**Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee 4**

**Environmental Protection, Climate Action & Energy**

**9th December 2024**

**Council Chamber/Hybrid**

**In the Chair:** Cllr. Eugene McGuinness. Chair transferred to Cllr Seán Ó hArgáin at 12pm.

**In Attendance:** Cllr. Seán Ó hArgáin, Cllr Ger Frisby, Cllr Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Cllr Pat FitzPatrick, Ms. Mary Rice; Mr. James Murphy; Mr. Noel O’Donoghue;

**Also Present:** Tim Butler, Director of Service; Michael Arthurs, Senior Executive Officer; Catherine Millea, Senior Staff Officer; Catherine Cunningham, Executive Engineer; Dearbhala Ledwidge, Climate Action Co-ordinator; Eamonn Morrissey, Executive Chemist; Margaret Whelan, Environmental Awareness Officer; Marian Nolan, Assistant Staff Officer; Cllr Maria Dollard

Apologies: Cllr Joe Lyons

Cllr Eugene McGuinness opened the meeting and welcomed the new Committee members. All present at the meeting introduced themselves.

**Item 1 Declaration of interests**

None reported.

**Item 2 Confirmation of Minutes**

Not applicable as this is the first meeting of this SPC committee.

**Item 3Matters Arising**

Not applicable as this is the first meeting of this SPC committee.

**Item 4 SPC 4 – Purpose, Structure and Standing Orders**

Tim Butler, Director of Services gave a slide presentation on the role of the SPC. Tim addressed questions from the members. Members requested that a copy of the SO’s are circulated to members after the meeting. Tim also asked that the full presentation is circulated (*Document: 2024-12-05 SPC2 - Agenda Item 4 - Purpose Structure and Standing Orders - Overview of Strategic Policy Committee SPC*)

**Item 5 EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy**

Dearbhala Ledwidge, Climate Action Coordinator, gave a presentation to the Committee outlining what the EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy is, what Kilkenny County Council is committing to and why Kilkenny County Council should consider renewing membership. Committee members discussed same with contributions from Cllr. Eugene McGuinness, Cllr. Seán Ó hArgáin, Cllr Pat FitzPatrick, Mary Rice and Mr. James Murphy. Dearbhala Ledwidge addressed all queries and comments raised.

Motion to bring recommendation to Council - “**Agreement to renew Kilkenny County Council’s Commitment to the EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy”**

 Proposed: Cllr Eugene McGuinness

 Seconded: Cllr Seán Ó hArgáin

**Item 6 Progress Report by Director of Services**

Michael Arthurs presented highlights of the Director’s Report. A discussion followed relating to enforcement, ongoing education and awareness campaigns and engagement with stakeholders with contributions from Cllr Eugene McGuinness, Cllr Pat FitzPatrick, Cllr Seán Ó hArgáin, James Murphy, Mary Rice, Margaret Whelan, Eamonn Morrissey and Tim Butler.

James Murphy stated that there is a need for a dedicated bring centre to meet the needs of farmers disposing of agricultural waste.

Cllr Seán Ó hArgáin suggested that the Council also engage with Comhairle na nÓg as a stakeholder.

Mary Rice queried the use of air quality monitors. Catherine Cunningham advised that there are three monitors in use – in Castlecomer, Thomastown and on the Calla Road in Kilkenny – and that a further two have been purchased.

This Report will be sent out to all Committee members after the meeting.

**Item 7 Policy Manners**

1. **NAP 2024-2028 Progress**

Catherine Cunningham presented a progress report to the Committee. Catherine covered details on

* what the Noise Action Plan is
* the types of noise covered by the Action Plan
* relevant policies and guidance
* the process of generating the Draft NAP
* next steps

Chairman Cllr Eugene McGuinness did not open to the floor for comments, stating that the Plan can be discussed at a future meeting.

1. **Bye Laws for Burial Grounds**

Catherine Millea gave a presentation on the drafting of Bye-Laws covering all 14 open burial grounds in the operational control or ownership of Kilkenny County Council. Catherine advised that there is an advertisement in this week’s Kilkenny People (dated 6th December 2024) giving notification of the public consultation.

**Item 8 Updates**

1. **C&D Waste Regulations**

Presentation by Eamonn Morrissey outlining the present Construction and Demolition waste legislation, the Circular Economy Bill 2022 and the introduction of levy on single use items. Eamonn addressed from members regarding the classification of top-soil.

1. **DWWTP Grant and how it works**

Michael Arthurs presented an overview of the Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems grant covering the three types of grants available, the purpose of the grant, eligibility criteria and the steps involved in claiming the grant. The Chairman, Cllr Seán Ó hArgáin, opened to the floor for comments. No comments were made.

1. **Expected EPA Publication on Local Authority Performance Framework**

Michael Arthurs presented details of the Framework to the Committee covering the role of the Local Authority and performances at both national and local level relating to the current 3-year performance cycle (2022-2024). 2023 results were published on 3rd December. The next steps with regard to closing out the current cycle and commencing cycle 2 (2025-2027) were also outlined.

**Item 9 Any other business**

Cllr Mary Hilda Cavanagh requested a glossary of terms/acronyms to be emailed to the Council. She also asked for future agendas to be limited as there was a lot covered in this meeting.

Tim Butler proposed setting the dates of the SPC meetings for 2025 on the first Thursday of every third month. To be agreed by members.

The Chairman Cllr Seán Ó hArgáin thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.