



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL



PLEAN SEACHADADH SEIRBHÍSE SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2024

**Approved by Elected Members at Monthly Meeting
held on Monday, 15th January, 2024**

NÓTA ÓN BPRÍOMHFHEIDHMEANNACH

NOTE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Local Government Reform Act, 2014, established the requirement for each local authority to prepare an Annual Service Delivery Plan identifying the services it proposes to deliver to the public in the year ahead. The purpose of this Plan is to provide a corporate document that highlights the services that will be provided by Kilkenny County Council across all Directorates in 2024. The Plan has been prepared based on the overarching Corporate Plan 2019-2024, the provisions of the adopted Budget of Kilkenny County Council for 2024 and the assumptions made when the Budget for 2024 was adopted by the Council of continued financial support from the Government to provide compensation arising from pay increases, following acceptance of a new National Pay Agreement.

County Kilkenny is situated in the South East of Ireland with a population of 103,685 (2022). The County has an area of 2,062 square kilometers (206,200 hectares). The main urban centre is Kilkenny City and Environs. The next largest towns in County Kilkenny are the Ferrybank area, adjacent to Waterford City, and the district towns of Callan, Castlecomer, Graigueenamanagh and Thomastown. Kilkenny is a Medieval City and is known internationally as a centre for craft and design. Kilkenny boasts a strong indigenous industry in sectors such as financial services, food and drink as well as the craft sector. Tourism, agriculture food processing, financial services, light engineering, animation, arts, design and more recently medical /pharma are the main industries in the County.

The City has developed a strong profile as a services centre and is an administration centre for a number of state and semi-state agencies. Kilkenny has high profile nationally and internationally as a centre for tourism, festivals, heritage and the arts.

Kilkenny County Council's Corporate Plan 2019-2024 provides a vision for how we propose to work in partnership with the people of Kilkenny, our Elected Members and our Staff.

The Corporate Plan takes account of a series of cross-cutting themes permeating the Council. It also reflects a range of cross-departmental issues. As a strategic framework, the Corporate Plan will steer the preparation and implementation of Service Delivery Plans by each service area. The Service Delivery Plans detail how each Directorate areas will deliver on the objectives contained in the Corporate Plan and identifies the work programmes for each Directorate for 2024.

It is the responsibility of all of us who work on behalf of this Council to seek to promote a strong economy with a quality of life, environment and placemaking which in turn contributes to making Kilkenny an attractive and enjoyable County for our communities, our tourists and the business sector.

I want to acknowledge the commitment of our staff during 2023 to delivering services in very challenging circumstances and I know that commitment will continue in 2024 to enable us to deliver for our communities.

Finally, I want to thank you the Elected Members for your support during 2023 and in particular for the adoption of the Budget for 2024 and for maintaining the level of Local Property Tax. You have continued to be flexible in carrying out your role as Elected Members in these challenging times.



Lar Power
Chief Executive
Kilkenny County Council

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RÉAMHRÁ - INTRODUCTION

Mission & Values

The Council's Mission Statement and its Core Values & Principles have been outlined in its Corporate Plan 2019-2024 as follows:

Kilkenny County Council is committed to working with the people of Kilkenny to develop sustainable, connected, economically thriving and proud communities with the consideration of climate change embedded into all of our policies and services.

The Council supports 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.

The Council subscribes to the following core values and principles:

- Accessibility, Transparency & Openness.
- Accountability & Budgetary Control.
- Adopting a Regional Approach and/or multi agency approach, where appropriate.
- Building Capacity.
- Community Leadership & Citizen Engagement.
- Efficient & Good Value Customer Service.
- Maximising the use of Scarce Resources.
- Mutual respect and support for Members, Staff and Citizens.
- Participation and Equality.
- Recognition of Employees.
- Responsiveness & Efficiency.
- Service Improvement & Measurement.
- Supporting an Enhanced Local Democratic process & Governance.
- Trust & Integrity.

The Service Delivery Plan is based on the Core Objectives & Supporting Strategies, as set out in the Corporate Plan. It outlines in detail the key actions in each of the service areas proposed to be undertaken in 2024. It also identifies the performance standards for the services.

In delivering this ambitious programme of work like any other year, the Council recognises the need

- to maximise the use of its resources,
- for continued improvement in communications,
- to focus on customer services,
- to work in partnership to achieve citizen engagement & social inclusion.

In addition, for the year 2024 our Service Plan will require us:

- to support blended ways of working in the delivery of services,
- to optimise use of best technology to access online services,
- to support the delivery of new or changed national and local programmes and priorities,
- to retain flexibility to enable us to adapt in response to financial/staffing constraints that may arise in 2024 particularly with inflation and recruitment.

The Service Delivery Plans in this document provides much detail on services/actions to be delivered in 2024, however it is important to set out the strategic priorities for Kilkenny County Council for the coming year.

- **Abbey Quarter (AQ):** We will progress delivery of Phase 2 of the public realm in the Abbey Quarter which includes: the development of a new urban street (*with pedestrian and cyclist priority*) through the Abbey Quarter and development of a 1-hectare urban park and public plaza around the St Francis's Abbey national monument, the construction of a Board Walk at Greensbridge to provide the missing link to connect the 2 existing Riverside Walks in the City and the further refurbishment of the former squash courts on the AQ as a Cultural Hub. In November 2023, approval in respect of the Preliminary Business Case for Kilkenny County Council's second application under URDF Call 2 was approved, namely, Kilkenny City Centre Enhanced Liveability Project. This project relates to enhancing the streets and public realm in the City Core area to help transform the quality of place and accessibility of the City Centre and implement the Orientation Strategy aimed at attracting more visitors from the Castle into the City Centre.
- **Active Travel:** With funding provided through the National Transport Authority including for the provision of dedicated staff, the Active Travel Team will continue to progress transformative schemes through design and the appropriate statutory processes. Work will continue on the Radial Cycle Routes, the Inner Orbital Route, the improvement to safety features for the Ring Road, Lacken Walk and Greens Bridge in the City, countywide new and improved crossings, junction tightening, public lighting, footpath improvements and continued work on the Callan one-way/active travel project.
- **Belview Economic Zone:** We will work with key strategic partners (*Waterford Port, IDA, Uisce Éireann*) to ensure that we maximise the potential of the Belview Area, particularly in the continued context of Brexit. The planned upgrade works to the port road will provide access to open up additional lands for development. This work is considered critical if Belview Economic Area is to develop to its full potential.
- **Climate Change:** This is a challenge for all sectors of society and we will continue our work in this area with particular focus on modal shift. We will deliver on the actions contained in the Climate Action Plan due to adopted in February 2024 and the Sub-Actions for 2024 through the Climate Action Steering Group to reduce the carbon emissions associated with the delivery of our services by 51% by 2030. We commenced a significant project to complete the retrofitting of our public lights in the City and the County in 2023.
- **Flood Schemes:** We will progress the Major Flood Relief Capital Projects for the communities of Graiguenamanagh and Ballyhale, the latter which advanced in 2023 through the Design Stage. Ballyhale FRS moved into Stage 2 in 2023 - Planning Phase with a decision due from ABP in January 2024. We will progress two further flood relief schemes of Freshford & Piltown approved by the OPW as Pilot Schemes in partnership with Donegal County Council.

- **Funding:** The next few years will be challenging as the full impact of rising costs affect our Budgets and our income streams may also be impacted. It is important that we plan for additional spend which will impact on the Council's Revenue Budget. It is essential we plan for additional income from rates and services in the future. Equally, we need to plan for the provision of funds for our Capital Projects.
- **Housing:** Kilkenny County Council has prepared a Housing Delivery Action Plan for the period 2022-2026 setting out how social and affordable homes will be delivered to meet the targets for Kilkenny under the Housing For All Plan. 163 social units have been delivered in 2023. Our target is to provide a further 179 units in 2024 which exceeds the target set by the Department for the year 2024. Kilkenny County Council will continue with grant funding under the disability and elderly Schemes to assist private home owners to remain living in their communities.
- **Infrastructure:** We will progress plans and seek funding for strategic infrastructure to support the development of Kilkenny City & County including the completion of the Northern Ring Road Extension, link roads in the Breaghagh Valley/ Loughmacask areas, major upgrade/realignment to the N24, N25, & N77 routes. We will continue to seek funding for the N25 scheme which was not included in the 2023 TII programme.
- **Kilkenny Sustainability Urban Mobility Plan (KSUMP):** The development of the ambitious and transformative SUMP will continue into 2024 with the ambition of completing its adoption in Q3 of 2024. The SUMP will integrate all aspects of sustainable mobility into Kilkenny City in terms of services, infrastructure and planning setting the scene for Kilkenny to be an international exemplar in integrated sustainable mobility and helping achieve our climate and decarbonisation targets
- **Libraries:** We will complete the construction and fitout of the new City Library in the Mayfair Building by end of Q1 2024. We will also progress an assessment of the Carnegie building in terms of structural and conservation works required as well as a preliminary design and cost estimate for its use as a public facing local studies service and administrative library headquarters. We will progress Stage 3 Thomastown Library capital project application and Stage 1 Callan Library application.
- **National Planning Framework 2040(NPF), National Development Plan 2019 - 2027 (NDP) and the Southern Region's Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES):**
The Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021 - 2027 (CDP) incorporates a vision for the City and County that aligns with the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. The objective of these national regional and local planning documents is to develop Kilkenny as a self-sustaining regional economic driver with a planned population growth of more than 30% by 2040. The Council will continue to work with Waterford City & County Council to implement the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) and bid for capital funding for infrastructure and public realm projects under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF). The Abbey Quarter Masterplan Review, Loughmacask and Urlingford Town Plan were approved by the Members in 2023. Town Plans for Ballyragget, Kilmacow and Paulstown will be completed during 2024.
- **Public Lighting:** Kilkenny County Council as Lead Authority for Region 2 of the National Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project (*PLEEP*), intends to retrofit the balance of the lighting stock through this Project. The Contractor has commenced work on the project and has completed the Survey and the Lighting Design works for Kilkenny. The installation of the lanterns in Kilkenny has commenced in 2023 and is scheduled for completion in 2024.

- **Rural Regeneration:** We will continue to develop and submit applications for funding under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF), Town and Village Renewal (T&VR), CLAR and other funding streams as available during 2024, supporting and ensuring project delivery where funding allocations are made. €860K was awarded under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) in 2022 for the design and planning of the development of the Friary Complex and two buildings on Bridge Street, Callan. Following on from public consultation in 2023 and the procurement of preliminary studies, it is expected that the Council will be in a position to tender for design and planning of all the buildings in early 2024.
- **South East Greenway:** Phase One of the project was officially opened in July, 2023 - 6km section extending from New Ross to Glenmore. We will continue to progress work on the 24km South East Greenway to link New Ross to Waterford City with a view to opening the fully completed scheme in 2025. We will continue to work with the Greenway Project Office to support the local communities to prepare for the opportunities that the Greenway will present. We will progress proposals to provide connectivity from the Greenway to Glenmore, Slieverue and Woodstock Estate in Inistioge.
- **Tourism:** We will support Government schemes as required to support businesses in partnership with all stakeholders & Fáilte Ireland. We will also continue to support Kilkenny Tourism to promote the City and County as an attractive visitor destination.
- **Town Centre First:** The Town Regeneration Office will focus on any initiatives under the Government's Town Centre First Policy in 2024. This will include the progression of Town Plans and Town Teams with a view to assisting communities in repurposing town centre locations for residential, community, creative and business use. The office will be taking an active role in reviewing and taking action in relation to vacant and/or derelict sites in the City and County. €6m funding for these projects have been provided under URDF 3.
- **Western Environs:** Roads & Services infrastructure in the Breaghagh Valley to facilitate residential development of scale and education facilities - were completed in 2021. This is a significant investment by the Council in future proofing the City for compact growth in keeping with the "10 Minute City" concept adopted by the Council. The completion of the roads has led to the commencement of much needed housing development in the City and approval has been secured for a new primary school and two post primary schools in this new neighbourhood. In parallel with the housing development, Uisce Éireann completed upgrade works on the Troyswood Water Treatment Plant which will ensure sufficient water capacity for the City up to 2060. Substantial housing commencements and completions are evident in both the Breaghagh Valley/ Loughmacask areas as a result of the Council's proactive approach to infrastructure delivery.

Our strategic priorities are underpinned by our supporting strategies contained in our adopted Corporate Plan 2019 - 2024. Therefore, the delivery of the key actions identified in each Service Area Plans for 2024 may be affected from the impacts of rising costs, inflation, staffing and any adverse circumstances.

CORPARÁIDEACH - CORPORATE

Core Objectives

The Core Objectives are to support the mandate of the elected representatives, to develop and manage the capabilities of staff so as to deliver organisational objectives, and to deliver quality services to the citizen.

Supporting Strategies

The Supporting Strategies provide that the Council will ensure that a clear recognition and understanding of the policy and representational roles of the elected representatives permeates the Council, that democratic structures of the Council are facilitated and supported, the further development of shared services, and that the appropriate structures and systems are in place as resources permit, to deliver timely and quality services to the people of the County across the full range of services.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Provide ongoing advice & guidance by the Chief Executive and Staff to Elected Members in relation to the strategic direction of the Council, in the exercise of its reserved functions, in support of the policy making role of the Elected Members and in the delivery of day to day services.
- Organise and provide support/advice to all Statutory Meetings of the Council including Municipal Districts, Strategic Policy Committees, Joint Policing Committee and other meetings of the Council/Committees as required.
- Provide the Chief Executive's report to Members on a monthly basis on information and reports on key Council's activities.
- Provide ongoing administrative support to the Cathaoirleach/Mayor/Chair of Municipal Districts in his/her role.
- Provide administrative support to the Elected Members with regards to Member's training & development. Provide training to Elected Members & Staff on Corporate Governance.
- Prepare, organise and ensure the Local Election process and Count is carried out efficiently and in accordance with relevant legislation.
- Update Member's Guidance Manual for issue to newly Elected Members in June 2024.
- Provide induction training and support for newly Elected Members in June/July 2024.
- Ensure preparation & adoption of a Schedule of Municipal Works by each Municipal District by the 31st March 2024.
- Prepare and adopt the Service Delivery Plan for 2024 by February 2024.
- Prepare and adopt the Annual Report for 2023 by April 2024.
- Prepare and adopt Corporate Plan for 2024 - 2029 by September 2024.
- Prepare and adopt Standing Orders by September 2024.
- Prepare and adopt Strategic Policy Committee Scheme by September 2024.

- Ensure that the Council's Risk Register is reviewed by January 2024 and updated as required.
- Maintain the Online rolling Register of Electors and populate database with the required data in accordance with National Guidance.
- Upgrade the Customer Service Desk in County Hall and commence development of an IT based Customer Service Management System.
- Ensure Council's website is updated with relevant information and ensure website is accessible to all users.
- Implement objectives contained in the Communications Strategy. Co-ordinate the work of the designated Communications Sub-Group.
- Ensure Press Releases are issued in a timely manner.
- Issue Annual Newsletter to all householders in the County.
- Oversee the organisation of 2 Civic Festivals - St Patrick's Festival & Yulefest.
- Organise other Civic Events as required by the Council.
- Co-ordinate the submission of data to LGMA to facilitate publication of 2023 Performance Indicators.
- Ensure Council is compliant with Data Protection Legislation. Provide on-line training for staff in partnership with the LGMA to ensure the organisation is complying with GDPR.
- Ensure responses to Customer Complaints, FOI Requests and Data Requests are responded to within a timely manner.
- Comply with the Irish Language legislation and encourage the use of Irish throughout the organisation. Ensure responses are issued to any complaints received re use of Irish.
- Support Audit Committee in their work.
- Implement programme of work as set out in the approved Internal Audit Plan.

Performance Standards

Performance under Corporate will be assessed against the standards as set out above.

SLÁINTE & SÁBHÁILTEACHT - HEALTH & SAFETY

Core Objective

The Core Objective is to manage health and safety so as to keep employees and those affected by any Council work activities safe and in good health.

Supporting Strategies

The Supporting Strategies include ensuring that the Council complies with all safety legislation and related statutory requirements, by implementing a comprehensive Health & Safety Management System.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Ensure the Health and Safety programme and inspection programme as set out by the Safety Management Committee are implemented.
- Ensure staff are consulted on health, safety and wellbeing through departmental meetings and the various committees including the joint Consultative H&S Committee.
- Develop a culture of health, safety & wellbeing being an integral part of all services.
- Implement a Training & Development Programme for Health, Safety & wellbeing to include the extension of the H&S Induction/ annual awareness programme.
- Adapt and continue with the electronic system for annual Corporate Health & Safety Induction.
- Embed electronic system for undertaking SSWPs, Vehicle Checks, Temporary Traffic Management and Safety Inspections across high risk areas.
- Maintain Incident Management Programme.
- Implement Inspection Management System.
- Ensure Safety Statements as set out in the approved H&S programme are developed/ reviewed and implemented as required.
- Continue with work station analysis programme to include blended work arrangements.
- Review Occupational Health Policy and undertake Risk Assessments.
- Review, update and implement Policies & Procedures in the following areas:
 - ❖ Temporary Traffic Management
 - ❖ Emergency Callouts
 - ❖ Driving
 - ❖ Violence & Aggression.

Organise promotional activities and issue regular newsletters.

Performance Standards

Performance under Health & Safety will be assessed against the standards as set out above.

Core Objectives

The Core Objectives are to develop and manage the capabilities of staff so as to deliver organisational objectives and quality services to the citizen.

- To ensure that there is an appropriately resourced, skilled and motivated workforce to meet the priorities and objectives of the Organisation and to ensure as reasonably practical the safety, health and wellbeing of all our staff.
- To manage health and safety so as to prevent injuries and occupational illnesses of employees and those affected by a Council work activities.

Supporting Strategies

The Supporting Strategies will ensure and support the further development of shared services, a flexible approach to the deployment of staff, the development of the human resource capacity, strategies that provide for the enhancement of employee efficiency & performance, on the development of staff through the implementation of the Council's performance management, appraisal & development system and competency framework and that the appropriate structures and systems are in place as resources permit to deliver timely and quality services to the people of the County across the full range of services.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Continue to provide a strategic approach to human resource management to support delivery of corporate objectives.
- Development of a Strategic Work Force Plan.
- Implementation of the Council's Performance Management and Development System. (PMDS).
- Recruit and retain staff in line with the approved Workforce Plan and available budgets.
- Implementation of the Employee Wellbeing Strategy in partnership with the Health & Safety Team.
- Development and implementation of the annual Training & Development Plan.
- Manage and support effective Industrial Relations.
- Support the Water Services transition to Uisce Éireann.
- Management of staff contracts and personnel records moving towards digitisation of records management.
- Update and create awareness of Council HR policies as required.
- Roll out mandatory Dignity at Work, Grievance and Disciplinary Policy training for all staff.
- Manage Payroll and Superannuation.
- Manage Time & Attendance proactively including blended working and family friendly schemes.
- Continue to implement the Local Authority People Strategy.

Performance Standards

In addition to any targets set out above the Council's performance will be assessed against the following National Local Government Sector Performance Indicators and Local Indicators.

Corporate (C1 to C2)

C1: Wholtime Equivalents (WTE's)

C2: Sick Leave

BAINISTÍOCHT RIOSCA - RISK MANAGEMENT

Core Objective

The Core Objective is 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

The Supporting Strategies provide for the operation of an independent appraisal function for the review of the internal controls as a contribution to the proper economic, effective, and efficient use of resources, to operate a risk assessment process for the ongoing identification of internal and external threats to the organisation, to operate a controlled response system to manage these threats and ensure that value for money is achieved.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Prepare and complete the Internal Audit Plan 2024.
- Assist & facilitate the Local Government Auditor.
- Coordinate Internal Audit Plan with Local Government Auditor.
- Coordinate and disclose period system checks with Local Government Auditor.
- Address appropriately any issues raised in the Local Government Audit.
- Maintain and update Audit Recommendations Tracker.
- Facilitate four meetings of the Audit Committee in 2024.
- Carry out an in-depth examination of sample of Capital and Revenue Projects for the Quality Assurance Report of the Public Spending Code.
- Insure the Organisation as appropriate against relevant risks.
- Implement the recommendations of Value for Money Reports/Studies undertaken in the Local Government Sector.
- Implement the recommendations of NOAC reports undertaken in the Local Government Sector.

Performance Standards

Performance under Risk Management will be assessed against the standards as set out above.

IOMPAR & COSC AR THUILTE

TRANSPORTATION & FLOOD PREVENTION

Core Objective

The Core objective is to plan for and facilitate the transportation needs and road safety of the people residing in and travelling through County Kilkenny by developing and improving infrastructure including the formulation of public transport policy for the City & County.

Supporting Strategies

The Supporting Strategies include for engaging with Transport Infrastructure Ireland & the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in the planning and execution of the identified transportation objectives for County Kilkenny, improving the standards of the County's national and non-national road network, developing policies aimed at meeting various transportation needs, promoting community involvement in road repairs, and implementing the County Kilkenny Road Safety Plan covering the period 2015-2020.

The Supporting Strategies also include the promotion of a shift to environmentally sustainable modes of transport through the improvement and development of pedestrian, cycling and public transport infrastructure and services, making adaptations for climate change and increased rainfall in the planning and maintenance of the County's road network, encouraging resource sharing and pooling of utilities amongst private sector transport operators, considering national and international carbon reduction commitments in the design of new road infrastructure and in the provision and operation of public lighting services and maintaining and improving the public road related bridge stock of County Kilkenny.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Health & Safety – undertake a schedule of Inspections.
- Roll out actions under County Kilkenny Road Safety Plan 2022-2030.
- Undertake Restoration Improvement/Restoration Maintenance/Discretionary works under 2024 Roadworks Scheme.
- Undertake Maintenance and Drainage Programmes as provided in the 2024 Roadworks Scheme.
- Undertake works identified under Low Cost Safety Schemes.
- Implement the Community Involvement in Road Works Scheme.
- Implement the Local Improvement in Road Works Scheme.
- Complete works prescribed under the Bridge Rehabilitation Programme for Non-national roads.
- Deliver the Winter Maintenance Plan 2023/2024.
- In conjunction with TII, progress through Phase 6 - Construction & Implementation for the N77 Ballyragget Village to Ballynasleee Road Improvement Scheme Subject to TII approval, contractor appointment imminent and construction phase expected to commence in February 2024 with a 12-month time period proposed.
- In conjunction with TII, progress through final elements of Phase 6 - Construction & Implementation and Phase 7- Close out & Review the N24 Tower Road Junction Road Improvement scheme (*Substantial completion December 2023*).
- Subject to An Bord Pleanála and TII approval, progress to Phase 5 - Enabling and Procurement for the N24 Carrick Road Improvement Realignment Project. (*Applications submitted for both the Compulsory Purchase Order and 177AE Planning approval to An Bord Pleanála during November 2022. The decisions on both applications are expected by Q1 2024*).
- Progress to close out of Phase 2 - Option Selection for the N24 Waterford to Cahir major scheme.
- Progress HD15 and HD17 Safety Schemes on the national road network.
- Progress Fencing Retrofit Programme on the national road network.
- Progress Vehicle Restraint Systems Programme on the national road network.
- Progress the TII Multi-Annual Pavement Scheme Programme.

- Progress the N76 Callan By-Pass Pavement Scheme (*Design, Tender Documents & Construction*).
- Progress the N76 Reviewfields Pavement Scheme (*KK Ring Road*) (*Design, Tender Documents & Construction*).
- Progress the N29 Port Road Pavement Scheme (*Design, Tender Documents & Construction*).
- Continue conveyance for M8/M9 Motorway Schemes.
- Undertake Visual Road Condition Survey via MapRoad Pavement Management Scheme (PMS).
- Undertake Mechanical Road Condition Survey of a selected percentage of the Regional and Local Road Network, including before and after surveys of works completed under the Road Restoration Improvement Programme.
- Continue to up-date Road Schedule for County.
- Maintain and improve (*under the PLEEP programme*) approximately 11,500 public lights within the City and County.
- Kilkenny Northern Ring Road Extension - Liaise with the Department of Transport to ensure continued progress on the planning and design for the scheme.
- Loughmacask Link Roads – Determine preferred route. Progress planning and design of chosen route in conjunction with construction of access road to the new CBS school site.
- URDF
 - Progress Design & Planning for the South-North Link Road Ferrybank between Belmont Road and Abbey Rd during 2024.
 - Progress Design & Planning for the Greenway Connectivity on the South-North Link Road Ferrybank. (*Linked with above*)
 - Progress Design and Planning of improvements to the N29 Port Road.
 - Progress Design and Planning for the Abbey Road & Belmont Road Improvement Works
- Respond to emergencies as they arise in accordance with the Severe Weather Plan, Flood Response Plan and Major Emergency Plan.

Kilkenny City

Progress Active Travel Projects across the City and Environs.

- Finalise Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) for Kilkenny City to facilitate sustainable urban mobility that will cater for the needs of local residents, businesses and visitors for the future.
- Progress the Kilkenny City Enhancement Projects under the URDF Programmes to include:
 - Vicar Street - A one-way inbound traffic flow system will be provided to facilitate widening of footpaths and a contra-flow cycle lane.
 - Feature Lighting on Historic Buildings.
 - Off-Street Connectivity - Provision of improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to link the Eastern Environs to the City Centre via Lady Desart Bridge.
 - Progress plans to improved Public Realm Enhancement of St. Mary's Lane, St. Kieran's Street, Market Yard, Watergate, Barrack Lane and the area around Carnegie Library.
 - Design and implement mobility for the City in accordance with the SUMP Plan once finalised.
- Maintain and operate public car parks, street parking areas and traffic management throughout the City including revised charges.
- Street sweeping, litter picking and other programmes to ensure Kilkenny maintains its high standard in City cleansing.
- Continue programme of maintenance of amenities and open spaces by the Parks Department including additions to the public realm such as the Abbey Quarter, Riverside Park and Breagagh Valley.
- Continued programme of planting by the Nursery Section to enhance the amenity offering in Kilkenny City.

- Continue to develop civic festivals and provide assistance to Civic Festivals and other events within the City.

Flood Prevention

In partnership with OPW, progress the Flood Risk Management Plans - Manage and progress the 6 schemes identified in Kilkenny by the OPW under the CFRAMS report. The following schemes are identified - Ballyhale, Freshford, Graignamanagh, Inistioge, Piltown and Thomastown.

Performance Standards

In addition to any targets set out above the Council's performance will be assessed against the following National Local Authority Sector Performance Indicators

Roads (R1-R2 & E6) as follows:

R1: Pavement Surface Condition Index (PSCI) Ratings

R2: Road Works/Expenditure

E6: Public Lighting

SEIRBHÍŚÍ UISCE - WATER SERVICES

Core Objective

The Council's Core Objective for Water Services is the provision of high quality water & waste water services to urban & rural parts of County Kilkenny through the implementation of the provisions of the Service Level Agreement, agreed between Kilkenny County Council & Irish Water and by working with the Group Scheme Sector in accordance with the health & safety requirements of Kilkenny County Council.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Provision of Water Services

- Engage with Uisce Éireann to ensure resolutions to water shortages on specific schemes in the County
- Engage with Uisce Éireann in relation to capital projects necessary to ensure adequate water services to meet the growing demands of the City & County.

Rural Water Programme

- Allocate grants and subsidies in accordance with Schemes and annual allocation.
- Monitor water quality in the Group Water Schemes.
- Continue to support and update Rural Water Committee on Upgrades to Group Schemes, Well Grants & Subsidies, Incident Management & Water Quality.

Public Conveniences

- Continue to maintain public conveniences around the County.

Performance Standards

In addition to any targets set out above the Council's performance will be assessed against the following National Local Authority Sector Performance Indicators

Water (W1) as follows:

W1: % of Drinking Water in private schemes in compliance with statutory requirements

W2: % of Registered Schemes monitored

CEATHRÚ NA MAINISTREACH - ABBEY QUARTER

Core Objectives

The Core Objective is the redevelopment of the former Smithwick's Brewery Site which will include a mixed use development with significant areas of high quality public realm.

Supporting Strategies

The development of six development blocks within the former brewery site will be undertaken by Kilkenny Abbey Quarter Development Ltd, a partnership between Kilkenny County Council and the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA) through the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF). Kilkenny County Council is responsible for the development of the extensive public realm areas proposed through the site and the redevelopment of the Mayfair Building as the new City Library.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Ongoing Projects:

- Complete Mayfair Library in Spring of 2024.
- Complete Horse Barrack Lane (*to junction at Irishtown*) with the Mayfair Library in spring of 2024.
- Appoint Operator for the renovated Tea Houses in Spring 2024.
- Commence construction on the development of the Urban Street and Park in the Abbey Quarter with a view to being completed by the end of 2025.
- Advance through Planning to construction in 2024 the renovation the former Squash Court for Cultural use.
- Advance the development of the new Boardwalk between Greens Bridge and Bishops Meadows to construction.

Performance Standards

Performance under Abbey Quarter will be assessed against the standards as set out above.

BAINISTÍOCHT AIRGEADAIS & MÓTARCHÁIN

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & MOTOR TAXATION

Core Objective

The Core Objective is to provide effective management of the Council's Finances and Assets to ensure delivery of the Council's objectives in all program areas.

Supporting Strategies

The Supporting Strategies are as follows:

- Management of the Annual Revenue Budget to ensure expenditure matches income.
- Ongoing monitoring of the impact of COVID 19 on the Council's Finances.
- Management of the Capital Budget to ensure expenditure does not exceed the funding available.
- Ensure that procedures / controls are in place in all areas for the effective management of all the Council's assets and finances and are sufficient for the needs of the business.
- Ensure the Elected Members are kept up to date on the Council's Finances and on legislative changes that may have a material impact on Finances.
- Monitoring of the Council's cash position to ensure optimum use of the facilities available.
- Collect all monies due to the Council in a timely manner.
- Ongoing monitoring of the Council's Capital funding requirements to ensure appropriate funding is available when needed for approved projects.
- Deliver an efficient / timely service in the Motor Tax Office.
- Management of the Mortgage Loan Book to ensure compliance with loan agreements.
- Ensure compliance with Departmental Circulars, the Accounting Code of Practice and relevant legislation.
- Ensure the Council is tax compliant in all transactions.
- Ensure that all goods and services both Revenue and Capital are procured in a compliant manner to ensure value for money.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Monthly Management Reports to be provided to all Department Managers / Directors of Services detailing actual Expenditure / Income against Budget for both the Revenue and Capital Accounts.
- Regular meetings to be held with Managers / Directors to review performance against budgets.
- Daily/Weekly monitoring of cash balances to ensure optimum use of the cash/overdraft facilities.
- Complete the 2023 Annual Financial Statement for approval by the Elected Members within the statutory deadlines.
- Complete Budget 2025 within the statutory deadlines.
- Complete Departmental Returns in a timely manner.
- Raise additional income to meet the increasing demands on expenditure incurred in the provision of the day to day services.
- Prepare three-year Capital Programme for the period 2024-2026.
- Arrange financing facility for the agreed Capital Programme.
- Issue all customer communications and respond to customer queries promptly.
- Monthly reporting on debt collection performance.

- Management of all Council's assets and facilities.
- Provide regular updates to the Elected Members and the public on new legislation.
- Ensure that the implementation of Blended Working has positive impact on the delivery of services.
- Ensure staff are adequately trained to carry out their duties in a professional and efficient manner.
- Finalise appointing new Debt Management Service Provider.
- Complete Public Spending Code when required.
- Implement and review Enhanced Reporting Requirements for travel and subsistence to employees.

Performance Standards

In addition to any targets set out above the Council's performance will be assessed against the following National Local Government Sector Performance Indicators

Finance (M1 & M4) and Motor Tax (R3) as follows:

M1:	Revenue Account Balance
M2:	Revenue Collection Rates
M3:	Public Liability Claims
M4:	Overheads
R3:	% of Motor Tax transactions conducted online

Core Objective

The Core Objective is to ensure that the Council has in place modern & efficient technological, information and communication systems capable of meeting the needs of the Council and its customers.

Supporting Strategies

The supporting strategies for Information Technology include the provision of relevant information in a timely manner that supports effective service delivery and informed decision making by members, management and staff, the use of information and communications technologies to assist in the implementation of the Council's goals and objectives including the modernisation of its systems where required, the ongoing and continued implementation and co-operation with shared information technology systems and the continued encouragement of the use of online service provision and e-business by its customers.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Maintain security of the network and data.
- Provide remote working facilities to staff to facilitate blended working.
- Connect new library in Kilkenny City to the network.
- Complete the upgrade of Network connections to key sites outside the City.
- Continue to upgrade servers and PCs to latest software.
- Continue the rollout of CRM product.
- Support the rollout of the National Broadband Plan and the Broadband Officer.
- Implement new updates to national systems as required.
- Continue preparation for the new national Housing Management Information System.

Performance Standards

In addition to any targets dates set out above the Council's performance will be assessed against the following National Local Authority Sector Performance Indicators

Corporate C3 & C4 as follows:

C3: Website and Social Media

C4 & C5: ICT Expenditure

SOLÁTHAR - PROCUREMENT

Core Objective

The Core Objective for Procurement is to further 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 organisation.

Supporting Strategies

The Supporting Strategies seek to achieve savings in the procurement of goods and services both locally & through any collaborative approaches in the Local Government & wider Government Sectors, the inclusion in contracts and supporting documentation specifications regarding lowering carbon emissions and the ongoing examination of current & future procurement policies.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Ensure that tenders as advertised on the eTenders website and OJEU (*European Journal*) as appropriate are completed successfully by Service Areas.
- Ensure that Kilkenny County Council participate in relevant SupplyGov.ie Frameworks and that mini competitions are conducted in compliance with their rules.
- Ensure that Kilkenny County Council participate in relevant Office of Government Procurement (OGP) Frameworks.
- Achieve further savings (*where possible*) in all areas.
- Provide advice and support to all staff involved in procurement/tendering etc.
- Review and update the Procurement Procedures Manual.
- Review the Corporate Procurement Plan.
- Promote the use of Environmental and Social Considerations in Public Procurement across the organisation.
- Facilitate training of staff to broaden their knowledge of Procurement with particular emphasis on Green Procurement.
- Continue the promotion of Quickquotes within the Organisation.
- Finalise new tender for provision of Legal Services.

Performance Standards

Performance under Procurement will be assessed against the standards as set out above.

Core Objective

The core objective is to develop, co-ordinate, motivate, inspire and strengthen artistic activity throughout the City and County.

Supporting Strategies

The supporting strategies provide for development and implementation of an Arts Policy to develop, co-ordinate, motivate, inspire, advise and empower artistic activity throughout the City and County, to co-ordinate key cultural events, to manage community and educational programmes and to provide funding to festivals and infrastructure. Strategies include Kilkenny County Council (*Arts, Heritage, Libraries*) Cultural Strategy 2018-2022, funded in partnership with the Arts Council of Ireland, Kilkenny County Council and Arts Council Framework Agreement-Making Great Arts Work 2016 - 2025 (*Arts Council of Ireland*) & Creative Ireland Kilkenny Strategy.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

ARTISTS SUPPORTS

Visual Arts

- Professional Development, grants and mentoring opportunities for artists.
- Climate Art Assembly- Research Phase 1 - Roots for the Future is collaboration between Wexford (Lead) Clare, Cavan, Galway, Offaly, and Kilkenny Arts offices. The project will focus on the research development of a Climate Art Assembly.

Literature

- Professional Development, grants and mentoring opportunities.
- Publication of our Poetry Broadsheet.
- Seasonal workshops and courses.
- National Mentoring in partnership with the Irish Writers Centre.

Music

- The continued roll out of our Music Plan including professional Development programmes, grants and mentoring opportunities.

Across Art forms

- Emerging Curator in Residence – This programme enables an emerging curator to gain experience and professional development in curating and managing exhibitions and projects for Kilkenny City and County. 2024 will focus specifically on Public Art projects.

ArtLinks

- Artists bursaries: continued investment in bursaries for artists across the four-county region.
- Continued concentrated work on our social media presence to promote and raise the profile of ArtLinks and awareness of practitioners in the region.
- Support emerging visual artists, specifically targeting artists from a socio/economic disadvantaged background.

CPD – Artists working with young people

- Identify needs of artists whose practices focus on working with children and young people. Support upskilling and provide networking and peer to peer learning opportunities.

Performing Arts

- Undertake a needs analysis for the sector.
- Design and deliver programmes in line with the outcome of the needs analysis.

YOUNG PEOPLE

- Artists in residence in partnership with Ossory Youth and Foróige – create a safe space for young people to explore their creativity and to diversify participation in the arts. 2024 specific focus is on the Climate Crisis.
- Bookville Festival Bookville - for families and children between the ages of 0 – 12 years managed by Kilkenny Library service and Kilkenny Arts Office. A multi-disciplinary festival with a strong emphasis on books, literature and writing.
- School subsidies - ensure that children from across the county experience high-quality professional theatre.
- Primary School residencies - Partner with Kilkenny Education Centre designed to support and enhance learning opportunities for children, teachers and artists.
- Rhyme Rag - Secondary school engagement - facilitate poetry workshops and publishing opportunities for teenagers.

COMMUNITY & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Culture night - Annual collaborative event celebrating the Arts in all its guises.
- Research, design and delivery of high-quality community programmes to suit diverse sectors of the public. 2024 will see a particular focus on Climate Action programmes, focusing on the personal power of the individual, highlighting how collective individual actions can have positive and powerful impacts.
- Ongoing support and advice to practitioners and communities.
- Endeavour to continue to nurture and develop new relationships within our community and public engagement projects and programmes.

PRACTITIONER and COMMUNITY GRANTS & BURSARIES

- Administration of the following grants and bursaries
- Arts Act Grants – individuals and communities
- Residency awards
- School subsidies
- Creative Ireland grants
- Professional development grants.

Creative Ireland

- Devise and implement Creative Ireland programmes in partnership with other relevant Departments.

Per Cent for Arts

- Continue development and implementation of the Per Cent for Arts Programme.

Infrastructure

- Support the development of the former Squash Courts on the Abbey Quarter Site.
- Support the development of physical infrastructural facilities for artists across artforms.

Other

- Continue to advice and support groups and individuals.
- Input to Arts planning and relevant policy initiatives.
- All programmes will be monitored and evaluated to collect qualitative and statistical data to show the actual reach, relevance and impact of our programmes.

Performance Standards

Performance under Arts will be assessed against the indicators as set out above.

BITHÉAGSÚLACHT - BIODIVERSITY

Core Objective

To record, conserve, protect, restore, enhance and to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of biodiversity and the eco-services it delivers. To develop and implement policy to safe guard and enhance biodiversity. The Biodiversity Officer will act as a co-ordination role supporting the community to participate in the conservation, management and restoration of biodiversity and collaborate with different stakeholders including, Government Departments, State Agencies, NGO's, third level institutions, interest groups, elected representatives and local authority colleagues to deliver national priorities at local level.

Supporting Strategies

The Supporting Strategies will ensure and support the Council to develop a County Kilkenny Biodiversity Plan and the establishment of a Biodiversity Working Group with the Biodiversity Officer taking a coordinating role to deliver prioritised actions. Key International, National and County supporting strategies include: UN Convention on Biodiversity, National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2027 (*in preparation*); All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025; The Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (2019); National Heritage Plan (Heritage 2030) ; Culture 2025 (*A Framework Policy for 2025*); Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027; Kilkenny Carbon Action Plan 2024-2029 (*in preparation*); County Kilkenny Culture and Creativity Plan 2023-2028; Kilkenny Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2028. Biodiversity is vulnerable to climate change and biodiversity offers both opportunities for both mitigation and adaptation. Climate change is predicted to accelerate biodiversity loss and biodiversity and the ecosystem services it delivers, presents opportunities for both climate mitigation and adaptation strategies. The development of a County Biodiversity Plan in 2024 will align with the requirements of the National Biodiversity Action Plan and the commitments under the County Development Plan and where necessary, will develop policy to consolidate and advance ambitions of biodiversity conservation, protection, restoration and enhancement in line with emerging work areas relating to climate change mitigation and adaption.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Co-ordinate the development of a County Biodiversity Plan.
- Establish a new Biodiversity Working Group.
- Participate in Kilkenny County Council's Climate Action Team and implement biodiversity-based climate actions in the Climate Action Plan.
- Implement the National Biodiversity Action Plan Fund.
- Implement the Kilkenny Pollinator Programme and support Tidy Towns Groups to participate in the national Local Authority Tidy Towns Pollinator Award.
- Assist in the roll out of staff biodiversity themed training programmes.
- Co-ordinate data collection regarding biodiversity in County Kilkenny.
- Co-ordinate and implement events for National Heritage Week and National Biodiversity Week.
- Support submissions of biodiversity themed projects under the Kilkenny Creative Ireland Programme.
- Communicate the biodiversity message via different mediums, ezines, social media, traditional media.
- Provide advice to the public and local authority on biodiversity best practise.
- Support Kilkenny's participation in the National Heritage in Schools Programme in collaboration with the Heritage Officer and Environmental Awareness Officer.

Performance Standards

Performance under Biodiversity will be assessed against the standards as set out above.

Core Objective

In line with the National Children's Strategy 2000, 'Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures' the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020, the National Strategy on Children and Young People participation in decision making 2015-2020, the objective is to make Kilkenny a great place in which to grow up, where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled, where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realise their maximum potential.

Supporting Strategies

The Supporting Strategies provide for working as part of an interagency team to build a strong Children and Young Persons Services Committee for Kilkenny, to engage in joint planning of services for children and young people and the continued growth of the Kilkenny's Comhairle na nÓg into a strong inclusive collective voice for young people across Kilkenny City and County.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Operate a strong and active Comhairle na nÓg structure in Kilkenny throughout 2024 focusing on schools who have not participated previously and young people from lesser heard communities.
- Coordinate and support the Kilkenny Comhairle na nÓg Steering Committee.
- Develop two topics of concern to young people in Kilkenny with Comhairle na nÓg and implement appropriate actions as necessary.
- Facilitate and support the operation of the DRUM youth café at MacDonagh Junction for 12-18 year olds.
- Facilitate the operation of a Youth Café in the former Courthouse Castlecomer staffed by youth development workers.
- Support the Children and Young Persons Services Committee (CYPSC) in the delivery of its current Strategic Plan through implementation of the Actions to improve service delivery for children and young people based on 5 outcomes:
 - ❖ active and healthy physical and mental wellbeing,
 - ❖ achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development,
 - ❖ safe and protected from harm,
 - ❖ economic security and opportunity, connected, respected and contributing to their world.
 - ❖ support and engage with the development of the new CYPSC Strategic Plan
- Support the CYPSC funding streams including seed fund projects and Healthy Ireland funding.
- Support Ossory Youth in the delivery of programmes to young people in the County.
- Provide support to Young Social Innovators through the running of the civic engagement programme in the County and the social innovations young people are pursuing.
- Facilitate the provision of events for children and young people for National Play Day, National Recreation Week and Bike Week.
- Access funding for recreation infrastructure targeted at children and young people under the Capital Play & Recreation funding stream.

Performance Standards

In addition to any targets set out above the Council's performance will be assessed against the following National Local Government Sector Performance Indicators

Y1: Participation in Comhairle na nÓg Scheme

COSAINT SHIBHIALTA - CIVIL DEFENCE

Core Objective

The core objective for the Civil Defence is to support the Local Authority and other Principal Response Agencies through our core services of: Emergency Response, Search and Rescue, Medical Response, Community Assistance and Radiation Monitoring Service as outlined in the “Civil Defence Toward 2030” document and in line with the Framework for Major Emergency Management publication.

Supporting Strategies

The supporting strategies provide for the prompt & appropriate response to the primary response agencies requests for assistance during severe weather, land and river search & rescue and to perform other duties in the event of a Major Emergency engaging with the community to provide casualty and safety cover for community and sporting events.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Increase the number of volunteers by 10% to maintain a core group of trained volunteers.
- Maintain standards of readiness to respond in an emergency by ensuring a comprehensive training plan is in place.
- Up skill the existing volunteers in line with national practices and standards.
- Continue to risk assess all core activities and ensure health and safety policies and procedures are in place.
- Strengthen the capacity of the boat unit to respond to emergencies and calls for assistance from the PRA's.
- Increase the capacity of the Swiftwater unit to respond to emergencies, flooding and calls for assistance from the PRA's.
- Continue to train volunteers to the highest standard of the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council.
- Expand the casualty service to include new skill sets in line with changing demands on the service.
- Procure and maintain equipment to aid the appropriate response to an emergency.
- Support the continued development of the resilience desk to assist with other voluntary services during severe weather events.
- Continue to strengthen relationships with principal response agencies and the Major Emergency Management Team.
- Part-take in training and meetings as part of the Crisis Management Team within the Council.
- Collaborate and undertake training exercises with PRA's and other voluntary response agencies in readiness for emergency response.
- Work collaboratively with other voluntary services to offer training in the community.
- Respond to requests for support from the PRA's during periods of severe weather, land and water searches for missing persons, flooding and during major emergencies.
- Provide casualty response and river safety boat cover for the Council, Community and Sporting events across the County of Kilkenny.
- Implement our own Climate Action Plan to reduce our carbon emissions.

Performance Standards

Performance under Civil Defence will be assessed against the standards as set out above.

Core Objectives

The Core Objectives are through the Local Community Development Committee to work towards the development, co-ordination, implementation of a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development, to put in place mechanisms by which citizens and communities will be encouraged and supported to participate in the decision making process of the Local Authority and ensure that the hard to reach socially excluded groups are supported to engage in this process and to promote and foster civic leadership and participation across the community, culture, arts, heritage and recreation sectors.

Supporting Strategies

The Supporting Strategies provide advice and information on the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and its role in the County in relation to coordination, management of and improvement of coordination public funded local and community development programmes. The Supporting Strategies also provide advice in the implementation, monitoring and review of the community element of the 6-year Kilkenny Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), assisting in the development of a strong socially inclusive Public Participation Network in Kilkenny.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Monitor and report on the actions contained in the first 2-year Implementation under the LECP 2023-2028.
- Support the LCDC and its Sub Groups with regards to preparation of the second 2-year Implementation Plan under the new LECP 2023-2028.
- Maintain and manage the oversight and monitoring of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP).
- Maintain and manage the oversight and monitoring of SICAP – Ukraine Response.
- Implement Community Development funding programmes including SICAP, Community Enhancement Programme, Healthy Ireland Fund, annual direct funding contributions and small-scale financial support for social inclusion events.
- Support the roll-out of the Local Authority Period Poverty Initiative for the provision of free period products as supported by the Department of Health.
- Support the recruitment of a Healthy Communities Coordinator under the new Slaintecare Healthy Community Programme.
- Support Kilkenny's One-Parent families Development Worker in the implementation of the Voice and Visibility Action Plan for One-Parent families in Kilkenny.
- Provide ongoing support to the Public Participation Network.
- Support the Kilkenny Traveller Interagency Group and the Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement to address locally identified needs and concerns and put in place responses where gaps in services currently exist.
- Support the Intercultural Forum in partnership with County Kilkenny LEADER Partnership, the Public Participation Network and local ethnic minority and cultural groups.
- Support a Development Worker to engage with and support ethnic minority and cultural groups to strengthen local structures as part of the LGMA funding stream.
- Publish a Community Grants Booklet and further develop the online One Stop Shop for Funding portal on the Kilkenny County Council's Website.

- Progress Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) projects in Piltown.
- Develop a RRDF/Town & Village Renewal One Stop Shop on the Kilkenny County Council Website.
- Develop RRDF project applications.
- Deliver Town & Village Renewal 2022 and 2023 projects and develop new projects for 2024 applications.
- Deliver projects approved under CLÁR 2023.
- Develop applications for projects under CLÁR 2024.
- Deliver Capital Facilities Grant Scheme 2023.
- Support the development of Masterplans for Ballyragget, Kilmacow & Paulstown.
- Support Town Teams in the implementation of the Town Plans.
- Support the Kilkenny Age Friendly Alliance and the Kilkenny Older People's Council.
- Develop the next 5-year Kilkenny Age Friendly Strategy.
- Deliver Age Friendly Programme for 2024.
- Co-ordinate the Pride of Place Programme in County Kilkenny.
- Support the Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership.
- Monitor the Implementation of Kilkenny County Council's Disability Inclusion Strategy 2023 - 2026
- Support Estate Enhancement Programmes.
- Further develop online Community Information Interactive Documents.
- Support the Climate Action Plan and Climate Action Initiatives for Community Projects.
- Implement Creative Ireland Programme for 2024.

Performance Standards

In addition to any targets set out above the Council's performance will be assessed against the following National Local Government Sector Performance Indicators

Youth/Community (Y2) as follows:

Y2: Groups associated with the Public Participation Network (PPN)

Core Objective

The protection and sustainable management of Kilkenny's heritage for current and future generations, by raising awareness, providing advice, developing/implementing policy, collecting data, promoting best practice, supporting the community to participate in the conservation and management of local heritage and collaborating with government departments, state agencies and local authority colleagues to deliver national heritage priorities at local level.

Supporting Strategies

Key National and County supporting strategies include: National Heritage Plan (*Heritage 2030*) (*in preparation*); Culture 2025 (*A Framework Policy for 2025*); National Biodiversity Action Plan 2018-2023; All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025; Irish Walled Towns Strategy 2020-; Decade of Centenaries Programme 2021-; The Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (2019); The Built and Archaeological Heritage Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (2019); National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage; Kilkenny City & County Development Plan; Kilkenny County Council (*Arts, Heritage, Libraries*) Cultural Strategy; Kilkenny County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024; County Kilkenny Culture and Creativity Plan; Kilkenny Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Review of membership of and re-establish County Heritage Forum.
- Develop new County Heritage Plan.
- Implement County Heritage Plan programme.
- Implement heritage actions in the Kilkenny County Council's Climate Action Plan.
- Manage the Community Monuments Fund Programme for Kilkenny.
- Manage the Irish Walled Towns Network Programme for Kilkenny.
- Co-ordinate and implement Kilkenny's programme for National Heritage Week.
- Support delivery of and implement heritage actions in Kilkenny's Creative Ireland programme.
- Generate heritage awareness and engagement through "Kilkenny Heritage News" ezine, Kilkenny Heritage website, local media and social media.
- Provide advice to the public and Local Authority on heritage best practice.
- Support Kilkenny's participation in National Heritage in Schools programme.
- Provide heritage input to Urban Regeneration & Development Fund (URDF), Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF), Town & Village Renewal Scheme, CLÁR Programme, Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, Fáilte Ireland, Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan as required.
- Implement heritage actions in the Local Economic and Community Plan.
- Support other relevant heritage programmes as they arise.

Performance Standards

Performance under Heritage will be assessed against the standards as set out above.

Core Objective

The Core Objective for Housing is 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. While the key actions included in this Service Plan relate to the provision of social housing services every effort will be made to support the provision of private housing in Kilkenny also to address the overall need for housing.

Supporting Strategies

The Supporting Strategies provide for maximising the availability of accommodation to meet different categories of need, implementing a planned programme of maintenance and refurbishment of our existing housing stock, subject to available resources, fostering estate management and tenant participation, providing loans and incentives for people housing themselves, providing for marginalised groups such as persons with disabilities, travellers and homeless within agreed Housing Accommodation Programmes and increasing the availability of accommodation in association with the Private and Voluntary Sector.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Housing Capital Delivery

- Progress the delivery of the targets for social housing units, as set out by the Department of Housing under Housing for All and in accordance with Kilkenny County Council Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022 to 2026.
- Increasing social housing supply through all available means, including:
 - Progression of direct build construction projects including land acquisition, feasibility studies, planning, procurement, construction and completion.
 - Continue to work with Approved Housing Bodies to increase social housing supply through CAS, CALF and Part V Schemes.
 - Continue to work with Housing Developers to deliver units under Part V and Turnkey Schemes.
 - Work with the Vacant Homes Team to deliver and manage units through Buy & Renew and Repair to Lease Schemes.
 - Acquisition of houses to meet particular needs in accordance with targets set out by the Department of Housing.
- Deliver Affordable Housing units for purchase under the various Affordable Housing Schemes in accordance with the targets set out by the Department of Housing.
- Progress the Retrofit Programme in line with the targets set out under National Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme.
- Deliver on housing targets set out in Kilkenny County Council Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) 2019-2024.
- Implement relevant Housing Capital actions included in Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029.

Housing Operations

- Respond in a timely manner to emergency maintenance calls.
- Review and record status of Local Authority Housing stock for planning and maintenance purposes.
- Implement a planned programme of maintenance and refurbishment of our existing stock subject to resources and seek to maximize funding for housing maintenance.
- Seek to maximise the resources available to improve housing stock to meet tenant's needs via programmes such as energy efficiency, voids, disabled persons grants and Traveller Accommodation funding.
- Provide additional crew to assist Voids Team.
- Increase the number of private rented inspections.

- Progress Private Housing Grant applications in a timely manner and in line with Regulations.
- Deliver on actions included in Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029.

Homeless Services

- Assess those presenting as Homeless in accordance with Regulations and provide relevant supports including the HAP Place Finder Service.
- Manage SLA with Good Shepherd Centre in relation to Emergency Accommodation.
- Develop and manage Own Front Door units.
- Implement the Southeast Regional Homeless Action Plan 2023-2026.
- Implement the Housing First Programme in accordance with the Service Level Agreement with Focus Ireland.
- Coordinate and support the Homeless Action Team (HAT).
- Provide supports for marginalised groups such as persons with disabilities, Travellers and homeless.
- Ensure compliance with Sex Offender Risk Assessment and Management (SORAM) requirements.
- Liaise with HSE to provide and manage housing units under the START programme.
- Record and update PASS system with new entrants to and exits from emergency accommodation.
- Provide long term solutions to people in emergency accommodation.
- Provide housing solutions to private rented tenants served with eviction notices.
- Coordinate and support the Housing Disability Steering Group (HDSG)

Tenancy Management

- Administer and manage the Tenant Purchase Scheme.
- Progress Local Authority Home Loan applications in a timely manner.
- Initiate and administer a Rent Review on Rental Accommodation Scheme, Social Leasing tenants and those in receipt of Housing Assistance Payments.
- Implement a programme of review and revision of Local Authority tenancy issues.
- Progress the various strategies provided for in the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy, adopted in 2020.
- Manage administration of properties leased under the RAS scheme.

Applications and Allocations

- Process applications for social housing supports within legislative requirements of 12 weeks.
- Continue on-going administration of the Housing Assistance Payment Scheme.
- Review current list of approved transfer applicants to reassess current needs and eligibility
- Allocate housing units in line with Scheme of Letting Priorities.
- Update iHouse system with AHB and leased properties.
- Continue to develop CBL system.
- Process applications for right to reside and succession of tenancy in line with Council's policy.

Performance Standards

In addition to any targets set out above the Council's performance will be assessed against the following National Local Authority Sector Performance Indicators.

Housing (H1-H6) as follows:

- H1: Social Housing Stock
- H2: Housing Vacancies
- H3: Average Re-letting Time and Cost
- H4: Housing Maintenance Costs
- H5: Private Rented Sector Inspections
- H6: Long-term Homeless Adults

SEIRBHÍŚÍ LEABHARLAINNE - LIBRARY SERVICES

Core Objective

The core objective for Kilkenny Library Service is to provide for the informational, educational, social and learning needs of Kilkenny citizens.

Supporting Strategies

The Supporting Strategies which include new National Library Strategy, The Library is the Place 2023-2027 and our forthcoming Kilkenny Library Service Development Plan 2024-2028 provide for the development of a modern library service across the 8-branch network, the mobile library service supported by the administrative library headquarters and local studies service.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Infrastructure & Service Delivery

- Completion of the Kilkenny City Library-Mayfair capital project for opening in Q1 of 2024
- Progress and develop Thomastown Library capital project.
- Progress the relocation of Local Studies and Library Headquarters to the Carnegie library including the structural and internal upgrade of the Carnegie building.
- Develop a viable proposal for the development of a fit for purpose modern library in Callan.
- Progress the replacement of the exiting mobile library vehicle – funding permitting.
- Review and implement a rolling annual programme of works to maintain and future proof infrastructure and vehicles.
- Continue to progress and assess feasibility of energy savings measures and investigate potential grant aid in conjunction with the Council’s Climate Action Team.
- Ensure compliance with Health and Safety and Disability legislation and roll out approved library safety statement and increase staff awareness of same.
- Progress actions as agreed in the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and ensure sustainable development goals underpins all aspects of library development.
- Progress development of a 5-year Library Development Plan, informed by the new National Strategy.

Workforce Development

- Ensure adequate staffing resources across the Library Service developing a new Workforce Plan where relevant.
- Develop a training schedule based on workforce needs and customer expectations regarding current and future service delivery and requirements.
- Liaise with HR Training Officer and Libraries Development and other relevant training suppliers/organisations to source and provide relevant training.
- Continue to develop and implement in-house and online training where possible.
- Regularly review staff scheduling and roles and align staffing resources to service needs and priorities in line with national and local strategies and PMDS process.

Service Development

- Continue to develop and provide accessible, quality services in a range of formats responding to different service delivery requirements.
- Continue to develop and roll out a range of varied, accessible programmes and initiatives in response to changing community needs, underpinned by pillars of accessibility and climate action/ sustainable development goals. Develop a panel of facilitators for programming in branches and set up panel to create a more streamlined approach to programming across the library network.
- Continue to research and create quality driven and relevant content to target those who need it most.

- Continue to visit early learning centres, primary schools and nursing homes throughout the County via our mobile library service and actively explore opportunities to maintain a mobile library presence in communities during the summer months. Continue to deliver a door-to-door delivery service for those who require it.
- Continue to increase engagement using both national and local platforms and media.
- Maximise opportunities to market and promote library and cultural services to the wider community via local media, online and social media and support the national publicity campaign.
- Continue to implement GDPR and Child Protection legislation/policies and implement across the library network.
- Continue to participate in national library initiatives – Right to Read, Healthy Ireland at your Library, Age Friendly, Creative Ireland, Dormant Account Funding initiatives and access all funding opportunities to further develop and deliver services.
- Ensure the library’s collections reflect community and individual needs alignment of collections, both physical and digital and budgets with local catchment areas.
- Ensure funding levels are increased in line with recommended capita stock fund target of €4 using an incremental approach to increasing funds year on year.

Collaboration & Partnership

- To support Kilkenny Age Friendly County Strategy 2017-2022, implement and deliver on actions. Continue to develop services so all libraries maintain age friendly status in 2023.
- Cultivate-existing collaborations and partnerships and create and develop new ones working with ETB, Kilkenny Childcare, Calmast, local community groups and Nala to promote the library as an accessible, cultural, community and educational space both physical and online.
- Increase engagement with citizens using LCDC and PPN structures and progress objectives in the LECF Plan.
- Continue to expand the Aistear project offering to local primary schools and crèches.
- Continue to expand the Little Library Bag/ First 5 Book Project in partnership with Early Learning Centres, Kilkenny Childcare Committee and partner schools.
- Continue to work in close liaison with the Arts and Heritage Department fulfilling the aims and objectives of Kilkenny County Council’s Cultural Strategy 2023-2027 and The Creative Ireland programme.

ICT & Digital Development

- Develop library spaces as digital learning centres and digital enablers, introducing new technology and services to the public, and continue to upgrade and invest in ICT and Infrastructure.
- Identify technology needs for a maker space community across the library service.
- Continue to engage with Library Management System national committees and forum for further roll out of library system modules.
- Continue to provide and promote the suite of 24/7 national online services to the public and amplify the digital offer by continued local subscription to other platforms e.g. Kanopy . Use a range of publicity channels physical and online to encourage usage for education, work and leisure.
- Develop our usage of social media platforms to deliver and promote library services and increase awareness and usage of our services.
- Investigate innovative and emerging technologies that will encourage digital inclusion across all age groups.

Local Studies Service

- Preserve, share, and promote the culture, history and heritage of Kilkenny, enable historical research and build awareness of local Studies resources.
- Manage, maintain, invest and increase access to existing library collections, both print and digital.
- Provide support for genealogical and local history queries.

- Expand and develop the Kilkenny Digital Archive, digitisation programme and continue to publicise on social media platforms.
- Engage with Digital Repository of Ireland and showcase our collections nationally and internationally.
- Collaborate and partner with organisations, schools, groups and communities to increase usage and awareness of Local Studies Department
- Continue to promote Decade themed suite of online resources, workshops, brochures, podcasts.
- Explore external funding opportunities to deliver Local Studies programmes and initiatives.
- Recruitment of Archivist and develop Policies and an Action Plan to assess and manage archives and records management across the County.

Enable Best Practice Delivery of the Library Service

- Explore and identify funding, sponsorship and partnership opportunities that will assist the delivery of sustainable programmes and services.
- Build further on our current evaluation approaches looking at effective evidence-based reporting to review statistical data for reporting bodies.
- Identify and develop local indicators, including online measurements to ensure the range and depth of usage is monitored and reflected.
- Compare and monitor usage of all library services and keep abreast of other models of library measurement from a best practice point of view.
- Ensure local studies events support and compliment national library initiatives.

Performance Standards

In addition to any targets set out above the Council's performance will be assessed against the following National Local Government Sector Performance Indicators:

Library/Recreation Services (L1 & L2) as follows:

- L1: Library Visits & Items Issues
- L2: Cost of operating a Library Service.

LEATHANBHANDA - BROADBAND

Core Objective

The Core Objective is to co-operate with Government initiatives to maximise the potential of having broadband connectivity available throughout the County.

Supporting Strategies

The Supporting Strategies provide for working with the managed services entity e|Net to maximise the use of the Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) in Kilkenny and Thomastown facilitating where possible the laying of ducting for broadband on new infrastructure projects and ensuring that our IT infrastructure and staff are sufficiently resourced to maximise the potential of broadband and other emerging technologies for the benefit of the County Council and the County as a whole.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Complete an audit of KCC digital assets.
- Bring forward a digital strategy for 2024 to 2026 for Kilkenny County Council for adoption and monitoring by SPC 1.
- Consider the availability of *Smart Data* in the County and how smart data is used to create base line information and evaluate the success of initiatives such as festivals and events.
- Facilitate commercial Broadband and Mobile operators with appropriate development strategies to maximise benefits and use for Kilkenny County Council and Kilkenny County.
- Identify opportunities for expanding the MAN coverage via new infrastructure projects.
- Work closely with the selected National Broadband Plan company NBI to maximise the broadband potential for County Kilkenny.
- Continue to work with the Broadband Connection Points throughout the County and support them to become centres of activity within their communities.
- Promotion of remote working hubs and the benefits of Kilkenny as a location for remote working.
- Assist where possible with the rollout of broadband initiatives in line with the Government's National Broadband Plan.

Performance Standards

Performance of the Council's role in Broadband provision will be assessed against the standards set out above.

COSAINT AN CHOMHSHAOIL & GNÍOMHÚ AR SON NA HAERÁIDE

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & CLIMATE ACTION

Core Objective

The Core Objective is the promotion and protection of the environment of County Kilkenny in a sustainable manner for the benefit of current and future generations.

Kilkenny County Council along with the wider public sector is required under Government policy to reach verifiable energy-efficiency savings of 50% by 2030 (*using 2009 data as a baseline year*), and a reduction in absolute Green House Gas emissions by 51% by 2030 (*using the average emission between 2016 and 2018 as baseline emissions*) and net zero emissions by 2050.

Supporting Strategies

There are a large number of Supporting Strategies across several areas including the communicating of relevant EU, national, regional and local environmental objectives to the public, shared services in the areas of waste management planning, waste collection permits, co-ordination of waste enforcement, veterinary service provision in Carlow and Kilkenny, public participation in river basin management planning through the Local Authority Waters and Communities Office (LAWPRO), pursuing suitable source protection for public drinking water supplies and co-operating with Group Water Supplies in their development of suitable source protection measures.

Kilkenny County Council has partnered with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) and with the South East Energy Agency (SEEA) to use their collective expertise to meet this challenging target. The Energy Agency sources funding from SEAI and Europe for both public and private sector projects that help reduce energy consumption. Kilkenny County Council has set up a Climate Action Team to help identify opportunities where energy savings can be made in public infrastructure and to improve energy education and awareness among staff.

Other Supporting Strategies include implementation of the Joint Waste Management Plan for the Southern Region (2015 – 2022), implementation of the National River Basin Management Plan for Ireland (2018 – 2022), enforcing environmental standards, provision of an urban street-cleansing service, development of community programmes, promotion of environmental education & awareness and implementation of consumer protection measures in co-operation with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

Ireland is vulnerable to the adverse effects of global climate change, in terms of increase in average temperature, changes in precipitation patterns, weather extremes (*storms and flooding, sea surges, flash floods*) and sea-level rise. Climate change will have diverse and wide-ranging impacts on the environment, society, economic sectors and natural resources. Effective actions are needed to reduce vulnerabilities to the negative impacts of climate change, take advantages of opportunities and to increase social, economic and environmental resilience.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

CLIMATE ACTION

- Adopt the Draft Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 which provides a framework for Kilkenny County Council to meet its statutory energy efficiency and emissions reductions targets of 50% and 51% respectively, by 2030; adapt to climate change; and provide leadership on climate action to the community, business and stakeholders in the County.
- Support the Climate Action Steering Committee by coordinating monthly meetings; assist the committee to prepare an annual Implementation Plan for 2024 and to implement actions in the adopted Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029.
- Continue to identify and utilise funding and other supports to deliver climate action, from Government, EU programmes, SEAI and other stakeholders including the private sector.
- Continue to support the Climate Action Office including recruitment of an Energy Officer.
- Establish a Decarbonisation Zone (DZ) Steering Committee for the Kilkenny City DZ.

- Agree a programme of actions and annual Implementation Plan for the Kilkenny City DZ.
- Monitor and report on implementation of the Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 including:
 - Internal reporting to Council Plenary Meetings, SPC4, Monthly Chief Executive Report, weekly Climate Action Team meetings
 - Annual report to Department of Environment, Climate and Communications on delivery of National Climate Objectives (*National Climate Action Plan*)
 - Annual reporting to the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) and Local Government Management Association (LGMA)
 - Annual reporting to SEAI Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) System.
- Support and co-fund the establishment of a South East Energy Unit under the SEAI Pathfinder Programme, in partnership with Carlow, Waterford, Wexford and Tipperary County Councils and CARO to support the local authorities in meeting their 2030 energy efficiency and carbon emission targets, and fulfil their exemplar leadership role with respect to climate action.
- Deliver the Community Climate Action Fund in partnership with the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications.
- Continue to co-fund and collaborate with the South East Energy Agency (SEEA).
- Continue to partner with and support the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office.
- Deliver the national Public Sector “Reduce-Your-Use” Programme to improve energy efficiency in Council assets (*Buildings, Fleet & Public Lights*).
- Manage and provide training to relevant staff on the Energy Elephant monitoring platform in order to support energy and emissions reductions in Council’s assets (*Buildings, Fleet & Public Lights*).
- Continue to work with the Council’s in-house Street Lighting Team, acting as the contracting authority for the Eastern Region with respect to the roll-out of the Local Authority Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project.
- Support community and Council projects for the Better Energy Communities (BEC) scheme.
- Undertake a Building Stock Register of all Council buildings, in partnership with Facilities Management.
- Develop and implement a Climate Communications Plan to share information with the community, business and other stakeholders on Kilkenny County Council’s climate actions.
- Support the Procurement Office with the roll out of Green Public Procurement in the Council.
- Continue to implement the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 and the Sub-Action Plan during 2023 and incorporate this Strategy with the new Climate Action Plan to be prepared.
- Support the implementation of the National Climate Policy as set-out under the Climate Action Plan in our role as Partner Local Authority for the Eastern & Midlands Climate Action Regional Office (CARO).
- Maintain ISO50001 Energy Management accreditation and continue to improve and reduce energy consumption in delivering council services and operational performance for public buildings, public lighting and fleet & machinery operations.
- Prepare and Deliver an Energy Action Plan for 2024.
- Climate Action Team to meet monthly and to actively work to reduce energy consumption across the organisation.
- Continue to support communities in Kilkenny to become more energy efficient and to lower their CO₂ emissions, and advise communities and the public on the grants and supports available.
- Update and improve energy data on Council’s Monitoring & Reporting energy reporting platform.
- Generate and present Display Energy Certificates (DEC’s) in local authority buildings with a floor area of 250m² that are frequently accessed by the public.

- Develop the Covenant of Mayors Sustainable Energy Action Plan 2 and gap analysis to the Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan 2030.
- Investigate potential funding opportunities for energy efficiency projects in Kilkenny.
- Run an Energy Awareness campaign in County Hall in partnership with the OPW's Optimising Power at Work.
- Carry out energy audits/register of opportunities for Council buildings to identify energy saving opportunities.
- Continue the Energy Awareness campaign for Fire Service and Library Service.
- Support Community and Council projects under the Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC) network to access funding to complete a local Energy Master Plan.
- Provide bridge-funding to Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC's) in the County as per the MOU with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI).
- Carry out pilot energy efficiency (Eco) driver training for the Council's fleet operators.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Kilkenny County Council is part of the Southern Region for waste management purposes along with Carlow, Clare, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford. Key actions include:

- Implement objectives in line with the National Waste Management Plan. In particular, support and implement actions for a Circular Economy.
- Operate a full-service waste recycling and disposal centre at Dunmore.
- Continue to support the operation of the waste recycling and disposal centre at Granny, County Kilkenny.
- Operate 46 bring centre recycling facilities throughout the County.
- Identify new locations for roll-out of additional Bring Centre Recycling Facilities.
- Complete upgrade of signage for Bring Centres.
- Continue to engage Textile Recycling Services as a service provider.
- Prepare and implement the RMCEI (*Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections*) Waste Environmental Inspection Plan 2024.
- Assess Waste Permit applications and issue permits and registration certificates.
- Support and implement Article 11 of EU Waste Framework Directive legislation, which requires all Local Authorities to set up separate collection schemes for textiles by January 2025.
- Implement street cleansing and litter management programme.
- Identify and deliver projects aimed at tackling illegal dumping 'black spots' throughout the County under the Anti-Dumping Initiative (ADI).
- Review Temporary Signage Policy.
- Continue to implement the County Kilkenny Waste Management Bye-Laws.
- Advance Historic Landfill Assessment and Works Programme. Progress works if funding is approved for 2024.
- Continue to assess planning application referrals with respect to environmental protection.

Tidy Towns

- Facilitate the Tidy Towns Forum to encourage networking among Tidy Town Groups.
- Encourage and support establishment of new Tidy Town Groups.
- Assist Tidy Towns Groups through education and awareness initiatives.
- Co-ordinate Anti-Litter/Anti-Graffiti Awareness Community funding and Community Action Grants to community groups.

Plans and Strategies

- Prepare and implement a new Litter Management Plan 2024-2026.
- Prepare and implement an Environmental Education and Awareness Strategy 2024.
- Continue to support the development and delivery of Environmental Awareness and Education campaigns by securing funding under national and regional funding avenues such as the following:

- Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti
- Anti-Dumping Initiative
- Community Environmental Action Fund.
- Continue to promote waste prevention community initiatives and support businesses with greening initiatives to improve their environmental performance.

Burial Grounds

- Operate 14 active burial grounds throughout the County and bring forward an updated policy on the allocation of burial plots.
- Continue to review and up-date mapping of 14 active burial grounds to determine capacity.
- Prepare Burial Ground Maintenance and Development Strategy.
- Administer the Graveyard Grant Scheme.
- Complete condition survey of historic burial grounds vested in the Council.

Casual Trading

- Manage and issue licences for designated casual trading bays in urban areas throughout the County.
- Implement the Casual Trading Bye-laws 2022 for the County.

Environmental Information

- Process requests for environmental information under Access to Information on the Environment Regulations.
- Develop Procedures Manual for Environment Section.

Customer Service

- Continue pilot of the Customer Relations Management (CRM) system.
- Continue to respond to and investigate environmental complaints from the public.
- Continue to assess planning application referrals with respect to environmental protection.

Water Safety

- Provide summer Lifeguard Service at the existing 5 river locations on the Rivers Nore and Barrow.
- Continue to monitor and replace lifebuoys, as necessary, at existing locations along watercourses.
- Continue to work in partnership with Kilkenny Water Safety and Water Safety Ireland.

Air Quality and Noise

- Promote local awareness of air quality.
- Provide live feed link to County Council website from Air Quality Monitoring station at Castlecomer Area Office and Thomastown, collect and compare before and after data.
- Implement Smoky Coal Ban and Solid Fuel Regulations.
- Manage registration of facilities under Deco Paints & Solvents Regulations.
- Liaise with Fire Service on dangerous substances and petroleum vapours legislation.
- Assess Air Pollution licence applications and monitor existing licences.
- Seek to incorporate Quiet Area locations into the County Development Plan.
- Continue to assess planning application referrals with respect to environmental protection.

Water Quality

Kilkenny County Council is joint Lead Authority with Tipperary County Council in delivering the Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) and the recently approved Water European Innovation Partnership (EIP). Both programmes are a shared service working with Local Authorities and State Agencies to develop and implement actions to improve water quality especially in priority areas of action, as required under the EU Water Framework Directive.

- Collaborate with the local LAWPRO office through regular meetings and a coordinated work plan.
- Support LAWPRO in the development of the National River Basin Management Plan 2022 to 2027. There are 14 areas for action identified in Kilkenny.
- Implement measures to protect and restore water quality as set out in the National River Basin Management Plan.
- Prepare and implement RMCEI Water Quality Environmental Inspection Plan 2023, to include for inspection of rivers, businesses, septic tanks and farms.
- Assess Discharge Licence applications and Nutrient Management Plans and issue authorisations.
- Continue reviews of existing discharge licences and issue revised authorisations.
- Participate and monitor the National Sampling Programme for the Water Framework Directive.
- Review and update the Environmental Sub-Plan of Major Emergency Plan.
- Review of Water Quality results for the relevant river Catchment Areas in Kilkenny and liaise with LAWPRO on selection of farms for inspection.
- Target riverbank walk and catchment assessment training for staff.
- Engage with local communities and citizen science groups to identify locations for targeted assessment and inspections.
- Implement the new Water European Innovation Partnership (EIP)

Veterinary Services

- Continue to deliver the FSAI Service Contract on Food Safety for Counties Kilkenny and Carlow as required to allow sufficient time for transition to proposed new arrangements in 2024.
- Regulate Dog Breeding Establishments in accordance with the Dog Breeding Establishments Act 2010 as amended.
- Administer the operation of the Carlow Kilkenny Dog Shelter.
- Liaise and work with service provider on enforcement under the Control of Dogs Act 1986 as amended.
- Liaise and work with service providers on enforcement under the Control of Horses Act 1998.
- Implement the Control of Horse Bye-Laws for County Kilkenny.
- Continue work with the Animal Welfare Committee to ensure adherence to the Council's Animal Welfare Standards for Dogs and Horses.

Performance Standards

In addition to any targets set out above, the Council's performance will be assessed against the following National Local Government Sector Performance Indicators

Waste/Environment (E1-E3) as follows:

E1: Households which availed of a 3 bin service

E2: Environmental Pollution Cases

E3: % of LA area within the 5 levels of Litter Pollution

E4: % of schools that currently hold and have renewed their Green Flag Status

E5: % Energy Efficiency Performance

E6: Public Lighting

E7: Climate Change

FORBAIRT EACNAMAÍOCH & TACAÍOCHT EACNAMAÍOCH & OIFIG FIONTAR ÁITIÚIL

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE SUPPORT & LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

Core Objective

The core objective is to support and promote the expansion and development of the economy of Kilkenny through measures to facilitate long term strategically sustainable investment with significant employment, income and growth potential.

The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) will be the first point of contact for enterprise related activity in the County. The core objective is to develop and sustain a positive enterprise ecosystem at local level that will in particular drive new added-value start-ups, the further growth of small and micro enterprises and enhance local economies.

Supporting Strategies

The supporting strategies include the strategic development of the economic infrastructure as detailed in the *Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)*, through projects and measures to improve and promote the attractiveness of Kilkenny as a destination for business, supporting the evolution of targeted investment and job creation initiatives, working with state agencies and other bodies to support enterprise development, attract foreign direct investment into Kilkenny, marketing Kilkenny as a location for investment, nationally and internationally, developing the Abbey Quarter in Kilkenny City, co-ordinate economic development activities of the Council in conjunction with the Strategic Policy Committee for Economic Development, Enterprise Support, Tourism, Planning & Development Policy (SPC1).

The strategic objectives of the enterprise support functions of the LEO are as per the Service Level Agreement with Enterprise Ireland and as outlined in the *Local Enterprise Development Plan 2021 – 2024*, the *LECP* and the *South East Regional Enterprise Plan*.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Delivery of the agreed actions as set out in the 2023 – 2024 Implementation Plan of the Kilkenny LECP framework 2023 to 2028.
- Support SPC 1 to monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the 2023 – 2024 LECP Implementation Plan.
- Identify and pursue funding opportunities to assist in economic development and job creation including opportunities under URDF Call 4 and Enterprise Ireland Smart Regions Funds. This includes assessing the feasibility of developing a 'Landing Zone' for start-up businesses or businesses locating in Kilkenny.
- Co-ordinate the URDF Operational Working Group for all projects under live URDF calls.
- Deliver *Careers Kilkenny* 2024 event and continue to work on collateral around the *Careers Kilkenny* brand building on goodwill from previous events hosted. This will aim to attract new talent to Kilkenny and promote Kilkenny as a great place to live and work.
- Support the promotion of the 'Kilkenny Offer' as a great place to live and work, focusing on and Belong Kilkenny websites and social media. Develop these brands in 2024 to consider a global audience including the Diaspora or network of Kilkenny Connections.
- Focus on sustainability, develop and promote a series of case studies and business champions to encourage engagement in sustainability in businesses.
- Support the emerging financial services and fintech sector in Kilkenny including progression of the FinTech Centre for Excellence and spin outs.
- Build on the designation of 'World Craft Council Craft City and Region' to showcase the works of local businesses, increase export sales and enhance the tourism/craft experience.

- Develop the Night Time Economy within Kilkenny and enhance the evening and night time experiences for both visitor, citizen and local business alike. Support the Stakeholder Forum and SPC 1 to bring forward and agree the pilot Night Time Economy Action Plan and commence implementation.
- Throughout the year, deliver housing and economic monitors to assess Kilkenny's performance under various measures.
- Continue the roll out of the Small Business Vacant Premises Incentive scheme.
- Ensure relevant information on commercial property, including Abbey Quarter and Belview Port and up to date marketing collateral is maintained and available to support agencies in attracting businesses to locate in Kilkenny. Continue building relationships with local stakeholders and liaise with EI and IDA to assist with their client's expansion.
- Promote Kilkenny as a centre of Excellence in Design, build on Kilkenny's strong credentials in design and support Kilkenny to be the National Centre of Design Excellence.
- Collaborate with the City Centre Task Force and delivery on any relevant actions agreed.
- Continue to promote Kilkenny as a campus and research location for third level education and provide necessary support for the joint SETU/KCC Working Group to be formed in 2024.
- Support businesses throughout the County through the promotion of the Shop local message, #ShopKilkenny brand, ensuring that people spend their money locally where they can thus support jobs in local communities.
- Entrepreneurship: Foster, promote and support local entrepreneurship through the creation of a strong enterprise support ecosystem.
- Competitiveness: Improve the competitiveness and productivity of small and micro enterprises through enhancing small business management capability.
- Green & Sustainability: Deliver services to enable small and micro businesses future proof their businesses from an environmental perspective. This includes the promotion where applicable of business energy support schemes.
- Innovation & Digitalisation: Increase the level of innovation, technology adaptation and digitalisation within small businesses in Kilkenny.
- Internationalisation: Increase the export capabilities of small and micro enterprises.
- Clustering: Work closely with local and regional networks and clusters to drive productivity, knowledge sharing and competitiveness.

Uncertainty created by external factors such as ongoing inflationary pressures are a reminder that some of the LEO activity plan can change quickly in the short terms. However, we will continue to delivery and build on a range of actions focused on achieving our strategic priorities.

Performance Standards

In addition to any targets set out above the Council's performance will be assessed against the following National Local Authority Sector Performance Indicators

Economic Development (J1 to J5) as follows:

J1: Job Creation

J2: Trading Online Vouchers

J3: Number of Mentoring Recipients

J5: Economic Development Annual Spend

PLEANÁIL, FORBAIRT INBHUANAITHE AGUS CAOMHNÚ PLANNING, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & CONSERVATION

Core Objective

The Planning Department's core objectives are to:

- provide for *balanced sustainable development while affording protection of the natural and built environment of the City & County*;
- develop and implement planning policy and objectives through the City & County Development Plan, Local Area Plans and Masterplans;
- oversee an effective development management process; and
- promote the sustainable development of the City & County.

This will ensure an enhanced physical and socio-economic infrastructure assisting in creating sustainable economic growth and driving a better quality of life for ALL.

Supporting Strategies

This will be achieved through the delivery of a high-quality customer-oriented planning service, encompassing pre-planning consultations, planning assessment, decision making and enforcement processes to our customers in an effective, efficient and customer friendly manner.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Forward Planning

- Undertake a new Local Area Plan for Ferrybank/Belview and incorporate into the City & County Development Plan.
- Undertake a new Local Area Plan for Castlecomer.
- Continue to implement the delivery of funding under the Urban Regeneration & Development Fund (URDF).
- Co-operate with Waterford City and County Council in delivering a Joint Retail Strategy for the Waterford Metropolitan Area.(MASP).
- Co-operate with Waterford City and County Council in delivering a Joint Blue and Green open space strategy for the Waterford Metropolitan Area (MASP).
- Complete the following Masterplans:
 - The St. Canice's Hospital lands at Lacken in Kilkenny City
 - For Ballyragget, Kilmacow and Paulstown in accordance with objective 4La of the City and County Development Plan.
- Commence next phase of Town Centre First Masterplans for the smaller settlements in the County.
- Complete the best practice Design Guidelines for the provision of cluster housing in rural settlements and nodes of the County.
- In conjunction with Roads and the City Engineer's office complete the Kilkenny Sustainable Urban Transport Plan (KSUMP) process to develop a 10-minute City framework for Kilkenny City to map and identify infrastructural requirements to support the '10 minute' City.

Development Management

- Manage planning applications as submitted to the Council and ensure planning decisions are transparent and are decided in accordance with statutory requirements.

Active Land Management

- Progress acquisition of properties under URDF Call 3.
- Continue to administer the Residential Zoned Land Tax process on behalf of the Department of Finance and the Revenue Commissioners.
- Continue to implement and monitor the Vacant Site Register and the levy in accordance with the legislation.
- Continue to implement Derelict Sites Act and maintain the Derelict Sites Register.

- Continue to implement an Active Land Management Policy through the coordination of vacant sites and derelict sites legislation, the Town Regeneration Officer and Vacant Homes Unit to proactively deliver redevelopment with a priority towards housing development through Derelict Sites levy and CPO of Derelict properties as appropriate.
- Commence and progress Butts Area Regeneration in conjunction with Housing & Community. Progress RRDF Project – Callan Friary Complex & Bridge Street Properties in conjunction with Housing and community.

Taking in Charge

- To advance Taking in Charge for 29 schemes in the County with a minimum 10 developments taken in charge in 2024.
- Monitor bonds on a monthly basis and submit claim on bonds as required.
- Minimise risk on residential developments through bond compliance.

Enforcement

- Investigate all planning complaints within 6 weeks of receipt.
- Take appropriate enforcement action in respect of breaches of planning legislation as required.

Conservation

- Provide conservation advisory service to the public and to the Council regarding works to architectural heritage in Kilkenny City and County.
- Continue to work with all stakeholders for the strategic and appropriate development of historic and cultural sites in the County.
- Manage the delivery of Conservation Grants for Kilkenny County Council.
- Continue to support applicants availing of the Living City Initiative within Kilkenny City.
- Continue the review of a select number of protected structures on the Register of Protected Structures (RPS).

Building Control

- Promote & Enforce Building Regulations and Construction Product Regulations.
- Implement and manage the BCMS system.
- Continue to carry out targeted Building Control Inspections to achieve an inspection rate of 15-20%.
- Continue to process Disability Access Certificates.

Administrative

- Implement new version of IPLAN 5.1.1.
- Continue to update and revise the Planning Department's Procedures Manual and ensure all admin staff are trained in each aspect of the planning function to provide cover when necessary.

Town Centre First

- Commence next phase of Town Centre First Masterplans.
- Progress acquisition of properties under URDF Call 3.
- Progress CPO of Derelict Properties in City and County.
- Commence and progress Butts Area Regeneration.
- Progress RRDF Project – Callan Friary Complex & Bridge Street Properties.

Performance Standards

In addition to any targets set out above, the Council's performance will be assessed against the following National Local Government Sector Performance Indicators.

Planning (P1-P4) as follows:

- P1: Building Control Inspections
- P2: No/ % of Planning decisions confirmed by An Bord Pleanála
- P3: Planning Enforcement
- P4: Cost per Capita of the Planning Service

TIONSCADAIL, PÁIRCEANNA, CONLÁISTE, SPÓRT & ÁINEAS PROJECTS, PARKS, AMENITY, SPORT & RECREATION

Core Objectives

The core objectives of the Project & Parks Office are as follows:

- (a) to deliver on the requirement for open natural spaces and recreation areas, including free play for the health and well-being of people of all ages and ability across the County,
- (b) to build on Kilkenny's outdoor and adventure tourism offering by improving visitor choice and experience of amenities that are accessible year-round, and
- (c) to attract funding opportunities to undertake infrastructural projects that will support job creation, address de-population and rejuvenate our small rural towns and villages.

Supporting Strategies

The supporting strategies include the planning and development of recreational play, amenity, sport and outdoor recreation for the enjoyment and constructive use of leisure time that encourages fitness, outdoor activity and outdoor recreational tourism.

Key County and national supporting strategies include: The Kilkenny Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021, the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021 -2027, Kilkenny County Council's Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024, the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021, the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2018-2023. The Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (2019), the National Countryside Recreation Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways 2018, the National Build a Sustainable Tourism Industry, Promoting the Participation of People with Disabilities in Physical Activity and Sport in Ireland, The Sport Ireland Participation Plan 2021-2024 and the DRCD's Our Rural Future 2021 -2025.

A number of the projects targeted for 2023 will be advanced by working with a number of other relevant Departments Agencies and groups, some of which include Department Rural & Community Development, Kilkenny Leader Partnership, Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership, Trail Kilkenny, Coillte and the HSE. Actions and projects will be supported from a number of funding streams including the Council's own funds, the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS), Town & Village Renewal, the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF), the CLÁR Programme, the Sports Capital Funding, the LEADER Programme along with recreation funding from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:-

Parks & Playground

- Provide assistance to community groups to plan, source funding for and develop community playgrounds and play spaces particularly focusing on areas in the County currently underprovided for.
- Maintain playgrounds to a high standard and provide assistance to support community playground groups across the County who also assist in their upkeep.
- Ensure playgrounds continue to meet the requirements of European Standards EN1176 and EN1177 which relate to playground safety of equipment and safety surfacing.
- Continue to implement weekly (*in house*), quarterly and annual (*independent*) playground inspection regimes across all Council owned playgrounds in the County and address maintenance and operational issues where relevant in a timely manner.
- Plan for future development provision and upkeep as playgrounds age and require replacement and identify capital funding streams to facilitate same.
- Continue to develop Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park.
- Continue to develop Kilkenny Countryside Park.
- Continue to maintain and improve Garringreen Neighbourhood Park, Newpark Marsh and Park, the River Nore Linear Park, Silaire Wood trail and boardwalk and the Pocket Park in Graiguenamanagh.

Sports Pitches

- Enter into short term lease agreements with sports clubs to allow them access to Council owned pitches for games and training. There are currently 5 pitches in total available for lease.
- Facilitate clubs into entering into long term lease arrangements to enable them to access grant assistance where appropriate.
- Continue to maintain pitches, upgrading areas of wear and tear where relevant.
- Continue weekly inspections of goal posts as per recommended safety guidelines.
- Undertake weekly inspections of Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) at Newpark, Callan and Garringreen.
- Construct a new all-weather mini pitch at Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park from funding secured under the Sports Capital Grant.

Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum

- Maintain and upkeep newly refurbished walkways from Inistioge Village to Woodstock Gardens and within the wider Estate, namely the Woodstock Loop Walk, Ladies Loop Walk and Woodstock Waterfall Loop Walk.
- Continue to plant native bluebell bulbs in the newly created vistas between the Noble Fir Avenue and Monkey Puzzle Avenue and the Bulb Garden.
- Continue to develop and roll-out marketing and promotion campaign via funding allocation secured under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS).
- Subject to outcome of pending funding application under ORIS Measure 2, undertake significant pathway enhancement works throughout the gardens, install additional accessible / inclusive play equipment within playground, purchase 3 all-terrain wheelchairs, continue removal of invasive species and replanting with native pollinator friendly plants.
- Submit application for funding under the Historic Structures Fund to undertake works to stabilise Woodstock House.
- Continue to promote a wide variety of outdoor events to attract members of the public to the Gardens, e.g. Schools Orienteering, Dawn Chorus, Light Up Gold, National Tree Day, Halloween event, Yulefest Santa Reindeer Trail.
- Make the Gardens available where appropriate for weddings and other private events.
- Run events to coincide with Play Day and Heritage Week.
- Implement a planting programme to replace valuable specimen trees lost due to storm damage to maintain the quality of the planting in the arboretum for future generations, with a particular focus on the Noble Fir and Monkey Puzzle Avenues. It is noted a number of Noble Fir and Monkey Puzzle trees are at end of life and will be removed in 2024.
- Reseed two wildflower panels in Winter Garden.
- Continue to strengthen planting of new central borders within the Walled Garden.
- Prepare and plant one panel within the Walled Garden with vegetables for educational interest.
- Re-level and repair frost damage to water fountain ensuring same is in working order for peak season.
- Continue to offer garden tours to visitors and provide a mobility service for the less able bodied.
- Continue to facilitate Woodstock Committee meetings in line with the Terms of Reference set-out for same.
- Review potential to advance accommodation offering on site with third party.

Annual Tree Planting and Tree Surgery Programme

- The Parks Section is committed to planting trees in public places in the City and County in association with community groups and in support of our objectives under the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. The trees will be predominantly native species and or pollinator friendly and will be semi-mature at planting as appropriate.
- Continue community planting schemes in association with community groups.
- Plant a significant number of specimen trees annually in Woodstock Gardens in the Arboretum in particular to replace those lost to storm damage and to ensure the long-term future of this significant tree collection.

- Assess the health of trees in public places around the County and organise tree surgery based on sound arboriculture principles.
- Continue to advise landscaping design for urban streetscape enhancement schemes.

Amenity Grants

- Invite applications for amenity grants to support communities and resident associations to maintain their local areas (*180 grants approved in 2023*).
- Assist communities with relevant advice in relation to planting schemes, pollinator planting, meadow management.
- Process all valid grant claims by year end.
- Support the objectives of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan by encouraging groups to manage areas in a more sensitive manner for habitat and pollinators.
- Priority will be given to those groups managing areas in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Maintenance of residential amenity areas

- Manage grass cutting in parks and playgrounds across the City and County and in certain residential estates where the size of the grass area warrants assistance to residents.
- Seek to convert locations currently intensively managed to meadow grassland in support of pollinators and biodiversity, such as Bishopsmeadows, Dukesmaeadows, Loughboy Park and Moat Field Callan.
- Support community groups through advice to maintain open space areas in a more sustainable way.

Planning & Development

- Assist the Planning Section in the proper planning and development of Kilkenny by having input into Masterplans and Planning Applications

Project Office

- Expand Project Office to develop, progress and manage larger Project Portfolio.

South East Greenway

- In conjunction with our partners Wexford and Waterford County Councils, assist in the construction of the 24km South East Greenway located between Ferrybank, South Kilkenny and New Ross, County Wexford. The Greenway will pass through the rural hinterland of south Kilkenny following the route of the old railway line. It will be a safe off-road facility for use by cyclists and pedestrians.
- Continue to engage with landowners for the duration of the project in relation to accommodation works along the 24km Greenway.
- Maintain the opened 6km of Greenway from New Ross to Glenmore and associated infrastructure.
- Continue to explore the option to open sections of the Greenway as they are completed, the main focus for 2024 will be the completion of Lot 5a, Ferrybank to Curraghmore.
- Progress to planning stage proposals to provide a connectivity link from the Greenway to Slieverue village.
- Seek to identify potential funding streams to advance the land acquisition and construction of the connectivity link from the Greenway to Glenmore village.
- Continue to engage with Failte Ireland and their consultants in relation to the development of an Animation Plan of the Greenway.
- Appoint a Technical Services Team, via the Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Framework, to advance Phases 0 to 4 of the proposed Greenway Link between the South East Greenway and Woodstock Estate in Inistioge.
- Work with HR Section to appoint staff approved and funded by TII and sanctioned by the Department.

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)

- Undertake the Millennium Forest Trail Enhancement & Accessibility Scheme funded under ORIS Measure 2, utilising the Coillte Procurement Framework.
- Undertake the Jeninstown Wood Walking Trail Rehabilitation Scheme, funded under ORIS Measure 2, utilising the Coillte Procurement Framework.
- Complete design to construction stage with respect to the replacement of wooden boardwalk at Lacken with a recycled plastic wider structure to accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists.
- Finalise in partnership with stakeholders, a Masterplan for the Castlecomer Discovery Park.
- Undertake Feasibility Study and Route Options Report for Phase 1 of the Kilkenny to Ballyragget – Castlecomer Greenway from Kilkenny City to the proposed Kilkenny Countryside Park at Dunmore.
- Engage technical consultants to deliver a service requirement brief to assess / update the existing Feasibility Study for the new Kings River Boardwalk and Pedestrian Bridge.
- Engage specialist Technical Consultants to deliver a service brief for the restoration of the upland section of the Brandon Hill Summit Walk, which has suffered from erosion. The proposal put forward will utilise natural stone steps along key sections of the slope.
- Subject to outcome of funding applications submitted under ORIS, Measure 1 (7), Measure 2 (3) and Measure 3 (1), advance all projects in line with funding requirements.
- Work with stakeholders and communities to identify new project opportunities and develop a portfolio of schemes in advance of future funding calls.

Partnership Projects with Kilkenny LEADER Partnership, Trail Kilkenny & Community Groups

- Bennettsbridge - Conclude Feasibility Study & Design Options Report to develop riverside amenity area and improved pedestrian connectivity over the River Nore.
- Complete, with project partners, the Callan Heritage Trail, interpretative signage on the many historical sites and points of interest within the town and environs.
- Nore Valley Link (NVW) - Bennettsbridge – Thomastown - Complete Feasibility Study & Design Options Report for the missing link of the NVW between Bennettsbridge and Thomastown.
- Goresbridge Riverside Amenity Area – Working with the local community engage Consultants to develop a non-statutory Vision Plan setting out a blue-print to stimulate sustainable economic development and attract investment into the Goresbridge area focusing on riverside amenity.
- Engage with KLP to identify potential new project that could advance in partnership under the LEADER Programme.

Community Recognition Fund

- Completed works on all 5 funded projects and drawdown capital funding.

Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF)

- Identity potential suite of projects suitable for submission under Category 1 & 2
- Prepare projects to the level required to make application submissions under Category 1
- Work with Community Section in terms of community animation.

Town & Village Renewal

- Identity potential suite of projects that application criteria and prepare applications for submission.
- Work with Community Section in terms of community animation.

Sports Capital & Equipment

- Complete funded project and drawdown capital funding.
- Subject to outcome of current live funding applications advance all projects to construction stage in line with funding conditions.

Performance Standards

Performance under Amenity, Sport and Recreation will be assessed against the standards as set out above.

Core Objective

Our core objective is to support tourism development throughout Kilkenny, working with key stakeholders, both public and private, voluntary and professional to adopt and implement *Kilkenny's Tourism Development Strategy and Action Plan 2023 – 2027* alongside delivering on Fáilte Ireland's Destination Experience Development Plan for Kilkenny 2023-2027. 2024 should be a year that the tourism industry continues to grow and expand with the development and delivery of additional tourism experiences throughout the City and County. In 2024 the objective is to welcome back the domestic “staycationers” and “daycationers” whilst also working to deliver a revised international sales and marketing plan for Kilkenny. Our position as one of the finest Cultural and Heritage destinations in Ireland requires maintaining, whilst our reputation for being a vibrant, always-on, walkable City with a great outdoor offering needs to be nurtured and further promoted.

Supporting Strategies

Kilkenny County Council will work closely with Fáilte Ireland and all stakeholders to develop Kilkenny's *Destination Experience Development Plan 2023-2026*. We will continue to promote Kilkenny as a marketing proposition and as a destination, to develop Kilkenny's festival calendar, to develop our outdoor experience for both the domestic and international visitor, to enhance the collaborative engagement with all stakeholders, to support a world class visitor experience and continue to strive for excellence in standards, to maintain a high level of visibility for Kilkenny and to identify and exploit opportunities presented by Ireland's Ancient East and Discover Ireland, consistent with Kilkenny's history and heritage.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Implement Kilkenny's Statement of Tourism Strategy and Programme 2023-2027.
- Implement Kilkenny's Destination Experience Development Plan in partnership with Fáilte Ireland.
- Provide support to Kilkenny Tourism CLG, through monthly meetings, workshops, marketing and public relations initiatives, business support and advice and further development of www.visitkilkenny.ie and www.outdoorkilkenny.ie
- Work with Kilkenny Tourism and Fáilte Ireland to support and further develop a marketing and PR campaign to promote Kilkenny both nationally and internationally as a top-class tourism destination.
- Continue to implement the Orientation and Wayfinding Plan for Kilkenny approved under Destination Towns initiative.
- Support the development and delivery of a unified tourist attraction at the Tholsel and Medieval Mile Museum in collaboration with The Civic Trust and Fáilte Ireland.
- Deliver on projects approved under funding streams received including Urban Animation throughout the City, Outdoor Performance Space at the Watergate, Kilkenny's Water Sports Hub at County Hall and Outdoor Dining at The Market Yard.
- Work to support the Greenway Project Office to develop and implement an Interpretation and Visitor Experience Plan for the South East Greenway.
- Support Butler Gallery to enhance the visitor experience at Evans Home.
- Seek opportunities to further implement the Woodstock/Inistioge Business Plan.

- Develop and implement a Festivals and Events Strategy for Kilkenny in partnership with Fáilte Ireland and our event's organisers.
- Support the Projects Office as required in the delivery of ORIS funding schemes across the County to enhance Kilkenny's outdoor tourism offering countywide.
- Support the implementation of Kilkenny County Council's Climate Action Plan by providing a leadership role to businesses in the Tourism and Hospitality Sector.
- Work with local communities and businesses to expand the tourism offering of County Kilkenny.
- Support the implementation of Kilkenny's Night Time Economy Pilot Action Plan in partnership with the Night Time Economy Advisor.
- Support #tastekilkenny to promote Kilkenny as a food tourism destination.
- Actively source funding opportunities and investment to investigate innovative digital tourism opportunities along with immersive and fun orientation and way finding solutions throughout the County.

Performance Standards

In addition to any targets set out above the Council's performance will be assessed against the following National Local Authority Sector Performance Indicators. In addition, the objective will be to increase the overall number of visitors to County Kilkenny and the tourism spend as per the Fáilte Ireland reports on tourism performance.

Economic Development (J4) as follows:

J4: Tourism Strategy

AONAD GÉARCHÉIME NA HÚCRÁINE

UKRAINIAN CRISIS UNIT

Український кризовий підрозділ

Core Objective

The Core Objective of the Ukrainian Crisis Unit is to ensure that our new Ukrainian community are provided with an adequate standard of accommodation and provided with the relevant wrap around supports to enable them to live and work in Kilkenny for as long as is required.

Supporting Strategies

The Ukrainian Crisis Unit will work in conjunction with the Department of Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government to roll out the government supports which are provided under the National Ukrainian Response and will work closely with local agencies involved in the response – Kilkenny Leader Partnership, Kilkenny Carlow Education & Training Board (KCETB), the HSE, Department of Social Protection (DSP) and local community groups to ensure that the supports required by Ukrainian refugees are provided in an effective and efficient manner. This will be coordinated through the Ukrainian Community Forum, chaired by the Chief Executive of Kilkenny County Council.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2024 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Management of the Temporary Rest Centre at St. John of God Convent & The Friary, Knocktopher for short term accommodation of Ukrainian refugees.
- Liaising with all commercial properties in the County to ensure accurate data on the Ukrainian community in Kilkenny and to support them in the provision of wider supports to the refugees.
- Sourcing of unoccupied homes under the Local Government 'Offer A Home' initiative.
- Matching of Ukrainian refugees residing in the Temporary Rest Centre and other commercial accommodations throughout the County to homes which become available under the 'Offer A Home' initiative and supporting the owners of these properties to ensure the smooth operation of the scheme.
- Monthly development of the Ukrainian Monitor to ensure that all statistics in relation to the Ukrainian community forum supports are up to date.
- Co-ordination of the Community Forum to ensure that agencies and community groups are aware of the needs and requirements of the Ukrainian community and the development of supports to meet those needs.
- Working closely with Kilkenny Leader Partnership to ensure that relevant training supports are developed in order to support Ukrainians to prepare for the workforce.
- Linking in with KCETB to ensure that relevant English as a Second Language, Advanced English classes and Adult Guidance Counselling is provided and communicated.
- Working closely with the HSE to ensure that all Ukrainians are assessed upon arrival and linked in with relevant health supports as required.
- Communicating with DSP arrivals to ensure that Ukrainians are set up with PPS numbers and relevant social welfare supports as soon as possible.
- Referrals of relevant issues to Tusla in relation to Ukrainian children in properties in Kilkenny.
- Close working with Kilkenny Volunteer Centre to support Ukrainian volunteers integrate into our society.
- Carrying out of surveys for refurbishment properties and further development of same if and when approved.
- Ensuring Council Members, general public and media are up to date on current information in relation to the Ukrainian community in Kilkenny.

Performance Standards

Performance under the Ukrainian Unit will be assessed against the standards as set out above.

SEIRBHÍS DÓITEÁIN & TARRTHÁLA & PLEANÁIL ÉIGEANDÁLA FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE & EMERGENCY PLANNING

Core Objective

The core objective for the Fire Service is to utilise the Council's available resources in working together for a safer Kilkenny and to prepare a major emergency response capability in line with the Framework for Major Emergency Management.

Supporting Strategies

The supporting strategies provide for the prompt & appropriate response to fire and other incidents, engaging with the community to inform and educate citizens in how to reduce the risk of fires and other emergencies, influencing and regulating the built environment to protect people, property and the environment from harm, working together to deliver the highest quality services within a safe and positive environment for all in the organisation and to utilise (and update as necessary) a Major Emergency Plan in line with the nationally agreed Framework for Major Emergency Management.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2021 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Implement Fire and Emergency Operations Plan 2022-2026.
- Respond to fire and other non-fire emergencies – 24 hours a day 365 days a year.
- Design and obtain Planning Approval for a new Fire Station for Kilkenny City.
- Implement a programme of community engagement measures including a Primary Schools Programme, a Road Safety Programme, Home fire safety visits, Fire Station Visits/Open Days and lunch time seminars for the Construction Sector and Council Technical staff.
- Process Fire Safety Certificate applications and hold Fire Safety Clinics.
- Develop and implement the Fire Service Management System.
- Work with Waterford City and County Council to deliver a framework for the delivery of fire service requirements in South Kilkenny.
- Implement Kilkenny Fire & Rescue Service Fire Safety Plan 2021-2026.
- Implement Kilkenny Fire & Rescue Service Safety Management Plan 2023.
- Assess Licensing Applications under Intoxicating Liquor, Dangerous Substances legislation.
- Review of buildings under the Fire Services Acts.
- Review Major Emergency Management Plan.
- Review and test Nitrofert in conjunction with AGS and NAS under Seveso Regulations.
- Review and implement Flood Emergency Response and Severe Weather Plans.
- Develop Pre-Incident Plans.
- Monitor all Fire Brigade response and attendance times.
- Review of Safety Statements.
- Deliver quality training e.g. Initial Firefighting Skills, BA, CFBT initial, ESDS, Emergency First, Responder, CAFS, Pump Operators, Hazardous Materials.
- Upgrade facilities in all Fire Stations as per Section 26 Plan.
- Upgrade of fire service vehicles as per the Section 26 Plan.
- Develop the IS/IT system for all stations and fleet integration.

Performance Standards

In addition to any targets set out above the Council's performance will be assessed against the following National Local Government Sector Performance Indicators.

Fire Service (F1-F3&P5) as follows:

- F1: Cost per Capita of the Fire Service
- F2: Mobilisation Times
- F3: Attendance Times at Scenes
- P5: Fire Safety Certificates Applications