

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

Held via MS Teams

Thursday 6th October at 3.30pm

Present: Cllr. Ger Frisby (Chair), Cllr. John Coonan, Cllr. Maria Dollard, Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, Cllr. Michael Doyle, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Eileen Moyles, Brian Hamilton.

Apologies: Cllr. Eugene McGuinness, Cllr. Patrick O'Neill, Fiona O'Neill, Marion Acreman, Paul Brophy, Deirdre Shine, Bill O'Keeffe, Martina Comerford, Catherine Myers.

In Attendance: Denis Malone, Martin Prendiville, Aileen McGrath, Nicolaas Louw, Edwina Grace (KCLR)

Item	
1.	Declaration of Interest: None
2.	Confirmation of Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 7 th July 2022 were proposed by Cllr. Michael McCarthy and seconded by Cllr. John Coonan and agreed.
3.	Matters Arising: It was noted and agreed to correct the minutes of meeting held on 7 th July 2022 under section 4 of the minutes, the word "no" was replaced with "an" in reference to the Initial workshop which had been conducted with the HSE with regards to the St Canice's Campus. Mr. Denis Malone noted that the preparation of the Masterplan for the HSE's St. Canice's Campus is ongoing. Once a draft plan is available, it will be presented to the Council and HSE before it is placed on public display. Mr. Malone added that regrettably there was no significant progress on this due to staff shortages in the Planning Department.
4.	Progress Report: The Chair noted that the agenda and progress report were circulated and the report was taken as read. Mr. Malone provided an update on the Abbey Quarter regeneration projects, noting that a Part 10 Planning application to An Bord Pleanala was required with regards to the Urban Park and Street. The Urban Park & Street project is currently in detailed design and works will commence on site in Q1 2023 and will be complete in the Autumn 2024 Mr. Malone also provided an update on the North Quays SDZ. <u>Local Enterprise Office (LEO) update:</u> Ms Aileen McGrath gave an update on the activities of the Local Enterprise Office, year to date, including information on the upcoming design workshop taking place in the Parade Tower on 18 th November. <u>Tourism Update:</u> Mr. Malone referred to an article in the Irish Times which stated that Kilkenny suffered the biggest downturn in domestic tourism during Covid 19 and that sector had been supported in response to the crisis and actions had been taken in so far as possible to reduce the negative impacts of Covid on the sector.

	Mr. Malone provided the following update on Tourism activities including the following: Lighting up key buildings along the Medieval Mile, including Johns Bridge, Town Hall, St Canice's Cathedral, the Court House and the Tholsel. This is a URDF funded project aiming to help attract more visitors to Kilkenny and to expand the tourism season and the city's evening and night time economy. Mr. Malone also advised that plans are ongoing for the development of a unified tourism attraction at the Tholsel. The Medieval Experience will be a collection of ancient buildings at the heart of Kilkenny. Visitors will be able to take a guided tour through the St. Mary's Church and climb into the Town Hall's original Clock Tower to experience the views of the City. Mr. Malone outlined that the South East Food Stories which was launched this year to help promote the wide variety of food producers, providers and makers delivering quality foods directly from source to plates across the South East. The project was a collaborative project of the five tourism officers across the region supported by the Department of Agriculture and South East. Mr. Malone also noted that Smithwick's Experience had now re-opened to the public. Kilkenny Day will take place on the 9th October and will consist of a programme of events across the city and county, showcasing the very best the county has to offer. It was noted the Team Up to Clean Up initiative was also taking place that day. <u>South East Greenway:</u> Mr. Malone advised that the 24km South East Greenway has been awarded in 7 lots with lot 1-3 being now at practical completion. Lot 5 has been divided into two sections of equal length comprising Lot 5a (Ferrybank to Luffany) and Lot 5b (Luffany to Aylwardstown South). Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) have undertaken a final review of the tender documentation for Lot 5a and it is anticipated that the works tender will be advertised in the coming weeks. The review of the design to rock cutting faces for Lot 5b in accordance with TII specifications is ongoing. In a joint initiative Kilkenny County Council with Kilkenny LEADER Partnership and Trail Kilkenny, engaged the services of Punch Consulting Engineers to prepare a Feasibility Study & Route Selection Report to develop a Link between the South East Greenway and Woodstock Estate Inistioge. Works had been progressing over the summer months and it is anticipated that the draft Feasibility Study will be ready over the next few weeks. <u>ORIS - Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)</u> Mr. Malone advised that an update on the 40 projects under the ORIS Scheme are in the progress report which was circulated to all.
5.	LECP 2023 – 2028: Ms. McGrath advised that consultants, Turley & Co have been appointed to assist with the delivery of the LECP and are working on an agreed timeline for project closure by April 2023. Public and stakeholder consultations took place in September and October. In relation to next steps she advised that the, the Advisory Steering group will meet in early November to consider the findings from the public and stakeholder consultations. Following

	this, it is proposed to organise a joint SPC1 and LCDC meeting to agree the final document. A draft of the socio – economic statement taking into the account the public consultation would be circulated to all members of these committees in advance of this meeting
6.	Consideration of Policy Issues: Mr. Malone advised that following on from the adoption of the City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 and before it came into effect on the 15th October, 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 Development Plan (relating to Wind Energy). The Minister issued a draft direction to the Council on the 15th October and this went on public display and the Chief Executive prepared a report, which was considered by a special meeting of the Elected Members on the 6th December. It was then delivered to the OPR and the Minister. The OPR considered the report and made further recommendations to the Minister. The Minister has yet to decide on the OPR recommendations and there is no time limit on the Minister's decision. Mr. Malone advised that the public consultations for the Loughmacask masterplan will be on the 10th and 17th October. The Planning Section have been working in collaboration with the LGMA to introduce e-planning and it is envisaged that e-planning will go live in Kilkenny County Council before the end of Q3 2022. It will then be possible to register as a user and submit planning applications online to Kilkenny County Council. With regards to the Vacant Premises Levy, Mr. Malone advised that this will be replaced by a new tax. This has been trialled in Tipperary. Mr. Malone went through the following - Taking in Charge - Conservation Office and Grants Schemes - Building Control – noting that 239 valid commencement notices were submitted for the first 8 months of 2022.
8	Any Other Business: The Chair proposed that the joint SPC1 / LCDC meeting take place on the 16th November. He also suggested that the Draft Socio-Economic Statement is presented to Elected Members at the next suitable Plenary Meeting. Cllr. Maria Dollard advised that she had recently visited Boheim in Denmark with Made in Kilkenny group. Cllr. Dollard noted that Kilkenny is a designated Word Craft Region and outlined the importance of looking at extending Tourism beyond Medieval. Cllr. Dollard suggested inviting a member of Made in Kilkenny to the SPC1 Meeting in December. Cllr. Dollard sought clarification on 3 matters – Housing at the Abbey Quarter site, the temporary nature of the Car Park and the valid disability access table which is contained in the progress report. In response, Mr. Malone provided an update on the review of the Masterplan and said that 30% of the site is committed to residential. He re-iterated the importance of quality of life and mobility on the Abbey Quarter Site. Mr. Malone also confirmed that the Car Park is temporary.

	The table in the progress reports relate to the submission of Disability Access Certs which new developments which have public access must have in place prior to opening to the public. It is a requirement under the Building Control Regulations Cllr. Michael Doyle had a question with regards to the Ministerial Direction on Windfarms, asking if An Bord Pleanala could over rule the City and County Development Plan. Following the adoption of the County Development Plan the OPR made a recommendation to the Minister recommending the Minister issue a Direction to the Council relating to its policy on windfarms. The Minister has yet to decide on the OPR recommendations and there is no time limit on the Minister's decision. Mr. Malone acknowledged the sponsors of "Team up to Clean up" and Kilkenny Day.
9	Date of Next Meeting: The next meeting will take place on Thursday 8th December in Council Chambers. The meeting concluded at 5.00pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____

CLLR. GER FRISBY
Chairman