

Quality Assurance – In Depth Check

Section A: Introduction

This introductory section details the headline information on the Operation of Kilkenny County Council Fire Service.

Programme or Project Information	
Name	Operation of Kilkenny County Council Fire Service
Detail	Kilkenny County Council Fire Service provides for the safety of people and buildings both new and existing by way of fire prevention and also by operational response in the case of fire or accident.
Responsible Body	Kilkenny County Council
Current Status	Revenue expenditure being incurred annually
Start Date	Ongoing Annual Budget
End Date	Ongoing Annual Budget
Overall Cost	€8,099,335 for 2025

Programme Description

Kilkenny County Council has a statutory obligation to operate as a Fire Authority as outlined in the Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003. The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage plays an advisory and policy-making role for Fire Services. The National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management (NDFEM) was established in 2009 as a section within the Department, its primary role is to coordinate emergency responses and provide support to the Irish Fire Service.

The core objective of Kilkenny County Councils Fire Service is to provide for the safety of persons and buildings both new and existing by way of fire prevention and by operational response in the case of fire or accident. The Fire Service is part of the Directorate of Integration, Emergency Services, Culture (including Fire Service, Civil Defence, Library, Arts & Heritage, & Callan-Thomastown MD. The Service comes under the remit of Kilkenny County Councils Strategic Policy Committee 5. The total expenditure for the Operation of the Fire Service in 2025 was €8,099,335.

There are 7 Fire Stations in County Kilkenny located as follows, Kilkenny City (Fire Service Headquarters), Castlecomer, Freshford, Urlingford, Thomastown, Callan and Graiguenamanagh. The Fire Services are organised under the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) who is a professional technically qualified officer. The CFO has primary responsibility for the delivery of the Fire Services in County Kilkenny. The CFO is assisted by 77 Retained Staff which includes Station Officers, Sub Station Officers, Fire Fighter/Drivers and Fire Fighters. There are also 8 Staff in the Headquarters comprising of Senior Fire Officers, Administrative Personnel and a Brigade Mechanic.

Fire Prevention Officers are generally engaged in inspections of buildings under the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003, assessment and provision of reports on Planning, HAP premises, the processing of Fire Safety Certificates, Dangerous Substances Regulations and carrying out Licensing Inspections in relation to Dance and Liquor License Acts. A Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer is responsible for Major Emergency Management and prepares Kilkenny County Council for large scale and inter-agency operations through participation in appropriate training and exercises. The Senior Fire Officers are engaged in managing and developing the Fire Service under the Fire Services Acts.

The crews in stations are provided by Retained Fire-fighters reporting to a Retained Station Officer. The Station Officers in turn report to Senior Fire Officers. Fire-fighters carry a pager and are expected to report to the Fire Station and go mobile to the incident within 5-6 minutes as is the norm for rural counties in Ireland at present. In addition, a Senior Fire Officer is rostered on-call each week to assist in the handling of more serious emergency incidents.

Fire cover is provided on an agency basis by Waterford City and County Councils' Fire Service to parts of South Kilkenny around the Mullinavat, Ferrybank, and Mooncoin area as per Section 85 Agreements. Section 85 Agreements are also in use with Tipperary, Carlow, Wexford and Laois County Council's. Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service also provide fire cover on an agency basis into parts of Laois, Carlow and Tipperary. Dublin City Council provides the statutory obligation as regards call-out of the Fire Service for Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service on an agency basis through the Eastern Regional Communications Centre (ERCC) attached to Dublin City Fire Station at Tara Street.

The Technical and Operational personnel are currently supported by Administration personnel. These personnel carry out administration duties including the processing of payments on the Agresso Financial System, payroll, issuing of invoices for fire incidents and they support the Senior Fire Officers with various other clerical and general administration duties.

2025 Expenditure - Operation of Fire Service	
Description	€
Payroll	4,761,515
Operation & Upkeep of Equipment	846,676
Miscellaneous Expenditure	102,356
Contributions to other bodies	859,948
Fire Charge Write Off's	119,130
Fire Brigade Training	350,767
Fire Prevention	276,398
Overhead Allocation – Service Support Costs	782,545
Total	8,099,335

Section B - Step 1: Logic Model Mapping

As part of this In-Depth Check, Kilkenny County Council Internal Audit Unit have completed a Programme Logic Model (PLM) for the Operation of Kilkenny County Council Fire Service. A PLM is a standard evaluation tool and further information on their nature is available in the [Public Spending Code](#).

Objectives	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
To provide for the safety of persons and buildings through fire prevention and operational response to fire and other emergency incidents	Budget of €8m in 2025 85 Staff members Highly trained staff 7 Fire Stations Fire Appliances & Equipment	Attend all incident types as required Implementation of Kilkenny Fire & Rescue Fire & Emergency Operations Plan (2022-2026)	747 incidents attended to in 2025 176 Fires attended 426 special services provided Delivery of the Fire Authorities statutory obligations under the Fire Services Acts	The Fire Service renders a quick emergency response to incidents Mitigates the impact of fires, protect homes, businesses saves lives
Ensure the Fire Service is well equipped	NDFEM support	Implement the Service Delivery Plan 2025		Enhances community safety by providing imperative fire protection services and fostering
Maintain highly trained Fire Service Staff	ERCC communications	Maintain and inspect all equipment	Capital Funding applications developed.	

Ready always to respond effectively to all incidents		Apply for Capital Aid Grant funding for equipment		strong community bonds
Engage with the public		Maintain three Water Tankers at existing fire stations		Raise public awareness about fire prevention through its educational programme
Swift operational response to incidents		Deliver required training		
		Safeguard Safety, Health and Welfare of all employees, contractors and visitors		
		Comply with Fire Prevention Legislation and Regulations		
		Prepare for Major Emergencies		

Description of Programme Logic Model

Objectives:

The main objective of Kilkenny County Council Fire Service is to provide for the safety of persons and buildings through fire prevention and operational response to fire and other emergency incidents. The service aims to be well-equipped, highly trained and ready at all times to respond effectively to all calls. The Fire Service endeavors to ensure a swift and efficient operational response which is essential to minimize risk to life and harm to persons and property.

Inputs:

The expenditure budget for the Operation of the Fire Service in Kilkenny was €8,099,335 in 2025. This budget allows the Fire Service to carry out its functions under two main headings Fire Prevention & Operational Service. Fire Authorities are obliged under the Fire Services Acts to ensure that their Fire-fighters and Officers are adequately trained and competent to deal with tasks and varying roles they may encounter in the performance of their duties. The Fire Service Staff in Kilkenny County Council are highly trained. Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service maintain fire appliances in all seven fire stations throughout the county. There are a variety of different types of appliances in operation i.e. Standard Class B Pumping Fire Appliance (normal

fire appliance), Emergency Tenders, Combined Aerial and Pumping Appliances, Water Tankers, Incident Command vehicle and 4-Wheel Drive Vehicles with off Road capabilities. Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service receive Capital Grant Aid for the replacement of appliances and equipment from NDFEM. Dublin City Council provides the call-out of the Fire Service for Fire Authorities in the Leinster area. This facility is known as ERCC. This system is financed by the participating Local Authorities.

Activities:

The Fire Services undertakes a wide range of activities to fulfil its remit under the Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003. It attends to all call outs as required. Kilkenny County Councils Fire & Rescue Fire & Emergency Operations Plan (2022-2026) and its Service Delivery Plan 2025 detail the operation of the Fire Service under operational response and fire prevention response. Kilkenny Fire & Rescue Service maintains all equipment in accordance with its Equipment Maintenance Policy which outlines the frequency and type of inspection for all equipment. Training is provided to staff in accordance with its Training Guidance Document and it also implements training guidance from the NDFEM.

Outputs:

The Fire Service attended 747 incidents in 2025. These incidents covered a broad range and included 176 fires attended in different categories such as domestic, industrial, commercial and agricultural. The Service also fulfilled 426 special services including 156 road traffic collisions, rescue and removal of persons from water, public road hazards and Garda/Ambulance assists. The invoicing for these incidents is completed by the administrative staff in the Fire Service.

Outcomes:

The Operation of the Fire Services provides a range of benefits to the communities they serve. The Fire Service provide a quick response to incidents. This quick response is vital in mitigating the impact of fires and medical emergencies, protecting homes and saving lives. Kilkenny County Council Fire Service engages with communities through their educational programmes, this helps to raise awareness about fire prevention, smoke detector use and the importance of creating emergency plans.

Section B - Step 2: Summary Timeline of Project/Programme

The following section tracks the operation of Kilkenny County Council Fire Service.

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| 2025 | The Programme is an ongoing service provided by Kilkenny County Council. Funding for providing the service is included in the Annual Budget in the amount of €8,099,335. The programme delivers Kilkenny County Council's statutory obligations as a Fire Authority as outlined in the Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003. |
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Section B - Step 3: Analysis of Key Documents

The following section reviews the key documentation relating to appraisal, analysis and operation of Kilkenny County Council Fire Service.

Programme Key Documents	
Title	Details
Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003	Outlines Kilkenny County Council's statutory obligations as a Fire Authority
Kilkenny Fire & Rescue Services Fire & Emergency Operations Plan 2022 – 2026	Fulfills Kilkenny County Council's statutory obligation as a Fire Authority
Kilkenny County Council Annual Budget 2025	The budget allocation for the operation of the Fire Service
Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, NDFEM, Keeping Communities Safe 2013	A Framework for Fire Safety in Ireland
Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, NDFEM	State investment in fire and emergency services
Kilkenny County Council Corporate Plan	Strategic framework for Kilkenny County Council
Kilkenny County Council Service Delivery Plan 2025	Identifies the services that Kilkenny County Council are proposing to deliver in 2025
Climate Action Plan 2023	The plan implements the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings and sets out a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve our emissions by 2030 and reach net zero no later than 2050
NOAC Key Performance Indicators for Fire Service	Metrics on relevant KPI's for the Fire Service
Kilkenny County Council Fire Charge Procedure	Describes rates applied for fire charge invoices and details processes regarding write-offs and waivers etc.

Key Document 1: Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003

The Fire Services Act 1981 updated by the 2023 amendments, provides the legal framework for the organisation of fire services in Ireland. It includes the establishment of fire authorities, fire-fighting operations and the protection and rescue of persons and property. It also defines the responsibilities of building owners and occupiers to maintain fire safety standards in their premises.

Key Document 2: Kilkenny Fire & Rescue Services Fire & Emergency Operations Plan 2022/2026

The Fire & Rescue Services Fire & Emergency Operations Plan fulfills Kilkenny County Council's statutory obligation as a Fire Authority as outlined in Section 26 of the Fire Services Acts. This plan details current arrangements within the Fire Authority, but it also sets out strategic plans and targets for the Fire Authority.

Key Document 3: Kilkenny County Council Adopted Budget 2025

Kilkenny County Council's Adopted Budget 2023 details the expenditure and expected income for all service areas including the operation of the Fire Service for 2025.

Key Document 4: Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, NDFEM Keeping Communities Safe

Keeping Communities Safe is the output from a review in 2012 of fire services and fire safety in Ireland. It aims to provide a comprehensive, balanced strategy to ensure the safety of the public in their homes and other locations, as well as worker-safety in providing emergency services.

Key Document 5: Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, NDFEM Capital Programme

Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage James Browne TD has announced the State's largest ever investment in fire and emergency services in the landmark €328.5 million Fire Services Capital Programme (2026–2030). The programme, developed by the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM), sets out a comprehensive plan to modernise Ireland's fire service fleet, infrastructure, training capability and communications systems to meet the evolving risks facing communities nationwide.

Key Document 6: Kilkenny County Council Corporate Plan

Kilkenny County Council Corporate Plan is the strategic framework outlining the Council's vision, priorities and objectives for a five-year period. The plan is designed to guide policy making, resource allocation and service delivery across all Council functions, ensuring accountability, transparency and responsiveness to the needs of the community.

Key Document 7: Kilkenny County Council Service Delivery Plan 2025

This plan identifies the services that Kilkenny County Council are proposing to deliver in 2025.

Key Document 8: Climate Action Plan 2023

The Plan details how Ireland's transport system needs to make accessible, sustainable transport modes more attractive and shift away from car dependency through consideration of the proximity between people and places in land use and housing policy.

Key Document 9: NOAC Key Performance Indicators for the Fire Service

Outlines KPI's for the Fire Service. These include the mobilization of fire emergency services, attendance at non-fire scenes and cost per capita of Fire Services.

Key Document 10: Kilkenny County Council Procedure for Fire Charges

This document sets out the procedure in relation to Fire Charges in Kilkenny County Council. It describes the rates applied and the various processes with regard to write-offs, waivers etc.

Section B - Step 4: Data Audit

The following section details the data audit that was carried out for the operation of the Fire Service in Kilkenny County Council. It evaluates whether appropriate data is available for the future evaluation of the Programme.

Data Required	Use	Availability
Details on Programme Expenditure on Agresso FMS	Reports can be generated from Agresso detailing the level of expenditure across the Fire Service. This allows management to monitor budget adherence	Yes
Procurement data for purchasing	To ensure compliance with procurement procedures	Yes
Fire Service Metrics collated on: Total incidents, broken down into fires attended and special services attended	The metrics reflect engagement with service users and allow Management to monitor, evaluate the operation of the service	Yes
Details relating to Fire Charge Write Offs	Ensure that Fire Charge Invoices that are written off are complying with the Fire Charges Policy/Procedure	Yes

Data Availability and Proposed Next Steps

The necessary data is available to evaluate the operation of Kilkenny County Council Fire Service. Agresso (Financial Management System) gives Management up to date financial information to allow for ongoing budget monitoring and to ensure adherence to the Annual Budget. The CFO reports to the Director of Services on Fire Service operations on a regular basis. Monthly reports on the operation of the Programme are also presented in the Chief Executive's report to the Plenary Council and the SPC.

Section B - Step 5: Key Evaluation Questions

The following section looks at the key evaluation questions for the operation of Kilkenny County Council Fire Service based on the findings from the previous sections of this report.

Does the delivery of the project/programme comply with the standards set out in the Public Spending Code? (Appraisal Stage, Implementation Stage and Post-Implementation Stage)

The operation of Kilkenny County Council Fire Service broadly complies with the standards set out in The Public Spending Code. Kilkenny County Council is fulfilling its statutory obligation to operate as a Fire Authority as outlined in the Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003. Kilkenny County Council's Fire & Rescue Services Fire & Emergency Operations Plan details current arrangements within the Fire Authority, but it also sets out strategic plans and targets for the Fire Authority.

Is the necessary data and information available such that the project/programme can be subjected to a full evaluation at a later date?

The necessary data is available to allow for a full evaluation if required.

What improvements are recommended such that future processes and management are enhanced?

The expenditure for the Operation & Upkeep of Equipment for the Fire Service was €846,676 in 2025. The fire appliances and equipment used by Kilkenny Fire & Rescue Services are required to be serviced and maintained to the highest standard. Some specialist equipment is maintained by external contractors, but the bulk of the equipment is maintained by the Brigade Mechanic. I would recommend that Management review the expenditure in this area to ensure that value for money is being achieved and resources are used effectively. Where there are Office of Government Procurement Frameworks in place for the procurement of goods these should be utilised to achieve efficiencies.

Section: In-Depth Check Summary

The following section presents a summary of the findings of this In-Depth Check on the operation of the Fire Service in County Kilkenny.

Summary of In-Depth Check

Overall, I find the operation of the Fire Service in Kilkenny County Council complies with the broad principles of the Public Spending Code.

Kilkenny County Council engages with the communities to inform and educate citizens in how to reduce the risk of fires and other emergencies. The Fire Service influence and regulate the built environment to protect people, property and the Environment from harm. They plan and prepare for emergencies that may happen.

Recent years have seen improvements in the Fire Stations in the County with a new modern Fire Station opened in Urlingford in 2024 and Graiguenamanagh in 2018. Kilkenny County Council Fire Service are currently progressing plans for a new Fire Service Headquarters in Kilkenny City. This new modern facility will reinforce public safety in Kilkenny and protect critical infrastructure and essential services for the next 40 years.