our objectives and respond to the needs of the Communities we serve.

**Cllr Michael O'Brien**

**Cathaoirleach**

## **MAYOR**

As Mayor of Kilkenny Borough Council, I wish to welcome this Corporate Plan covering the period 2009-2014. The year that this plan is being produced has been a momentous one as it marks our 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary since we received City Status. However, it has also been a challenging one for the people of Kilkenny City and the broader County as its citizens come to grips with the most difficult economic situation for many generations.

In the last Corporate Plan covering the period 2004-2009 considerable emphasis was placed on social inclusion. While funding is now scarcer than has been the case in recent times, it is essential that the Council continues to take a caring approach to ensure that no members of our community are socially excluded. I am pleased to see that social inclusion continues to be a core value and cross cutting theme in the Plan for the future.

I am also pleased that this Plan places as a core theme and objective, the concept of Sustainable Development. Sustainable development is at the heart of the National Spatial Strategy with the need to make best use of natural resources, bring jobs closer to where people live and ensure a high quality natural and built environment. Sustainable Development goes beyond the confines of what would be perceived as environmental issues and has at its heart Sustainable development is at its core the need to make best use of natural resources, bringing jobs closer to where people live and ensuring a high quality natural and built environment.

As Elected Members and Officials I am confident that we can work in partnership with other agencies and take the lead in maintaining and where resources allow, improving the high standard of Local Government services to the people of Kilkenny City and County at the most appropriate level.

**Cllr. Malcolm Noonan**

## **Mayor**

### **Kilkenny County and City**

Kilkenny County, along with the counties of South Tipperary, Wexford, Carlow, and Waterford constitutes the South East Region of Ireland. The County has an area of 796 sq. miles (509,432 acres). Although an inland County, it has direct access to the sea via Belview Port on the Suir estuary and via New Ross on the Barrow River.

The County consists of a highly fertile central plain with uplands in the northeast, the northwest and in the south. The River Nore bisects the County on a north/south axis. The rivers Barrow and Suir are natural boundaries to the east and south of the County respectively.

The main employment categories in the County comprise agriculture, manufacturing, financial services, retailing, tourism, construction, food processing, mining and crafts enterprises. Small enterprises provide the vast majority of employment in Kilkenny and account for 90 per cent of all business.

The Census of 2006 estimates an increase in County Kilkenny's population of 7,055 between 2002 and 2006. This represents an 8.8% increase from the Census 2002 and was slightly ahead of the national average of 8.1%. The preliminary figures further indicate that 4,822 of this rise was due to net migration.

#### **Population in Kilkenny City and County 1996-2006**

	<b>1996</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>Kilkenny County</b>	75,336	80,399	87,558

#### **Kilkenny City**

<b>&amp; Environs</b>	18,696	20,735	22,179
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There are 26 councillors serving the County divided over 5 electoral areas.

The City of Kilkenny has played an important role in the history of Ireland since its foundation in the 6th century by St. Cainneach (St. Canice). It is essentially a medieval town of the thirteenth century: a product of the Norman Conquest.

Kilkenny was constituted as a City by a Royal Charter of James I in 1609. This year, the City proudly celebrated the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of it being declared a City.

The Borough of Kilkenny is served by 12 elected members.

The City has an area of 373.5 hectares (923 acres) and a population estimated at 8,500.

The Borough and Environs has a population of 22,000 approx.

The medieval character of the city has been maintained, particularly by the preservation of such historic buildings as Kilkenny Castle, St. Canice's Cathedral, Rothe House and Shee Alms House.

Though the City has attracted large employers such as Glanbia, Statestreet, VHI and Smithwicks Brewery would be an internationally known local trade mark, the City and Environs is highly dependent on the hospitality trade and its unique attraction to tourists.



## **Background**

The Corporate Plan serves as the local authorities strategic framework for action in the future. The Corporate Plan is a strategy to attain high-level organisation goals. It presents the local authorities' vision. In legislative terms, Section 134 of the Local Government Act 2001 requires Corporate Plans for the lifespan of the new councils (2009-2014).

The Corporate Plan identifies objectives for the timeframe of the plan within the context of the operating environment for the County and Borough. The strategic planning process has had regard to the resources and constraints impacting on the delivery of the Corporate Plan objectives. Kilkenny Local Authorities have also established reporting arrangements to monitor progress annually.

The plan takes account of a series of cross-cutting themes permeating Kilkenny Local Authorities. It also reflects a range of cross-departmental issues. As a strategic framework, the Corporate Plan will steer the preparation and implementation of Operational Plans by each service area. The Operational Plans will detail how each directorate /service area will deliver on the objectives herein.

## **Consultation Process**

Kilkenny Local Authorities in the preparation of the Corporate Plan has had a widespread consultation process with all our stakeholders. Internal Local authority stakeholders consulted included:

- Elected Members of Kilkenny County Council
- Corporate Policy Group
- Management Team (County Manager & Directors)
- Kilkenny Local Authorities Workplace Partnership Committee
- Teams within various Departments

External stakeholders consulted included:

- County Development Board
- Social Partners and other Public bodies

## **Mission Statement:**

**“Kilkenny Local Authorities aim to work in partnership with the people of Kilkenny and relevant agencies to deliver quality services and to promote sustainable economic, social and cultural development for current and future generations.”**

## **Cross Cutting Issues**

A number of cross-cutting themes underlie the strategic objectives in the Corporate Plan. These include the local authorities' commitments with its partners within the County Development Board and issues relating to social inclusion, sustainable development and relevant statutory plans and strategies of the local authority.

- Kilkenny County Development Board
- Social Inclusion
- Sustainable Development
- Quality Customer Service
- Statutory Plans and Strategies of Kilkenny Local Authorities
- Improved Communication
- Best Use of Scarce Resources
- Dealing with the effects of Climate Change

### ***County Development Board***

Kilkenny County Development Board (CDB) was established in 2000. The CDB has statutory responsibility under Section 129 of the Local Government Act 2001 for the better co-ordination of public services at local level. The Board involves a joint effort by all agencies and organisations who are committed to the overall social, economic & cultural development of Kilkenny. This approach to decision making represents a significant step in terms of the achievement of common goals for the county.

Kilkenny Local Authorities Corporate Plan 2009-2014 compliments and supports the overall thrust of the CDB strategy as well as the ongoing work of the board generally.

Kilkenny Local Authorities will work in partnership with, local communities and other service providers to ensure that our services are delivered in an effective and efficient manner to meet the ever changing needs of society.

### ***Social Inclusion***

The Local Government Act 2001 identifies social inclusion as a core issue for Local Authorities. Social Inclusion is defined as

"A series of positive actions to achieve equality of access to goods and services, to assist all individuals participate in their community and society, to encourage the contribution of all persons to social and cultural life and be aware of and change all forms of discrimination."

Our County Development Board's Integrated Strategy has endorsed 'social inclusion' as one of the fundamental values of the communities, families and businesses of Kilkenny.

*"A focus on Social Inclusion underpins the plans and actions of the County Development Board"*

Kilkenny Local Authorities have committed to these values.

Through a multi agency approach, Kilkenny Local Authorities are informed on the key problems of social exclusion as they apply to different groups within the various electoral areas of the county. The Corporate Plan seeks to address these needs based on targetting scarce resources. The annual Operational Plans for each Directorate will also pursue this social inclusion objective. All plans will be proofed against poverty, exclusion, inequality and spatial planning issues.

### ***Sustainable Development***

Sustainable development is defined as:

"Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

Sustainable development is at the heart of the National Spatial Strategy with the need to make best use of natural resources, bring jobs closer to where people live and ensure a high quality natural and built environment. Kilkenny County Council has a mandate to ensure the provision of a range of essential infrastructure and services throughout the County. A number of important policy documents are in place, particularly the County

Development Plan 2008-2014 and the equivalent City and Environs Plan which guides growth and development in a sustainable and equitable manner.

### ***Quality Customer Service***

Kilkenny Local Authorities are committed to the principles of Quality Customer Service and has formulated an Action Plan which sets out how it is proposed to implement these principles and ensure that customer / citizens are dealt with in an efficient and effective manner at all times.

### ***Statutory Plans and Strategies of Kilkenny Local Authorities***

Kilkenny Local Authorities have developed and adopted statutory plans and strategies and have also responsibility for implementing many national policies at local level..

These cross cutting issues will be dealt with in greater detail and translated into actions under the key objectives of the Corporate Plan.

### ***Improved Communication***

Kilkenny Local Authorities will strive to improve communications within each authority, across both authorities, with relevant agencies and with the general public to ensure better service delivery.

### ***Best Use of Resources***

Given the medium term economic climate and the low income base, the need for budgetary restraint, maximizing efficiencies and utilizing scarce resources has become even more important.

Kilkenny Local Authorities will strive to deliver their services in the most efficient and cost effective manner, through regular and ongoing review.

### ***Dealing with the effects of climate change***

In recent years both locally and nationally we have seen the visible effects of climate change in the way of higher rainfall leading to more frequent flooding incidences and the consequent detrimental effect on the lives of citizens. Over the period of this Corporate Plan, Kilkenny Local Authorities will seek to play a lead role in National Climate Change Strategy through the provision of an organizational Climate Change Action Plan together with a County Kilkenny Climate Change Action Plan.

## **Core Values and Principles:**

### **Core Values**

The following Core Values will underpin and guide the delivery of services by Kilkenny Local Authorities over the period 2009 - 2014:

- Quality Customers Service
- Enhanced Democracy
- Supporting the Democratic Process
- Community Leadership
- Transparency
- Accessibility, Equity & Respect
- Recognition of Employees
- Consultation & Partnership
- Trust & Integrity
- A Regional Approach
- Responsiveness
- Efficiency & Accountability
- Budgetary Control
- Seeking to maximise use of Scarce Resources.
- Participation and Equality
- Adopting a multi agency approach where appropriate.

In supporting the democratic process and the mandate of the Elected Representatives as well as recognising the need for a safe, healthy, and a supportive environment for staff, Kilkenny Local Authorities subscribe to the following principles:-

- Participation and Equality
- A high quality of service delivery.
- Ongoing service improvement (including value for money and use of indicators).
- High standards of conduct and probity.
- Openness and accountability
- Mutual respect and support for Members, Staff and the general public
- An effective and caring focus on people.
- Ongoing development of Staff

## **Our Operating Environment**

### **External Environment:**

In examining our organisational context we acknowledge that we operate in a multidimensional environment. There are both internal and external factors that dictate how we will implement this plan and realise our core objectives.

- *The National Spatial Strategy (NSS)* which sets out Government policy in relation to achieving balanced regional development over a twenty year time frame up to 2020. Kilkenny is part of the South East Region, which consists of counties Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford. The South East Region is identified for “reinforcing” and “strengthening” in the National Spatial Strategy. Waterford is identified as the Gateway for the region with Kilkenny and Wexford acting as Hubs which will support the national and international role of the gateways and in turn energise smaller towns and rural areas within their sphere of influence.

- *The National Development Plan 2007-2013* which sets out the economic and social investment priorities needed to realise the vision of a better quality of life for all. The NDP sets out a strong framework for the promotion of regional development with a particular focus on investment in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS). Strong urban centres are directly related to regional growth and development, affecting employment, incomes and quality of life throughout the regions. The investment framework and strategy of this NDP will assist and enhance physical and spatial planning.

- *The Towards 2016 Agreement* outlines key national and sectoral policy instruments and strategies in place to meet the economic and social challenges ahead. It considers the wider policy framework, including macroeconomic policy, and building a new social policy perspective, founded on the lifecycle approach. It also outlines the role of social partnership, and the implementation arrangements for the Agreement, including an agreed protocol for engagement between Government and the Social Partners. Despite difficulties which have subsequently arisen from the current Economic climate, Kilkenny Local Authorities have a commitment to engage in a spirit of Partnership to put in place the reforms outlined in that agreement.
- *Ministerial Guidelines and Directives* including those on Housing Strategies, Retail Planning, Childcare Facilities, Development Plans, Residential Density, Architectural Conservation, Landscapes, Sustainable Rural Housing, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Water Pricing. The Council will have regard to all future amendments and new Guidelines published during the plan period and will vary the Plan as appropriate. In carrying out its work programmes
- *Compliance with statutory requirements* places increasing responsibilities and challenges on local authorities. the carrying out of work programmes have to take cognizance of stringent Health and Safety requirements. Furthermore, we are answerable to third parties such as the EPA who require that we comply with standards set at National and EU levels.
- *The national and international economic situation* which influences Central Government policy, funds available to local authorities through the Local Government Fund and local income sources. The current difficulties also require a refocusing to prioritise essential services and places greater pressure on the resources required (both financial and human) to respond to social need

- *EU Policies and Guidelines* which places greater pressures on local authorities to comply with Environmental standards particularly in the areas of Water and Waste water
- *The South East Regional Planning Guidelines* , which expand on the NSS and identify critical enabling investment priorities for the region. The Guidelines are designed to achieve a better spatial balance of social, economic and physical development throughout the region. A settlement typology was established identifying six classifications of urban centres based on size and function and in line with the NSS.
- *Waterford Planning and Land Use Transportation Study (PLUTS)* which sets out a strategy that aims to provide guidance as to the general scale and location of growth in Waterford City so that the City and its environs can be developed in a balanced, sustainable, transport-friendly and attractive way to provide a high quality of life and opportunities for all its citizens over the next 20 years.
- *The South East River Basin Plan* sets out a strategy for the counties within the region to meet their legal obligations to achieve at least good status for waters by 2015. Kilkenny faces considerable challenges if it can bring this plan to realisation, especially in the area of meeting the cross policy requirements and investment needs to achieve the Plans stated objectives. The final plans which will be presented to Members for adoption in coming months will contain details of;
  - Pressures
  - Status of Waters
  - Objectives
  - Measures



At a county level, the Corporate Plan takes account of:

- *Strategy for Economic Social and Cultural Development 2002-2012*. which sets out the agreed strategy for the social, economic and cultural development of Kilkenny for a 10-year period. The Kilkenny County Development Board produced a ten year strategy for the economic, social and cultural development of the City and County for 2002 to 2012. This document sets the framework within which the Kilkenny County Development Board will operate over the period 2002 to 2012. It was reviewed in 2005

The mission of that strategy is to empower the Kilkenny community to take more control over the issues that impact on their daily lives and to recognise the positive mutual dependency and synergy between County and City, to encourage a broadening vision beyond the confines of single agencies and organisations and to encourage full public consultation and a spirit of true partnership. It also sets out to underpin all actions with an ethos of equity and access for all and to consolidate and increase the cultural and economic wealth of the County.

- *Kilkenny County Council's Water Needs Assessment 2009-2012* which was agreed by the Council in October 2009 is an updated programme which covers the period 2010-201 and has been submitted to the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government..The programme emphasises a more focussed approach that centres on contracts rather than schemes and reflects the difficult challenges of balancing the protection of the Environment and Public Health, with the huge issue as to how these urgent measures can be funded.

A prioritised needs assessment was prepared under 4 headings

- Water Conservation
- European Court of Justice Decisions
- Environmental/Public Health Objectives
- Planning/National Spatial Strategy/Job Creation

This assessment prioritises projects that target environmental compliance issues, supports economic and employment growth and offers best value for money. The Department Of the Environment will be publishing the new Water Services Investment Programme over the coming months.

**Local:**

Demographics, changing demands and a recessionary economy coupled with changing information technology also dictate how our business is done. The social, cultural, political and economic context in which we operate is an ever changing and difficult environment to which we must adapt if our people centred approach and our commitment to sustainable development is to be realised.

In our attempts to co-ordinate service delivery much of our local work is undertaken in collaboration and partnership with other key agencies. There is a series of local plans and strategies that have also been considered in developing the Corporate Plan to create synergy at local level.

- Kilkenny Co Council County Development Plan 2008-2014
- Kilkenny City and Environs Development Plan 2008-2014
- Various Local Area Plans
- Kilkenny Co. Council Housing Strategy
- Traveller Accommodation Plan
- Litter Management Action Plan
- Homeless Strategy
- HSE Service Plan
- FÁS Statement of Strategy
- BNS LEADER Plan
- CEB – County Enterprise Plan
- County Tourism Plan
- Rural Transport Strategy
- Water Services Needs Assessment 2009

## **Internal Environment:**

In line with the policies set out in Better Local Government Kilkenny Local Authorities have been seeking to implement the principles of enhanced local democracy, serving the customer better, developing efficiency and the sourcing of proper resources.

The Corporate Policy Group has proved to be a positive forum for overseeing the implementation of policy initiatives as adopted, and the business of Kilkenny County Council.

The Strategic Policy Committees and Municipal Policy Committee have created huge potential to enhance the role of elected members and the wider community as well as creating opportunities for policy development. Over the lifetime of the last Plan, these Committees dealt successfully with a broad range of challenging policy areas across a number of functions and will continue to do so over the next 5 years.

Area Committees are an invaluable forum where democratic structures are in place at the most local level. These quarterly meetings deal with issues relating to service delivery on an area basis. The area committees have addressed a range of road, traffic management, village renewal, community, environmental improvement and service issues for their localities .

National policy documents such as Towards 2016 and increasing local demand require a high standard of service delivery. In order to face these challenges, the organization has to ensure that staff are equipped to serve the public and support local representatives democratic mandate. A staff training programme has been developed to ensure that staff are skilled, motivated and effective in their roles.

Overall improvements in our Information Technology systems have resulted in better internal communications, more streamlined and efficient financial management systems and a shared system of information storage and retrieval.

## **Core Objectives and Supporting Strategies**

### **Corporate:**

#### **Core Objectives:**

- To support the mandate of the elected representative's.
- To develop and manage the capabilities of staff so as to deliver organisational objectives.
- To deliver quality services to the citizen.

#### **Supporting Strategies**

- To ensure that a clear recognition and understanding of the policy and representational roles of the elected representatives permeates both authorities.
- To support and facilitate the democratic structures and fora of both authorities including all of its committees.
- To provide the appropriate structures, people, strategies and systems, as resources permit, to deliver timely and quality services to the people of the County across the full range of services.
- To ensure that staff are supported through appropriate leadership, motivation, appraisal and empowerment strategies.

## **Risk Management**

### **Core Objective:**

To support the organisation in delivering its objectives through minimising associated identified risks and providing guidance and assurance accordingly with a risk adverse appetite.

### **Supporting Strategies:**

- Operate an independent appraisal function for the review of the internal controls as a contribution to the proper economic, effective, and efficient use of resources.
- Operate a risk assessment process for the ongoing identification of internal and external threats to the organisation and operate a controlled response system to manage these threats.
- Review the operations of the Council and ensure that Value for Money is achieved, while openness, accountability, and probity are paramount to the delivery of a high quality service.

## **Procurement**

### **Core Objective**

To advance the purchasing and procurement of goods and services in a more cost effective manner and to pursue a policy of environmentally friendly procurement throughout the organization

### **Supporting Strategies**

- To include in contracts and supporting documentation specifications regarding lowering carbon emissions
- To examine the setting up of an in house team looking at current and future procurement policies

## **Health and Safety**

### **Core Objective**

- To manage health and safety so as to prevent injuries and occupational illnesses of employees and those affected by any council work activities.

### **Supporting Strategies**

- To ensure that the council complies with all Safety Legislation and other related statutory requirements.
- Implement requirements of The Health and Safety Action Plans
- Implement the Annual Health and Safety Training Plan

## **Housing:**

### **Core Objectives**

- To ensure that all our citizens enjoy an adequate standard of housing accommodation appropriate to their needs and, as far as possible in a location and tenure of their choice and to provide a responsive and supportive housing service for those in need of assistance.

### **Supporting Strategies:**

- To maximise the availability of accommodation to meet different categories of need.
- Implement a planned programme of maintenance and refurbishment of our existing housing stock in Kilkenny, subject to available resources.
- Foster estate management and tenant participation.
- To provide loans and incentives for people housing themselves.
- Provide for marginalised groups such as persons with disabilities, travelers and homeless within agreed Housing Accommodation Programmes.

## **Transportation:**

### **Core objective**

To plan for and facilitate the transportation needs of the people residing in and traveling through County Kilkenny by developing and improving infrastructure including the formulation of public transport policy for the City & County.

### **Supporting Strategies**

- To engage pro-actively with the relevant authorities in the planning and execution of the transportation objectives of the National Development Plan.
- To improve the standards of the county's non-national road network to meet the current and anticipated needs.
- Through the Strategic Policy Committee to develop policies aimed at meeting the various transportation needs of the county.
- To promote community involvement in the repair and upgrading of local tertiary roads.
- To prepare traffic management plans for the principal towns in the County and make provision for the implementation of such plans.
- To engage with relevant agencies in the promotion of traffic safety, particularly by targeting the younger members of the community.
- To promote a shift to environmentally sustainable modes of transport through the improvement and development of pedestrian, cycling and public transport infrastructure and services
- To make adaptations for climate change and increased rainfall in the planning and maintenance of the county's road network
- To encourage resource sharing and pooling of utilities amongst private sector transport operators
- To consider national and international carbon reduction commitments in the design of new road infrastructure and in the provision and operation of public lighting services.

## **Water Services**

### **Core Objective**

Water: To provide a quality drinking water supply for all current and prospective customers

Waste Water: To protect river and groundwater quality

### **Supporting Strategies**

- To implement plans under the Water Services Investment Programme, having regard to the assessment of needs and resource availability
- To maximise our Water Services infrastructure to support economic development in County Kilkenny
- To promote water conservation and maximum efficient use of resources
- To maximise potential of the Rural Water Programme including the Small Schemes Programme to further improve the water and wastewater facilities in the County
- To minimise energy consumption in delivery of water and waste water services
  - To carry out the following in order to comply with National Regulations and Guidelines:
    - Monitoring relating to, surface water, waste water etc. to ensure compliance with appropriate Drinking Water regulations
    - To further develop and comply with the drinking water quality protocol, agreed with the Council and HSE.
    - To prepare and develop the DWIRP (Drinking Water Incident Response Plan) and the Water Safety Plan
    - Reporting to the public in a transparent manner the water quality results on a timely basis



## **Emergency Planning**

### **Core objective:**

- To prepare a major emergency response capability in line with the *Framework for Major Emergency Management* publication.

### **Supporting Strategy:**

- Produce (and update as necessary) a Major Emergency Plan in line with *Framework for Major Emergency Management* publication.
- Test the Major Emergency Plan with a Major Emergency Exercise.

## **Broadband:**

### **Core Objective**

**To co-operate with Government initiatives to maximise the potential of having broadband connectivity available throughout the county.**

### **Supporting Strategies**

- To work with the managed services entity e|net to maximize the use of the Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) in Kilkenny and Thomastown.
- To facilitate where possible the laying of ducting for broadband on new infrastructure projects.
- To ensure that our IT infrastructure and staff are sufficiently resourced to maximize the potential of broadband and other emerging technologies for the benefit of the Local Authorities and the County as a whole.
- To support the roll out of the National Broadband Scheme throughout the county.

## **PLANNING & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE**

To achieve balanced sustainable development while affording protection of the natural and built environment of the county so as to ensure

- ❖ enhanced physical and socio-economic infrastructure,
- ❖ enhanced quality of life for the County's residents and,
- ❖ a sound economic base on which to deliver local sustainable employment in both rural and urban locations throughout the county.

### **SUPPORTING STRATEGIES**

1. Regularly review plans and policies and ensure a flexible response to the county's changing needs and providing for the strategic planning of:

- Kilkenny County
- Kilkenny City & Environs as a designated Hub.
- Ferrybank/Belview promoting the Waterford Gateway

2. Plan and provide for the development of sustainable neighborhoods

3. Protect the built and natural environment with policies and practices to secure their conservation and protection.

4. Provide an effective and efficient high quality planning service encompassing pre-planning consultations, planning assessment, decision making and enforcement processes.

5. To work in partnership with key stakeholders in the implementation of all National and Regional Plans and Guidelines.

## **Environment**

### **Core Objective**

To promote and protect the environment of County Kilkenny in a sustainable manner for the benefit of current and future generations.

### **Supporting Strategies**

- **Water Quality**
  - To facilitate the implementation of the South East River Basin Management Plan.
  - To pursue, in the interests of public health, suitable source protection for public drinking water supplies and to co-operate with Group Water Supplies in their development of suitable source protection measures.
- **Climate Change**
  - To play a lead role in National Climate Change Strategy through the provision of an organizational Climate Change Action Plan together with a County Kilkenny Climate Change Action Plan.
- **Waste Management**
  - To participate in the implementation of the Joint Waste Management Plan for the South East Region.
  - To enforce environmental standards.
- **Education & Awareness**
  - To develop community programmes in order to facilitate environmental objectives
  - Promote environmental education awareness.
- **Emergency Response**
  - To provide an efficient emergency response in liason with the relevant agencies.
  - To participate in the National Framework for Emergency Response Management.
- **Consumer Protection**
  - To co-operate with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland in relation to consumer protection measures.

## **Community & Enterprise and Cultural Affairs (Arts, Culture, Heritage, Education and Tourism)**

### **Core Objectives:**

1. To actively participate in the achievement of the priority objectives of Kilkenny County Development Board
2. To promote and foster civic leadership and participation across the arts, culture, heritage, recreation, library and community sectors.

### **Supporting Strategies**

#### **Community & Enterprise:**

- To form working partnerships internally as well as with other service providers, agencies and groups to develop integrated responses to identified economic and social issues.
- To support the County Development Board and its substructures to implement priority objectives for the county
- To support the Community & Voluntary Sector in County Kilkenny to fulfill its role as a Social Partner at local level.
- To actively promote community participation and organisation aimed at achieving valued improvements in quality of life, quality of services and quality of environment for identifiable groups such as children & young people, ethnic groups, older people, Travellers etc.

#### **Arts:**

- To develop and implement a Strategy for the Arts.

#### **Sport & Recreation:**

- To guide the process in the planning and development of sporting, recreational, play and amenity facilities for the enjoyable and constructive use of leisure time, in conjunction with the Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership and other relevant agencies and groups.
- To further support the co-ordination and implementation of the Kilkenny Play Plan in line with National Policy.

#### **Heritage:**

- To promote interest, education, knowledge and pride in the heritage of the City and County of Kilkenny.
- To implement the Kilkenny Heritage Plan and Kilkenny Biodiversity Plan, in association with the Kilkenny Heritage Forum.

#### **Tourism:**

To continue the implementation of the existing Tourism Strategy in conjunction with Kilkenny Tourism, representing the various stakeholders and position Kilkenny as Ireland's culture.

## **Corporate Plan – Library Section**

### **Core Objective**

“To pursue the aims and objectives set out in the five year Library Development Plan through the provision of a knowledge resource that promotes imagination, lifelong learning and culture.”

### **Supporting Strategies**

**Access and Participation** – To pro-actively build partnerships and networks across the community to serve the widest possible audience.

Measures include reviewing membership charges, reviewing opening hours, investigating ways of establishing a library presence utilizing existing community hubs, and developing contacts with local agencies and relevant organizations. These may be currently limited or constrained as a result of financial, physical or social barriers.

**Infrastructure:-**Recognising current economic conditions, we will endeavour to pursue the capital development programme where possible and maintain and develop existing buildings and vehicles to comply with current standards and legislation.

**Information Technology: -**To use ICT as a tool to improve and enhance library services, utilizing and embracing new technologies where feasible and appropriate.

Actions include expansion of the current public Internet service using WIFI and providing searching skills classes for the public, enhancing our webpage and developing on-line services to support the notion of a virtual library.

**Library Collections and Information:-**To strategically position our information services and library collections to reflect community and individual needs. Actions include developing a stock collection policy, developing local history outreach activities and most importantly ensuring that the recommended per capita book fund target of 3.77% is reached.

**Management and Staffing:-**To develop a mechanism to ensure that staff resources are supported and utilized to deliver the most effective service using improved communication channels, PMDS process and reviewing current staffing and structures in line with prioritized service requirements.

**Marketing and Promotion:-**To develop a pro-active marketing strategy and to provide a more co-ordinated promotion programme.

## **Kilkenny Borough Council**

Kilkenny city manages to combine a unique historic character with being one of the most vibrant and dynamic urban centres in the country. The challenge for Kilkenny Borough Council will be to build on the strengths of the city and provide an inclusive, pro-active service for the people of Kilkenny in partnership with the County Council over the term of this plan.

### **Vision**

The principles of democracy, focus on people, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, social inclusion and value for money will be central to all activities of Kilkenny Borough Council. The following strategies are central to Kilkenny Borough Council's vision for the period of this Corporate Plan.

- The fostering of improved communications between the Borough and County Councils.
- The recognition of the strong democratic link between the two authorities whilst maintaining the unique identity of each organisation.
- The Promotion and development of the city in all of its aspects including the commercial and retail core, social/community, tourism, amenities and culture.
- The examination in partnership with Kilkenny County Council of the feasibility of extending the Borough Boundary to include the Environs of Kilkenny City.
- The sharing of services with Kilkenny County Council to provide a streamlined, efficient service to all the people of the City and Environs at the level most appropriate to the customer.
- The focus on optimal use of resources in the provision of core services.
- The protection and promotion of the City's unique heritage.

## **Internal Capacity and Resources**

Kilkenny Local Authorities have identified and are committed to providing the Financial, Human and ICS resources required to realise the objectives and strategies outlined in this plan.

### **Financial**

Our capacity to raise finances and generate economic activity will be fundamental to the realisation of the corporate objectives. Kilkenny Local Authorities will put in place an Economic Development Strategy dedicated to the role of identifying business and stimulating investment opportunities, which will facilitate targeted financial investment into the county with a view to strengthening the rate base .

The management of our assets is an on-going activity, which will enable the organisation to progress the objectives in the plan.

Future budgets will be prepared having regard to the objectives of this plan. Value for money reviews and audits will also underpin this process. Kilkenny Local Authorities have a Debt Collection Unit in place and reviews of income received will take place on a monthly basis.

The capacity of Kilkenny Local Authorities to realize all our objectives is greatly influenced by external factors. The current economic situation is likely to extend over much of the lifetime of this plan. This means that we will be operating with a lower income base. Therefore, targeting our scarce resources and examining spending practices and work methodology will be a primary focus for the 2009-2014 periods.

There will be regular assessments of expenditure programmes in Kilkenny Local Authorities. These developments will provide a more rational and informed basis on which to make decisions for allocating available scarce resources in the light of the priority objectives identified.



## **Human Resources**

We need to build on the achievements of shared delivery of services. We have a flexible approach to the deployment of staff so that adequate resources are available on a countywide basis

The current embargo on recruitment is especially challenging, and it is critical that Kilkenny Local Authorities' Human Resources Department has the capacity to meet these challenges in the development of its policies.

Notwithstanding current shortages, the aspirations, training and career development needs of the staff must be adequately addressed so that the attainment of skills and knowledge are in line with our business strategies and corporate objectives. Development of our human resources will focus on the enhancement of employee capacity to take on future tasks and responsibilities. There will be a provision in the annual budgets towards the ongoing development and training of staff, with a special priority being given to meeting the necessary Health and Safety requirements set down in legislation.

## **ICS**

Provision of relevant information in a timely manner that supports effective service delivery and informed decision making by members, management and staff

The development of information and communications technologies in the County is vital for the successful implementation of many of the Council's goals and objectives.

Investment in e-Commerce and communications infrastructure and services is fundamental to the success of any organisation

## **Implementation and Monitoring**

As an accountable and transparent organisation it is necessary to measure the performance of the local authority against the objectives set in the Corporate Plan. This will occur on a frequent and structured basis. Kilkenny Local Authorities are committed to an ongoing process of Strategic Planning and Management. Part of that commitment

involves the implementation of this plan. This implementation will involve many factors at the core of which is the organisations' commitment to the management of an ever changing environment, our internal capacity and our ability to maximize scarce resources.

### ***Mechanisms for Review***

The following mechanisms are available on progress on the corporate plan:

### ***Operational Plans***

As stated earlier Operational Plans will be prepared for each Directorate for the timeframe of the Corporate Plan. The Operational Plans will clearly show the actions to be undertaken by different service areas to deliver on the objectives of the Corporate Plan. The Annual Budget will be a key factor in driving the preparation of Annual Operational Plans which will be prepared by the end of February each year.

### ***Service Indicators***

The service indicators initiative developed for local authorities by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Delivering Value for People: Service Indicators in Local Government, 2004) has introduced 42 Key Performance Indicators. These indicators are across the range of local authority functions. The 42 National Key Performance Indicators together with local Performance Indicators will be inform the content of Operational Plans. Indicators are focused on results and can act as signposts towards full achievement of the Corporate Plan's objectives.

### ***Annual Report***

Section 134 of the Local Government Act 2001 requires that the local authority forward a progress report on the Corporate Plan to Council each year. The Annual Report of Kilkenny Local Authorities will specifically report on the implementation of the Corporate Plan. This will be achieved by providing a summary report on progress achieved and by assessing implementation against the agreed set of performance indicators.

### ***Corporate Policy Group***

There will be regular reporting to the Corporate Policy Group on the Corporate Plan. This will ensure ongoing assessment and review. The Corporate Policy Group will determine a method to undertake an independent mid-term review of the Corporate Plan. Corrective action measures will be adopted in response to the review and assessment process.

### ***Intranet / Extranet / Kilkenny Local Authorities Website***

The continued development of the Intranet / Extranet / Kilkenny Local Authorities Websites will be a further mechanism to communicate with our stakeholders on the implementation and monitoring of the Corporate Plan..When finances allow,Kilkenny Local Authorities will engage in customer surveys.



**Kilkenny Local Authorities**  
**Kilkenny County Council**  
**Kilkenny Borough Council**



**Customer Charter**

**Our Commitment To You**

To deliver high quality services to you in an effective and caring manner.

**Courtesy & Consideration**

You are at all times entitled to be served:

- Promptly and in a courteous manner
- With due regard to privacy and confidentiality
- By helpful staff

**Openness & Impartiality**

We undertake to:

- Deal with you in a fair and open manner
- Discuss any aspect of your dealings with us.
- Explain how a decision was reached

**Access**

We endeavour to:

- Provide clean, accessible public offices
- Facilitate customers who wish to conduct their business through the medium of the Irish language.
- Facilitate access for people with disabilities and special needs.

**Review**

Our services will be continually reviewed and improved upon where necessary.

**You Can Help Us To Help You**

- By providing full and accurate information
- By letting us know when we do something well.
- By making comments, complaints or suggestions about the services you receive.

Kilkenny Local Authorities have in place a Complaints Procedure for Customers dissatisfied with the quality of service received. A Copy of same can be obtained

*at our Customer Services Desk or by e-mailing us at [info@kilkennycoco.ie](mailto:info@kilkennycoco.ie) Kilkenny County Council and Kilkenny Borough Council*

## **Customer Action Plan**

In their dealings with the public Kilkenny Local Authorities are committed to taking a number of significant steps over the next number of years to improve our services. Some of these will yield immediate improvements at certain points of contact such as improvements in information technology, improvements to public offices and improved quality of the telephone service.

Kilkenny Local Authorities are committed to the following:-

### **Quality Service Standards:**

Publish a Customer Charter that outlines the nature and quality of service which customers can expect, and display it prominently at the point of service delivery.

### **Equality/Diversity:**

Ensure the rights to equal treatment established by equality legislation, and accommodate diversity, so as to contribute to equality for the groups covered by the equality legislation (under the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community).

Identify and work to eliminate barriers to access to services for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, and for those facing geographic barriers to services.

### **Physical Access:**

Provide clean, accessible public offices that ensure privacy, comply with occupational and safety standards and, as part of this, facilitate access for people with disabilities and others with special needs.

### **Information:**

Take a proactive approach in providing information that is clear, timely and accurate, is available at all points of contact, and meets the requirements of people with specific needs. Ensure that the potential offered by Information Technology is fully availed of and that the information available on public service websites follows the guidelines on web publication.

Continue the drive for simplification of rules, regulations, forms, information leaflets and procedures.

### **Timeliness & Courtesy:**

Deliver quality services with courtesy, sensitivity and the minimum delay, fostering a climate of mutual respect between provider and customer. Give contact names in all communications to ensure ease of ongoing transactions.

**Complaints:**

Maintain a well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of dealing with complaints about the quality of service provided.

**Appeals:**

Similarly, maintain a formalised, well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of appeal/review for customers who are dissatisfied with decisions in relation to services.

**Consultation & Evaluation:**

Provide a structured approach to meaningful consultation with, and participation by, the customer in relation to the development, delivery and review of services. Ensure meaningful evaluation of service delivery.

**Choice:**

Provide a range of choices, where feasible, in service delivery. Use available and emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice, and quality of delivery.

**Official Languages Equality:**

Provide quality services through Irish and/or bilingually and inform customers of their right to choose to be dealt with through one or other of the official languages.

**Better Co-Ordination:**

Foster a more coordinated and integrated approach to delivery of public services.

**Internal Customer:**

Ensure staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues.

Kilkenny Local Authorities are committed to the principles of Quality Customer Service approved by the government and has introduced this Action Plan which sets out how we will implement these principles and achieve our service targets over the next four years. In addition we will integrate training on customer service issues into general training courses and council procedures and practices. Improvements in service delivery are expected to arise from increased utilisation of information and electronic technologies. These include the new financial management system. A customer service ethos will be promoted throughout the organisation and customers and staff will be encouraged to comment and improve upon existing practices.

***Customer Action Plan:******What you can expect from us?***

Kilkenny Local Authorities are committed to delivering an efficient courteous and quality service to its customers. We will treat all our customers equally ensuring that there is no discrimination on any grounds. We will be sensitive to our customers needs and take into

account their age, their capacity to understand often complex rules and procedures and any disabilities they may have.

***When providing service by telephone we will aim to:***

- Staff will be available to take your call from 9.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. Monday to Friday.
- Be helpful and provide you with clear and accurate information.
- Always give you a contact name and telephone number.
- Respond properly and courteously.
- Take details and call you back if we cannot answer your query immediately.

Indicate when you can expect to hear from us if we have to call you back.

- Provide an improved telephone system for our customers.
- Keep internal telephone directories up-to-date.

***If you visit our offices we will aim to:***

- Meet with you punctually if you have an appointment
- Respect your privacy.
- Deal with you in a polite, courteous and fair manner.
- Deal with your enquiry and provide any relevant information that we have as quickly as possible.
- Keep our offices clean and safe.
- Continue to improve accessibility for all our customers including people with a disability and special needs.

**Note:** Due to work commitments it may be necessary to make an appointment in advance to meet with some members of staff.

***In corresponding with you we will aim to:***

- Use clear and simple language and keep the technical terms to a minimum.
- Include a contact name, telephone and extension number, e-mail address and reference number on all correspondence that we issue.
- Make arrangements to ensure that letters do not go unanswered when individual staff members are absent.
- Some correspondence requires considerable research before a full reply can issue and when this happens we will send you an interim reply explaining the position.
- Ensure that service departments are allocated an e-mail address.
- Ensure that all payments are made in accordance with provisions of the Prompt Payments Act, 1997.

***In producing forms and leaflets we will aim to:***

- Ensure that leaflets and forms are freely available, including in electronic format.
- Use clear and simple language.
- Explain exactly what information is required on application forms.
- Request only relevant information on application forms.
- Ensure that data supplied on forms will only be used for the purpose for which it is given.
- Produce all documentation in a range of accessible formats suitable to the needs of people with disabilities.

***Complaints:***

- If you are not happy with the quality of service we provide you are entitled to make a complaint to the section head of that service.
- If you are not satisfied with the response received, you should contact the Complaints Officer, Corporate Affairs, in writing, who will respond to your complaint in writing within twenty eight days of receipt of complaint.
- You may also have a statutory right to complain to the Ombudsman whose role is to investigate complaints about administrative actions, delays or inaction adversely affecting persons or bodies that are dealing with the County or Borough Council.
- All complaints will be dealt with properly, fairly and impartially.

***Information and Communications Technology:***

- New technology will be availed of to the greatest possible extent to make services more accessible and improve service delivery.
- Over the period of the plan the information technology systems within Kilkenny Local Authorities including the telephone system will continue to be upgraded.

***Staff:***

- Kilkenny Local Authorities will ensure that staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues.
- A comprehensive customer service-training programme for our staff will be implemented throughout the plan period.

***Co-Ordination of Services:***

- Kilkenny Local Authorities will foster a more co-ordinated and integrated approach to delivery of services.
- Kilkenny Local Authorities will provide during the plan period one-stop shop facilities for the public.

***Official Language Equality:***

- Kilkenny Local Authorities will provide in so far as possible quality services through Irish and/or bilingually and inform customers of their right to choose to be dealt with through one or other of the official languages.

***Choice:***

- Kilkenny Local Authorities will provide a range of choices, where feasible, in service delivery.
- Kilkenny Local Authorities will use available emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice, and quality of delivery.

***Consultation and Evaluation:***

- Kilkenny Local Authorities will provide a structured approach to meaningful consultation with, and participation by, the customer in relation to development, delivery and review of services.
- Kilkenny County Council will use the Strategic Policy Committees as one of the approaches to evaluating our service delivery.



- Kilkenny Local Authorities will provide a comment sheet on our website [[www.kilkennycoco.ie](http://www.kilkennycoco.ie)] to facilitate customers who may wish to make suggestions or comments on the services which we provide.

## **Appendices**

### **Local Authority Structures and Management Structures**

## KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

### HOUSING

Social Housing

Affordable Housing

Voluntary Housing

Traveller  
Accommodation

Homeless  
Accommodation

Housing Loans

Disabled & Essential  
Repairs Grants

Private Rental  
Control

Estate Management

### PLANNING

County  
Development  
Plan/Area Plans

Planning  
Applications

Development  
Control &  
Enforcement

Conservation &  
Amenity Grants

Town & Village  
Renewal

Derelict Sites  
[Delegated to Areas]

### ROADS

Road Design/  
Construction/  
Improvement/  
Maintenance

Public Lighting

Road Safety

Community  
Involvement in Road  
Works Scheme

Parks

### COMMUNITY

Serving the County  
Development Board &  
Sub Committees

Library Service

Recreational Facilities

Heritage

Arts Department

RAPID Programme

Supporting the  
Community &  
Voluntary Sector

Conservation

### FINANCE

Financial &  
Management  
Accounting

Payroll

Internal Audit

Payment &  
Receipting of all  
monies

Value for Money

Debt Collection

Rates

Motor Tax

Higher Education  
Grants

### CORPORATE

Human Resources

Staff Training and  
Development

Register of Electors

Information Systems

Workplace  
Partnership

Freedom of  
Information

Meetings  
Administration

Support of Elected  
Members

Co-ordination of  
Council Publications

### ENVIRONMENT

Waste Management

Environmental/  
Education &  
Awareness

Pollution Monitoring  
& Control [Air,  
Water & Noise]

Litter Management

Street Cleaning  
[Delegated to Areas]

Burial Grounds

Food Safety

Control of Animals  
Parks  
Woodstock Project

### WATER SERVICES

Rural Water  
Programme

Small Schemes  
Programme

Water & Sewerage  
Schemes

Capital Schemes

Water Conservation

Serviced Land  
Initiative

Monitoring of  
Drinking Water

Emergency Services  
including Fire  
Service

### ENTERPRISE

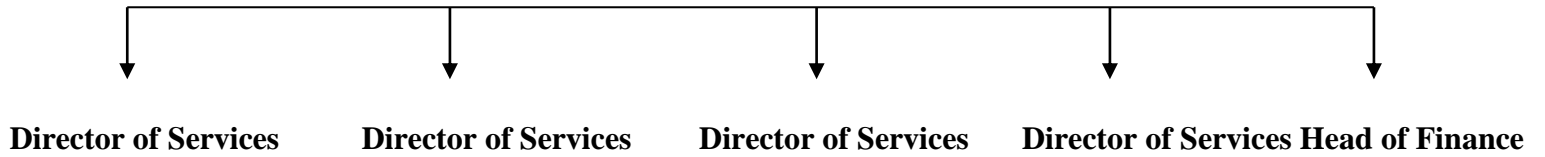
Link to County  
Enterprise Board

Links to Kilkenny  
Tourism

Land & Property  
Acquisition & Control

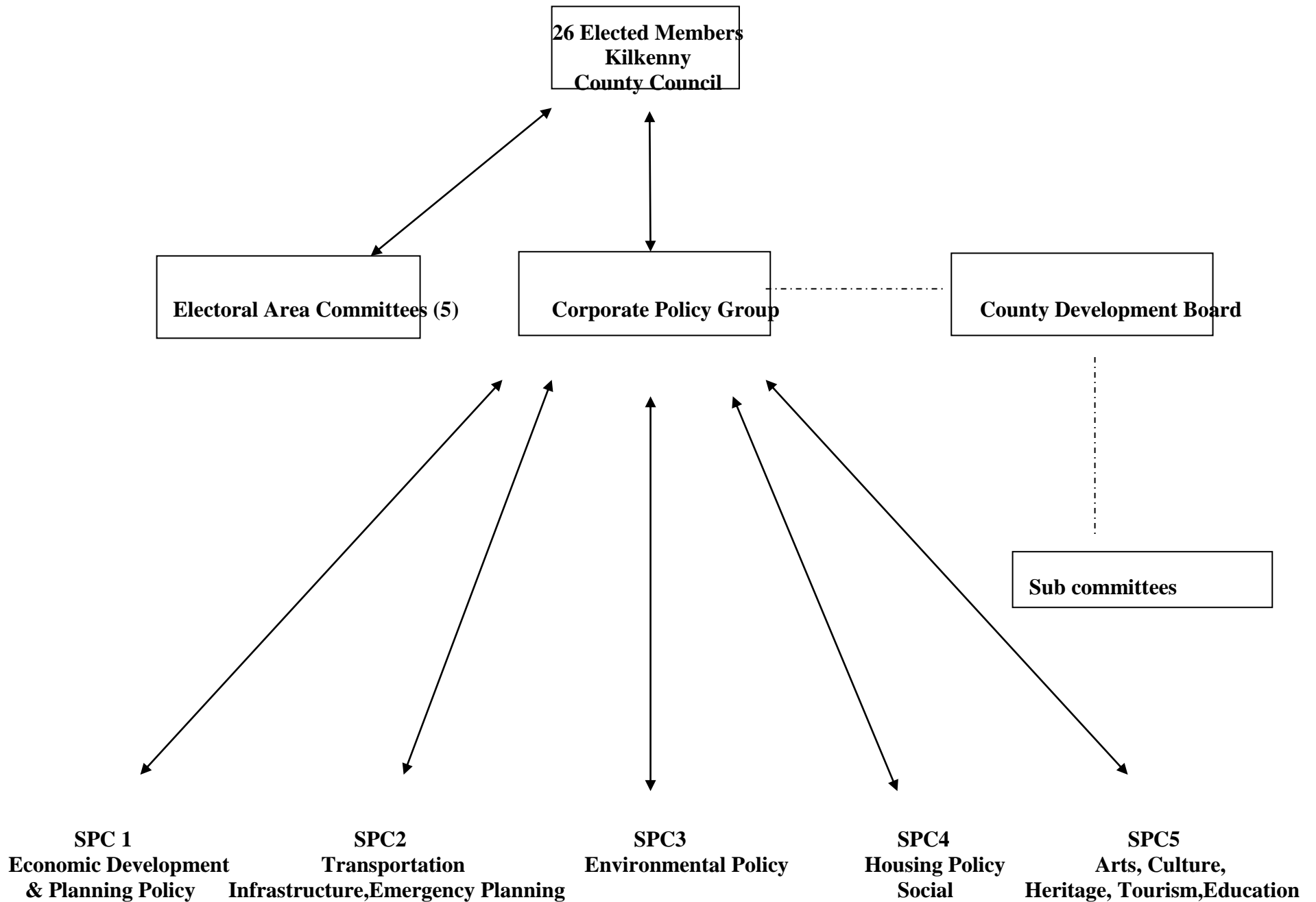
**- MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE -**

**COUNTY MANAGER**



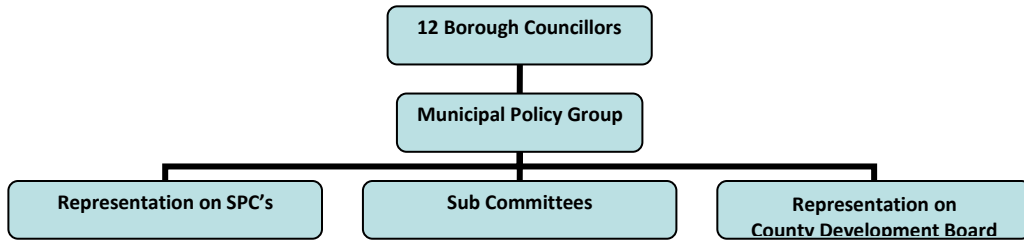
**EACH OF THE DIRECTORS HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR AN ELECTORAL AREA**

## KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL– STRUCTURE –



# KILKENNY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## - STRUCTURE -



## Kilkenny Borough Council Management Structure

