

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

Held via MS Teams

Friday 3rd December 2021

Present: Cllr. Ger Frisby (Chair), Cllr. John Coonan, Cllr. Michael Doyle, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Cllr. Eugene McGuinness, Cllr. Maria Dollard, Cllr. Patrick O'Neill, Brian Hamilton, Eileen Moyles, Paul Brophy, Marion Acreman.

Apologies: Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, Fiona O' Neill, Deirdre Shine, Bill O Keeffe, Martina Comerford.

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

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

Item	
1.	Declaration of Interest: There were no Declarations of Interest.
2.	Confirmation of Minutes: The Minutes of the previous meeting held on the 17 th September 2021 were proposed by Cllr. Michael McCarthy and seconded by Ms. Eileen Moyles and agreed.
3.	Matters Arising: Following the minutes from the previous meeting in relation to Ms. Fiona O Neill's query on the Council's Disability Plan 2008, Mr. Sean McKeown stated he was referring to the Council's Strategy for Housing for People with a Disability and not the Council's Disability Plan and noted that they were 2 completely separate matters. Mr. McKeown clarified the latter explaining that under the Disability Act, 2005 all public bodies are obliged to provide: 1. Accessible buildings; 2. Accessible information; and 3. Accessible services. He stated that the Act requires each Local Authority to produce a Disability Implementation Plan setting out how they will <i>"...promote universal access to all public spaces, buildings and services operated by them...."</i> . Mr. Mc Keown stated that Kilkenny County Council adopted its Disability Implementation Plan in 2008. The Council since then have implemented a range of measures/actions/initiatives to meet its obligations under the Disability Act. He further stated that the Council now needs to review and update its Implementation Plan. However, Mr. McKeown added that it is important to note that one of the core values of the Council, as stated in its Corporate Plan (2019-2024), is <i>"...to prioritise social inclusion and equality of opportunity in all policy decisions for people with disabilities...."</i> and therefore, that commitment remains central to the delivery of all Council services. Mr. McKeown concluded that a review of the Implementation Plan is a Corporate responsibility and it will be raised at management level for consideration in the first instance and the SPC will be updated on the process agreed on the review.

4.	Progress Report: The Chair noted that the Progress Report was circulated to all committee members along with the agenda and is taking it as read. Mr. McKeown advised that Kilkenny had been successful in obtaining funding from the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) for the following schemes: Measure 2 - €189,000 has been approved for Woodstock Estate for the development of accessible trails, age friendly and disabled parking and wheelchair swing. €196,000 was also allocated for the rehabilitation of the Ardra Looped Walk and Arboretum Walk at Castlecomer Discovery Park. Measure 3 – €499,500 has been approved for the Kilkenny Countryside Park which is located at the old Dunmore Landfill. Phase One, which is the Biodiversity Park will be covered by this funding and also the enhancement of amenities on the North Kilkenny Cycle-Trail from the “City to the Park”. Project Development Measure: €50,000 has been allocated to the Castlecomer Discovery Park Masterplan. Cllr. John Coonan noted it was great news that this funding was secured and he advised that Kilkenny County Council should be promoting this positive news. Mr. Brian Hamilton raised a concern in relation to “rights of way” on land and asked that landowner concerns be considered and shared a link to a Farmer Journals podcast on same. Mr. McKeown reminded the committee that there is an introductory event in relation to the new Local Enterprise and Community Plan (LECP) Guidelines taking place on the 9th December at 10.30am. The event is currently full, but there is a waiting list in operation if anyone is interested in attending. Mr. McKeown advised that the LECP guidelines were recently announced and provided an update on same as follows: The LECP is a 6-year plan which has to be completed by 2023. The current plan is for the period 2016-2021. There are two elements to the plan - Economic (SPC1 have an oversight on this element) and Community (LCDC have an oversight on this element). The overall plan has to be approved by Kilkenny County Council (Reserved Function of the Elected Members). The focus of the plan will be on social and economic issues that can be addressed at community level and also climate action The process involves 4 main steps: • Preparation (to include review of current LECP) • Public Consultation (also MD’s and Regional Assembly) • Development of high-level goals, objectives and outcomes and Implementation Plan • Finalisation of LECP Mr. McKeown also added that an Advisory Steering Group will be set up to oversee the process and monitoring of the new Plan and a decision on nominees will be discussed at the next SPC meeting in March.
5.	Presentation on The Abbey Quarter: The Chair welcomed Mr. Jason Clerkin, CEO of the Abbey Quarter Partnership Ltd who provided an update on the development of the Abbey Quarter.

	Mr. Clerkin advised that The Abbey Quarter Regeneration projects are divided into two main areas, (i) Public Realm infrastructure & Mayfair conversion, and (ii) Building Development of plots within the Abbey Quarter. Mr. Clerkin provided a brief update on the following: • The Brewhouse redevelopment is due to be completed in early 2022 along with the new Brewhouse Square and Horse Barrack Lane Public Realm. There have been terms agreed on all of the 12 units within the Brewhouse and by mid-2022 there will be capacity for 400 people to work within same. • Building 7, which is adjacent to the Brewhouse, has a design team appointed and a planning application is due to be lodged this month. This development will consist of retail/restaurant/services on the ground floor, as well as office space on the upper floors, and is due to be completed by 2024. • Planning has been granted for the Temporary Car Park and Coach parking (7 years) with the works due to commence in January 2022. • Contractor has been appointed for the Mayfair conversion and is currently on site. • The works on the Urban Park and Street will commence mid-2022. Mr. Clerkin stated that the Abbey Quarter Riverside Garden and Skate Park won the Overall National Excellence in Placemaking Award 2021 in the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Excellence in Placemaking Awards. The awards were established to reward organisations and communities throughout Ireland that make genuine efforts to improve their local communities through the initiation of placemaking projects that add to the public realm and make these places better places in which to 'live, work and play'. Following questions from Ms. Marion Acreman and Cllr. Eugene McGuinness in relation to displacement of retail, Mr Clerkin advised that the Abbey Quarter (AQ) is not set up to be a centre for large retail businesses and also there is a lack of car parking to facilitate retail. The focus of the AQ is on a mix of public realm, office and residential. Mr. Paul Brophy asked about Air Filtration and Anti-Viral surfaces in the commercial sites, to which Mr. Clerkin replied that these measures were already in place along with anti-microbial doors and touchless sensors. Mr. Clerkin also advised that additional measures would be added if required. Cllr. Coonan asked what types of residential units were proposed for the Abbey Quarter to which Mr. Clerkin advised that it would be Apartments, Townhouses and Duplexes. Cllr. Coonan requested that a copy of Mr. Clerkin's presentation be shared with the committee. The Chair thanked Mr. Clerkin for his time and extended an invitation to him to provide a further update at an SPC Meeting next year.
6.	Update from Local Enterprise Office: <u>Update on Strategic Priorities of the LECP</u> Ms. Deegan advised that the current LECP consists of 9 High Level Goals and 63 actions and stated that there will be engagement with the stakeholders in the first quarter of 2022 in relation to the actions and a final update will be presented at the first SPC1 meeting in March 2022.

	Local Enterprise Development Plan (LEDP) Ms. Deegan advised that the new LEDP 2021-2024 which sets out the work plan for the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) has been approved by Enterprise Ireland and requires adoption by SPC1 as they have oversight of same. The plan outlines the key strategic priorities of the LEO up to 2024. Ms. Deegan advised that the plan is made up of 6 sections: Section 1 – Context Section 2 – Vision/Mission and Overarching objectives Section 3 – Strategic Priorities Section 4 – Associated Actions and Activities Section 5 – Risks Section 6 - Delivering the Strategy Ms. Deegan outlined the key strategic priorities contained within the plan which include Entrepreneurship, Competitiveness and Digitalisation, Green/Sustainability, Exporting/Internationalisation, Innovation, Clustering and Networks and stated that LEO Kilkenny will continue to work and support other initiatives in the County such as Tourism & Hospitality, Taste Kilkenny, the Craft sector, Invest Kilkenny and Shop Kilkenny. Following a question from Mr. Paul Brophy in relation to having one website with an ecommerce facility to allow people to purchase items from various retailers in Kilkenny, Ms. Deegan replied that www.kilkenny.ie has a central focus on retail which showcases the various types of retail in Kilkenny along with direct links to the retailer's own websites. Ms. Deegan added that over 300 retailers availed of the Trading online Voucher last year which enables businesses to develop an online ecommerce shop via their website. Ms. Acreman added that the Trading online Voucher scheme was a great success and asked Ms. Deegan if there would be a renewal of funding granted to businesses. Ms. Deegan replied that a new Digitisation Voucher is to be rolled out though the LEOs next year, however, details are still to be announced in relation to same.
7	Consideration of Policy Issues: Mr. Denis Malone advised that the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) wrote to the Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage recommending a Draft Ministerial Direction in relation to Sections 11.4.1, 11.5.1 and Figure 11.4 of the recently adopted City and County Development Plan 2021-2027. Following this, the Minister issued a draft direction to Kilkenny County Council on the 15th October, which included the following: a) Reinstate sections 11.4 and 11.5.1 of the draft Development Plan, including the identification of 201 MW renewable energy to meet the objective for the generation of 100% of electricity needs from renewable sources for the county by 2030 consistent with the Climate Action Plan. b) Amend the adopted wind energy strategy map (reference Figure 11.4) to ensure consistency with the renewable energy target at (a) above as follows: i. Reinstate areas designated at Templeorum/Mullenbeg to 'acceptable in principle' in accordance with the 'draft wind energy strategy' of the draft Plan.

	ii. Reinstate areas designated at Castlebanny to 'acceptable in principle' in accordance with the 'draft wind energy strategy' of the draft Plan. iii. Reinstate the 3 no. smaller areas to the south of the county as 'acceptable in principle' in accordance with the 'draft wind energy strategy' of the draft Plan. This draft direction went on public display on the 29th October for two weeks and received a total of 724 submissions. The Chief Executive will compile a report which will summarise the views of the public, the views / recommendations of the Elected Members and of the Regional Assembly and also the recommendations in relation to the best manner in which to give effect to the draft direction. The report has to be delivered to the OPR by the 10th December, 2021. A special meeting of the Council has been scheduled for the 6th December which will consider the Draft Ministerial Direction. Ms. Eileen Moyles asked if Kilkenny County Council will go with Solar or Wind to which Mr. McKeown replied that the Council's renewable energy strategy provides for all forms of renewable energy.
8	Any Other Business: None
9	Date of Next Meeting: The draft Schedule of Meetings for 2022 was proposed by Cllr. John Coonan, seconded by Cllr. Michael Doyle and agreed. Due to current Covid19 restrictions, there was no decision made on whether meetings will be held in the Council Chamber or Virtually. The Chairman extended a thank you to all for their participation during the year and he wished everyone a very Happy and safe Christmas and New Year. Mr. McKeown, on behalf of the Management and Staff of Kilkenny County Council, extended a thank you to the Chairman and the Committee and wished everyone a Happy Christmas. The next meeting of SPC1 will take place on Friday 11th March 2022 at 3.30pm. The meeting concluded at 5.00pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____

CLLR. GER FRISBY
Chairman