

2025

Service Delivery Plan



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

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The Local Government Reform Act, 2014, established the requirement for each local authority to prepare an Annual Service Delivery Plan identifying the services that 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 2025 and has been prepared based on the provisions of the adopted budget by Kilkenny County Council

Kilkenny is located in the southeast of Ireland, in the Southern Region. Kilkenny is the 16th largest of the 32 counties in area (at 2,062 km²) and the 12th smallest by population, with a population of 104,160 in 2022. It is home to internationally renowned companies such as Abbott, State Street International, Glanbia and UPMC alongside indigenous companies such as CluneTech, Tirlan, VHI and Carne Group. The County supports the same sector to develop new business opportunities.

Kilkenny has strong design legacy that has contributed to the growth of globally successful companies such as Nicholas Mosse and five-time Academy Award winning animation company Cartoon Saloon, Kilkenny is also the home of the Design & Craft Council of Ireland and is designated World Crafts Council Craft City.

The tourism and Agri-culture are critical elements to the consistent economy and are supported by Kilkenny County Council

Kilkenny County Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2029 describes the kind of Kilkenny we want to see in the future and what we will do as the County Council together with all stakeholders, to deliver the vision for the County. The Service Delivery plans set out what services Kilkenny County Council will deliver to work towards reaching the objectives of the Corporate Plan.

The range and breadth of services provided by the Local Authority have expanded over the years. Kilkenny's County Council's remit as a service provider extends beyond the traditional services to include expansive roles in areas such as active travel, support to refugees and asylum seekers, economic development, job creation and community support. While many of these services are fully funded by Exchequer grants and other financial measures, the multiplicity of services now being provided places greater demands on our support services which is reflected in our budgets.

The service delivery plan for 2025 must operate within the context of the very real and continuing challenges presented by national and international issues, wars in Eastern Europe and the Middle East and cost of living inflation and the challenge is to seek to balance the competing demands for additional and more expansive services against the financial capacity to meet such demands in an inflationary economic environment while also meeting targets set under local and national Climate Action Policies.

Kilkenny County Council plays a lead role at local level in the implementation of Government policy on economic development, housing provision, climate action, wellbeing and supporting those who are most vulnerable in our community. As well as being one of the major employers in the county, Kilkenny County Council contributes significantly to the local economy with a combined capital and revenue spend of circa €120,922,000 annually based on the current budget.

Our strategic priorities are underpinned by our supporting strategies contained in our adopted Corporate Plan 2024 - 2029. Therefore, the delivery of the key actions identified in each Service Area Plans for 2025 may be affected from the impacts of rising costs, inflation, staffing and any adverse circumstances.

The Council's Mission Statement and its Core Values & Principles have been outlined in its Corporate Plan 2024-2029 as follows:

We will work in a sustainable way with our communities to make Kilkenny the best place to live, work, visit and invest

- **Accountability:** We are committed to being accountable and responsible for all our decisions, ensuring they are communicated openly and transparently.
- **Ambition:** We strive to foster a culture of innovation, creating opportunities for economic development and enhancing the well-being and quality of life for all in Kilkenny City and County.
- **Collaboration & Engagement:** We aim to build safe, resilient and inclusive communities and places through regeneration and proactive engagement with stakeholders.
- **Quality Public Service:** The Elected Members and Staff commit to delivering the highest standards of public service with integrity and professionalism.
- **Sustainability:** We are committed, across all service areas, to transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity-rich, sustainable and carbon neutral economy. In making vibrant places we are also committed to the strong implementation of our Sustainable Development Goal requirements.
- **Equality & Human Rights:** All service areas will embed Public Sector Duty values into organisational plans and activities having regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to protect human rights.

PILÉAR RIACHTANACHA D0 BRAND CHILL CHAINNIGH - ESSENTIAL PILLARS FOR BRAND KILKENNY

In bringing into effect our Mission Statement to make Kilkenny the best place to live, work, visit and invest our ambition is to Build a Better Kilkenny across eight essentials pillars of:

- Sustainable Economic Development,
- Vibrant City, Town & Village Centres,
- Strong Housing Delivery,
- Protect our Heritage and our Culture,
- A Healthy Natural Environment and an effective Climate Action Plan
- Engage People and Communities
- Quality Public Service Delivery
- Effective Communications.

The Service Delivery Plans in this document provides much detail on services/actions to be delivered in 2025, however it is important to set out the strategic priorities for Kilkenny County Council for the coming year. The Priorities for 2025 are aligned to the pillars as set out in the Corporate Plan

Sustainable Economic Development:

In 2025 we will work with key strategic partners to ensure that we maximise the potential of the Belview Area including the upgrade of the port road N24. We will also work all local authorities in the region to advance the case for the redevelopment of Waterford Airport. Supporting the provision of high-speed broadband under the National broadband Strategy Kilkenny will commence the implementation of our digital strategy for business and public service in the coming year. The refurbishment and development of the City Hall will commence in 2025 to ensure that this critical heritage building will remain accessible to the public into the future and will add to our medieval visitor offering.

The provision of a number of infrastructure projects are essential to the sustainable development of our City and County. These projects include the Northern Ring Road Extension and R9 projects in the City and the N24 Waterford to Cahir and N25 Glenmore Road realignment. Our Road design team will progress these projects in 2025 with the TII. Our planning department will continue to manage the enhancement of physical and socio-economic infrastructure to maximise the quality of life of our residents and to provide a sound base to deliver local sustainable employment in both rural and urban locations. In 2025 the review of our Development Contribution Scheme will form a critical part of plan for the provision of infrastructure and amenities across the county.

Vibrant City, Town & Village Centres:

Delivery of Town Centre First Plans in partnership with Town Teams, will progress in 2025 with the provision of projects under RRDF, Town and Village renewal and other rural development funding opportunities. Work to reduce vacancy and dereliction in Kilkenny City and towns and villages of the County will increase through the vacant homes office. In Kilkenny City the delivery of a new urban street, an urban park and plaza surrounding

Strong Housing Delivery

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.

Protect our Heritage and our Culture

To Protect, celebrate and enhance Kilkenny's unique heritage, culture and creativity as well as Improving access to and awareness of our built and natural heritage through strong community engagement programmes and conservation projects.

In 2025 we will actively promote our cultural, heritage and creative assets through practitioner supports, funding programmes, festivals and tourism campaigns while working closely with locally based stakeholders, Heritage Ireland, the Design and Craft Council, OPW, Butler Gallery and the Watergate Theatre to maximise our cultural offering. Our Cultural Services team continues to maximise service delivery through Arts, Libraries, Heritage, Conservation and Creative Ireland programmes.

Our Libraries will continue to serve as a vital community resource delivering a broad range of services which contribute to the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of individuals and communities. To continue to be a key resource in local communities, delivering a broad range of services to meet a diversity of needs in information, learning, literacy, employment skills, business and leisure

A Healthy Natural Environment and Effective Climate Action Plan.

In 2025, Kilkenny County Council, will actively implement the Climate Action Plan 2024-2019. The Plan has been prepared in close collaboration Climate Action Steering Committee, relevant staff from every service area in the Local Authority and Elected Representatives and is informed by the most recent scientific data and evidence. We will Actively reduce energy consumption and emissions within Kilkenny County Councils facilities and fleet

Engage People and Communities

In 2025, we will work towards our ambition that every resident, community, visitor, employee and employer in Kilkenny is helped. to realise their potential and to make their best contribution to enable a positive future for our County over its lifetime and beyond. We will Work closely with our Local Community Development Committee to implement our Local Economic and Community Development Plan to best support local communities and to include growth of the nighttime economy, tourism and creative sectors

We will facilitate strong inclusion measures in line with Integration, Age Friendly, Disability and Human Rights responsibilities and Support local democracy and our community and voluntary sectors through our Municipal Districts, Strategic Policy Committees, our Public Participation Network and Town Teams.

Quality Public Service Delivery

Kilkenny County Council will continue provide quality services across our county, ensuring equal access to those services for all customers. We will support and promote sustainable and integrated development and infrastructure and facilitate the transportation needs of the people residing, visiting and travelling through County Kilkenny by developing and improving infrastructure by maximising and allocating available funding to deliver the infrastructure that will benefit all citizens. We will Identify new ways of working to achieve effective service delivery through innovations in technology and smart working practices and work to improve community services and facilities in our county towns

Effective Communications

In 2025 we will work towards to heightening awareness of the activities and services that the Council provides through ensuring on going communication initiatives. We will ensure Press Releases are issued in a timely manner and continue to foster relationships with local media organisations. We will Develop strategies to drive increased traffic to the website and social media platforms to enhance citizen awareness and participation. We will Prepare, and promote the organisation's achievements through key corporate publications, such as the corporate plan, service delivery plan, annual report and other reports and newsletters.

An Ambition Work Programme for 2025

In delivering this ambitious programme of work like any other year, the Council recognises the need to maximise the use of its resources, to attract, support and develop staff, for continued improvement in communications, to focus on customer services, and to work in partnership to achieve citizen engagement & social inclusion.

In addition, for the year 2025 our Service Plan will require us:

- to finalise a workforce plan to identify gaps and opportunities in our workforce,
- 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 2025 particularly with inflation and recruitment.

Core Objectives

To support the mandate of the Elected Representatives.

To promote Kilkenny and deliver quality services to the citizen.

To embed an inclusive and localised approach to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals through action from the bottom up.

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. The strategies ensure 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 to deliver timely and quality services to the people of the County.

The Corporate Affairs Department operates within a structure of democratic principles and ethics, offering services to the Elected Members, managing meetings and preparing the Register of Electors. It supports other organisational activities, including business planning, risk management, and ensuring compliance with legislative requirements such as data protection, freedom of information and ethics. The department also provides communications and media services, supports a strong health and safety culture across the Organisation and facilitates public service delivery through our customer services team. Additionally, it manages communications and media relations, corporate events and maintains relations with several relevant bodies.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2025 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Local Representation/Civic Leadership

- Continue to provide ongoing support to Elected Members in their role as democratically elected representatives. This includes organisation and support/advice to all Statutory Meetings of the Council including Municipal Districts, Strategic Policy Committees and other meetings of the Council/Committees as required.
- Provide the Chief Executive's report to Elected Members monthly on information and reports on key Council's activities.
- Support the leadership role of the Cathaoirleach. Provide ongoing administrative support to the Cathaoirleach/Mayor/Chair of Municipal Districts in his/her role.
- Provide administrative support to the Elected Members. Provide training to Elected Members and Staff on Corporate Governance.
- Prepare Schedule of Municipal Works for adoption in Q1 of 2025.
- Build transparent and ethical leadership that encourages a culture of integrity, trust and respect through supporting and monitoring adherence to the Ethics Framework and Codes of Conduct of Elected Members and Council Employees.
- Ensure compliance with the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015.
- Prepare and adopt Standing Orders by February 2025.

Franchise

- Maintain the Online rolling Register of Electors and populate database with the required data in accordance with the National Guidance. Additionally, the modernisation of the electoral registration process will advance as outlined in the Electoral Reform Act 2022.
- Carry out data cleansing tasks on existing Register of Electors (iReg) system in preparation for merge to national database voter.ie in 2026.
- Prepare and adopt the Annual Report for 2024 and Service Delivery Plan for 2025.

Customer Service

- Provide an excellent, accessible and responsive customer service to underpin customer satisfaction and deliver on the objectives of our Customer Charter, including commencing the introduction of a Customer Relations Management System across the Organisation.
- Ensure Council's website is updated with relevant information and ensure website is accessible.

Communications

- Deliver the objectives of the Communications Strategy to heighten awareness of the activities and services that the Council provides.
- Work with the internal Communications Planning Team for the provision of proactive communications across the Organisation.
- Ensure Press Releases are issued in a timely manner and continue to foster relationships with local media organisations.
- Develop strategies to drive increased traffic to the website and social media platforms to enhance citizen awareness
- Prepare, publish, and promote the organisation's achievements through key corporate publications, such as the corporate plan, service delivery plan, annual report and other reports and newsletters.

Civic Events

- Oversee the organisation of 2 Civic Festivals - St Patrick's Festival & Yulefest Kilkenny and organise other Civic Events as required by the Council.

Compliance

- Ensure the Council is compliant with Freedom of Information, Access to the Environment and Data Protection Legislation. Provide on-line training for staff in partnership with the LGMA to ensure the organisation is complying with GDPR.
- 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.
- Foster a culture of respect for human rights and equality through fulfilling our obligations under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty
- Ensure responses to Customer Complaints, FOI Requests, Access to Information on the Environment and Data Access Requests are responded to within the statutory time limits. Engage with the Office of the Ombudsman in relation to complaints that are submitted through their office.
- Ensure that the Council's Risk Register is reviewed and updated as required.

Audit and NOAC Performance Indicators.

- Promote good governance through effective internal audit function and support the Audit Committee in their work.
- Implement programme of work as set out in the approved Internal Audit Plan.
- Co-ordinate the submission of data to LGMA to facilitate publication of 2024 Performance Indicators.

Performance Standards

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

Core Objective

The Core Objective is to manage health and safety 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 2025 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

To continue to value our employees and will strive to build an inclusive, flexible, skilled and resilient workforce.

Promote an open and engaging work environment and become an employer of choice.

Create a culture of continuous learning and development

Empower and enable our managers and supervisors.

Promote positive employee relations and engagement.

Create a fair, supportive and healthy working environment.

Supporting Strategies

The Supporting Strategies will 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.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2025 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Plan and Deliver our Organisation's workforce requirements through the development and delivery of a Strategic Work Force Plan.
- To provide the appropriate structures and workforce as resources permit to deliver timely and quality services to the people of the County across the full range of services.
- To develop and manage the capabilities of staff to deliver organisational objectives and quality services to the citizen
- Development of Kilkenny County Council work force in accordance with the Local Authority People Strategy.
- Continue to provide a strategic approach to human resource management to support delivery of corporate objectives.
- Implementation of the Councils Performance Management and Development System. (PMDS).
- Recruit and retain staff in line with the approved Strategic 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.
- 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: Wholetime Equivalents (WTE's)

C2: Sick Leave

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 2025 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Prepare and complete the Internal Audit Plan 2025.
- 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 2025.
- 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

To plan for and facilitate the transportation needs of the people residing, visiting and travelling through County Kilkenny by developing and improving infrastructure by maximising and allocating available funding to deliver the infrastructure that will benefit all citizens.

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 2025 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 2025 Roadworks Scheme.
- Undertake Maintenance & Drainage Programmes as provided in the 2025 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 2024/2025.
- In conjunction with TII, progress through final elements of Phase 6 - Construction & Implementation and Phase 7- Close out & Review of the N77 Ballyragget to Ballynaslee Improvement Road Scheme (*Anticipated substantial completion Q1 2025*).
- In conjunction with TII, progress through final elements of Phase 7- Close out & Review the N24 Tower Road Junction Road Improvement Scheme (*Substantial completion February 2024*).
- Subject to outcome of Judicial Review and TII approval, progress to Phase 5 - Enabling and Procurement for the N24 Carrick Road Improvement Realignment Project. (*Approval for the Compulsory Purchase Order and 177AE Planning was granted by An Bord Pleanála in March 2024, however a Judicial review was sought and subsequently approved. The timeline for the judicial review process is uncertain.*)

- Secure funding to move to Phase 3 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 Transport Project - Secure funding and start Planning/Preliminary Design for the project.
- R7 - Loughmacask Link Roads - Procure consultants and start route selection process.
- Complete the link from Loushybush Lane to the CBS Link Road.
- Kilkenny IDA (Ring Road) Procure consultants and start the design process for the upgrade of the Outrath Road and the link to the Waterford Road from the Outrath Road.
- URDF
 - Progress Design/Tender & CPO for the South-North Link Road & Greenway Carpark Ferrybank between Belmont Road and Abbey Rd during 2025.
 - Progress Design and Planning of improvements to the N29 Port Road.
 - Progress Design and Planning for the Abbey Road & Belmont Road Sustainable Links.
- 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 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 Breagh 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 2025 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 Group Water Schemes.
- Continue to support and update the 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

Abbey Quarter (AQ): We will continue to progress delivery of the URDF approved Abbey Quarter Phase 2 Advancement Project for the public realm in the Abbey Quarter which includes:

Construction commencing in late Q1 of 2025 of a new urban street (*with pedestrian and cyclist priority*) through the Abbey Quarter and associated development of a 1-hectare urban park and public plaza around the St Francis's Abbey national monument.

Construction commencing in late Q2 2025 of a new Board Walk at Greensbridge to provide the missing link to connect the 2 existing Riverside Walks in the City.

The progression through planning and thereafter detailed design and tendering for the 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. These projects are advancing with a view to construction commencing in 2025.

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 2025, supporting and ensuring project delivery where funding allocations are made. The construction of the Thomastown Library commenced in mid-2024 and will be completed by the end of Q2 2025.

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

Support the delivery of projects to improve the attractiveness of Kilkenny as a destination for business including maximising funding opportunities and supporting the Abbey Quarter Master Plan.

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 continuing development of the extensive public realm areas proposed throughout the site and various buildings including the recently completed redevelopment of the Mayfair Building as the new City Library.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2025 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Ongoing Projects:

- Advance through planning and thereafter implementation of the energy efficiency project to the Watergate Theatre which both borders and will visually complement the works completed on the Abbey Quarter in respect of the Brewhouse, Mayfair and public realm improvements on Horsebarrack lane.
- Commence construction on the development of the Urban Street and Park in the Abbey Quarter by the end of Q1 2025 with a view to being completed by the early Q3 2026.
- Advance through Planning to construction in 2025 the renovation the former Squash Court for Cultural use.
- Advance to construction commencing Q2 2025 the development of the new Boardwalk between Greens Bridge and Bishops Meadows.
- Procure design teams to advance planning, design and tendering for the refurbishment of the Engineers Block of the Smithwicks Brewery.

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

To develop and implement sound Financial Management and Control Systems, to plan and deliver all services based on efficiency, value for money and accountability and optimisation of all Resources across all areas of the Organisation.

Supporting Strategies

The Annual Revenue Budget 2025 was adopted by the Elected Members in December 2024. Monthly expenditure/income reports are prepared and circulated to budget holders to ensure adherence to the Adopted Budget and that we maintain a balanced Income and Expenditure Account. An ambitious six-year Capital Programme has been prepared with a total spend of €832m which will require match funding of €70m from the councils own resources. A review of the Capital Programme will be carried out in 2025. The Capital Programme will be monitored to ensure that expenditure does not exceed the funding available. Collection targets and weekly cashflow monitoring ensures that adequate funding is in place for approved Revenue Programmes and Capital Projects.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2025 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 2024 Annual Financial Statement for approval by the Elected Members within the statutory deadlines.
- Complete Budget 2026 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.
- Review six-year Capital Programme for the period 2024-2029.
- Management of all Council's assets and facilities.
- Ensure staff are adequately trained to carry out their duties in a professional and efficient manner.
- 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.
- Management of the Mortgage Loan Book to ensure compliance with loan agreements.
-

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

TEICNEOLAÍOCHT FAISNÉISE - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Core Objective

To provide a modern and secure ICT Infrastructure which complies with best standards and practices to enable Staff and Elected Members to deliver modern, efficient and effective services.

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 2025 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Maintain and enhance the security of the network and data.
- Implement updates to national systems as required.
- Continual monitoring and upgrade of KCCs IT infrastructure
- Connect new library in Thomastown to the network.
- Provide remote working facilities to staff to facilitate blended working.
- Complete the upgrade of Network connections to key sites outside the city.
- Upgrade the content management system for main web sites.
- Upgrade Operating Systems for PCs and laptops.
- Continue to update servers and PCs with latest software updates.
- Continue the rollout of CRM product.
- Support the rollout of the National Broadband Plan and the Broadband Officer.
- Prepare for move to a single central Electoral Register.
- Continue preparation for the new national financial management system upgrade and 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

Core Objective

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 2025 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 empower artistic activity throughout the city and county, working to further strengthen Kilkenny's position as a centre of excellence for the arts and ensure a successful and prosperous arts environment within the region.

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 2025 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

ARTISTS SUPPORTS

Visual Arts

- Design and delivery of professional development programmes including specific mentoring programme in partnership with Big Look Art.
- Delivery of the Breaking the Patterns programme with Carlow, Waterford and Wexford Arts Offices in partnership with Capacity Ireland.
- Continued programming of the Tea Houses, including exhibitions, talks, residencies and workshops.
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of all programmes outlined above.

Literature

- Delivery of our 'Your Voice Matters' professional development programme.
- Publication of our annual Poetry Broadsheet, celebrating its 25th edition in 2025.
- National Mentoring in partnership with the Irish Writers Centre.

Performing Arts

- The continued roll out of our Music Plan
- Delivery of a professional development programme for performing artists in partnership with the Irish Theatre Institute.

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. There will be a specifically on our Public Arts programme in 2025.

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.

YOUNG PEOPLE

- Deliver the 'Art of Change' programme working with with Ossory Youth, Foróige and local schools- creating a safe space for young people to explore their creativity and exploring the Climate crisis through the arts.
- Bookville Festival - 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 - facilitating poetry workshops and publishing opportunities for teenagers.

COMMUNITY & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Research, design and delivery of high-quality community programmes to suit diverse sectors of the public with 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.
- Continue to nurture and develop new relationships within our community and public engagement projects and programmes.
- Culture night - Annual collaborative event celebrating the Arts in all its guises.

PRACTITIONER and COMMUNITY GRANTS & BURSARIES

- Arts Act Grants - individuals and communities
- Residency awards
- School subsidies
- Creative Ireland grants
- Professional development grants - Performing arts forum, Age and Opportunity, Creative Futures Academy

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. Research management models of said spaces and input in to Capital grant application(s)

Performance Standards

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

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.

To record, conserve and restore habitats and enhance ecological connectivity.

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 2025 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Advance the County Biodiversity Action Plan for formal adoption.
- Co-ordinate the Biodiversity Working Group.
- Develop projects under the Local Biodiversity Action Fund.
- Promote actions for pollinators by supporting community led projects and support colleagues to advance pollinator projects within their directorates.
- Roll out staff biodiversity training and biodiversity engagement activities.
- Co-ordinate biodiversity data collection in County Kilkenny.
- Co-ordinate events for National Heritage Week and National Biodiversity Week.
- Support Creative Ireland biodiversity themed projects.
- Deliver biodiversity communications via social and traditional media.
- Provide advice to the public and local authority on biodiversity best practise.
- Promote The Heritage in Schools Programme to encourage in biodiversity education in primary level and develop educational resources for second level.

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 2025 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Operate a strong and active Comhairle na nÓg structure in Kilkenny throughout 2025 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.
- 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 .
- 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

Core Objective

The core objective for the Civil Defence is to provide appropriate response as a back-up service to the local emergency services in the event of an emergency.

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 2025 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. Responding to requests for support from the PRA's during periods of severe weather, land and water searches for missing persons, flooding and other emergencies
- Up skill the existing volunteers in line with national practices and standards, including promoting development in volunteers, assisting them achieve instructor qualifications.
- 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 Principal Response Agencies.
- Increase the capacity of the Swiftwater unit to respond to emergencies, flooding and calls for assistance from the Principal Response Agencies.
- 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 part-take in training and meetings as part of the Crisis Management team within the Local Authority.
- Continue to strengthen relationships with principal response agencies and the Major Emergency Management Team.
- Collaborate and undertake training exercises with PRA's and other voluntary response agencies in readiness for emergency response.
- Provide casualty response and river safety boat cover for the Local Authority, Community and Sporting events across the County of Kilkenny.
- Continuing to implement the climate action plan to reduce our carbon emissions.
- Continue to assist communities with the provision of First aid training in local GAA and community groups.

Performance Standards

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

Core Objectives

To work with the Local Community Development Committee to develop, co-ordinate, implement 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.

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 2025 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 the preparation of the second 2-year Implementation Plan for the 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.
- The EU Erasmus+ “Urban Action Against Cancer (UcanACT)” 2022-2025 pilot project, aimed at promoting physical activity for cancer prevention in urban green spaces will be finalised by June 2025.
- 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.
- 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, Glenmore & Thomastown.
- Develop RRDF project applications.
- Deliver current Town & Village Renewal projects and develop new projects for 2025 applications.
- Deliver approved projects under the CLÁR Programme

- Develop applications for projects under CLÁR 2025.
- Deliver Capital Facilities Grant Scheme projects approved.
- 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.
- Launch the new 5-year Kilkenny Age Friendly Strategy 2025-2028.
- Co-ordinate the Pride of Place Programme for 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.
- Support the Climate Action Plan and Climate Action Initiatives for Community Projects.
- Implement Creative Ireland Programme for 2025 for County Kilkenny.

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

To manage a strategic heritage service, including developing partnerships, raising awareness, providing advice, developing/implementing policy, collecting data, and promoting best practice to value and safeguard heritage for future generations.

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 National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-30; 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 Plan 2024-2029; County Kilkenny Culture and Creativity Plan; Kilkenny Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2019

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2025 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Prepare a new County Heritage Strategy, 2026 - 2030.
- Co-ordinate and support County Kilkenny Heritage Forum
- Implement County Heritage Plan programme.
- Implement Heritage actions in the Kilkenny County Council's Climate Action Plan.
- Manage the Community Monuments Fund Programme for County Kilkenny.
- Manage the Irish Walled Towns Network Programme for Kilkenny.
- Co-ordinate and implement Kilkenny's programme for National Heritage Week.
- Co-ordinate and implement the Public Commemoration Programme for Kilkenny.
- 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 the National Heritage in Schools programme.
- Provide heritage input to council plans and strategies.
- 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.

- 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,
 - increasing the availability of accommodation in association with the Private and Voluntary Sector,
 - Implement Housing Capital actions included in Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2025 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Housing Capital Delivery

- Progress the delivery of the targets for social housing units, as set out by the Dept 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 the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS), Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) and Part V of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2021.
 - Continue to work with housing developers to deliver units under Part V and Turnkey Schemes.
 - Delivery and management of 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 Local Government & Heritage (DHLGH) .
- Deliver Affordable Housing units for purchase and rent [cost rental] under the various Affordable Housing Schemes in accordance with the targets set out by the DHLGH in collaboration with Approved Housing Bodies and private developers as required.
- 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) 2025-2029.

Housing Operations

- Respond to reactive maintenance requests in an effective and efficient manner.
- Implement a planned programme of maintenance and refurbishment of our existing stock subject to resources while seeking to maximise value for money.
- Implement a national sock survey and asset management system.
- Avail of all opportunities to improve housing stock to meet tenant's needs via programmes such as energy efficiency retrofit, void refurbishment, disabled persons grants and traveller accommodation funding.
- Meet target set by DHLGH in respect of private rented inspections.
- Management of Private Housing Grant applications in an efficient and equitable manner and in line with regulations and available funding.

Homeless Services

- Implement the Southeast Regional Homeless Action Plan 2023-2026
- Assess those presenting as Homeless in accordance with regulations and provide relevant supports including the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Place Finder Service.
- Work in collaboration with Good Shepherd Centre under service level agreements for the provision of emergency accommodation.
- Develop Own Front Door project as an exit strategy from temporary emergency accommodation.
- Work in collaboration with Focus Ireland and HSE to implement Housing First Programme providing accommodation with wrap around supports for those entrenched in homelessness
- Coordinate and support the multi-disciplinary Homeless Action Team (HAT) to provide a coordinated response to those availing of homeless services.
- Work in collaboration with HSE to provide housing units for the Support to Home & Recovery Targets programme (START). START is an interagency programme which aims to provide and sustain secure tenancies for people engaging with their local mental health service.
- Provide housing solutions to private rented tenants served with valid eviction notices (notice to quit).

Tenancy Management

- Deliver efficient and effective responses to tenancy management issues and in particular issues around anti-social behaviour in accordance with the Anti-social Behaviour Strategy.
- Administration and management of the Tenant Purchase Scheme which facilitates tenants to purchase their existing local authority house.
- Efficient and effective processing of Local Authority Home Loan Scheme which is a government backed mortgage scheme for first time buyers and certain other applicants
- Undertake regular rent reviews of tenants in receipt of social housing supports.
- Implement strategies provided for in the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy, 2020-2025.
- Manage administration of properties leased under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS).
- Ensure compliance with Sex Offender Risk Assessment and Management (SORAM) requirements.
- Coordinate and support the multi-disciplinary Housing Disability Steering Group (HDSG)

Applications and Allocations

- Process applications for social housing supports within legislative requirements.
- Administration of the Housing Assistance Payment Scheme in conjunction with shared service centre based in Limerick.
- Allocate housing units in line with Scheme of Letting Priorities.
- Continued development of Choice Based Letting system (CBL).
- Process applications for transfer, right to reside and succession of tenancy in line with council 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

Core Objective

To continue to serve as a vital community resource delivering a broad range of services which contribute to the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of individuals and communities.

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 2025 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Infrastructure & Service Delivery

- Complete Thomastown capital project for opening by Q4 2025.
- Progress THRIVE funding for Carnegie Library building and progress building works if successful.
- Progress Callan capital library project, ensuring a fit for purpose modern building is developed.
- Procure a new mobile library vehicle to ensure modern effective service in rural locations.
- Implement a rolling annual maintenance and energy-saving programme of works.
- Ensure user-friendly, modern resources, spaces and services compliant with health and safety and disability legislation.
- Progress actions under Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and continue to ensure sustainable development goals underpin our work.
- Complete and implement our library development plan.
- Launch My Open Library at Mayfair Library.

Workforce Development

- Ensure adequate staffing throughout the network of library branches through the new workforce plan and adjust roles in line with identified needs.
- Regularly review and align staff scheduling, roles and skills with service needs and priorities.
- Create a training schedule that meets workforce needs, customer expectations, and ensures ongoing professional development.
- Continue to implement in-house and online training.
- Ensure strategic succession planning for future staffing needs.

Service Development

- Continue to develop and provide accessible, quality user-centred services in various formats responding to changing service delivery requirements.
- Ensure the library's collections are current and meet the needs of the community served by aligning both physical and digital collections and budgets accordingly.
- Continue to develop and roll out a range accessible, targeted programmes and in response to changing community needs, underpinned by pillars of accessibility and sustainable development goals.
- Development of a support to the Secondary Schools programme targeting first year students to increase membership and engagement with our services.
- Further develop our sensory toy collection.

- Ensure our resources and programmes comprehensively address the challenges people face around various literacies such as climate, financial, and media literacy.
- Continue to visit early learning centres, primary schools and nursing homes throughout the County via branch outreach and our mobile library service.
- Actively explore opportunities to maintain a mobile library presence in communities during school breaks and summer months.
- Continue to deliver a door-to-door delivery service for those who require it.
- Continue to maximise opportunities to market and promote our libraries as democratic, inclusive and dynamic spaces through staff outreach visits and promotions, local media, online and social media.
- Continue to participate in national library initiatives – Right to Read, Healthy Ireland at your Library, Age Friendly, Skills for Life, Creative Ireland, Dormant Account Funding initiatives, ALL strategy initiatives and access all funding opportunities to further develop and deliver services.
- Advocate for increased funding levels in line with recommended capita stock fund target using an incremental approach to increasing funds year on year.

Collaboration & Partnership

- Support the Kilkenny Age Friendly County Strategy and maintain age-friendly library status in 2025.
- Cultivate and develop new and existing collaborations with local organisations to promote the library as an accessible, cultural, community, and educational space.
- Increase citizen engagement through LCDC and PPN structures, and progress LECP plan objectives.
- Expand the Aistear project, My Little Library Bag and First 5 book project for primary schools and Early Learning Centres.
- Collaborate with the Arts and Heritage Department to fulfil the Cultural Strategy and Creative Ireland programme goals.

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.
- Develop an innovative Makerspace programme for all ages.
- Continue to provide and promote our suite of 24/7 national online services, and supplement with investment in other platforms.
- Investigate innovative and emerging technologies that will encourage digital inclusion across all age groups.
- Continue to work on programmes for digital support and literacy.
- Redevelop the library website for better navigation, usability, and accessibility.
- Continue to engage with Library Management System national committees and forum for further roll out of library system modules.

Local Studies Service

- Preserve, share, and promote Kilkenny's culture, history, and heritage and our local studies resources, both physical and digital.
- Manage, maintain, invest and collaborate with relevant partners to increase access to print and digital library collections, both print and digital.
- Expand the Kilkenny Digital Archive, promoting online through social media platforms.
- Continue to introduce new content from local archives and records through a strategic digitisation programme, using current and emerging digital technologies.

- Continue to engage with Digital Repository of Ireland and showcase our collections nationally and internationally.
- Continue to promote our collections and commemorative initiatives in 2025 with a suite of online resources, workshops, brochures, podcasts.
- Explore external funding opportunities to deliver and expand Local Studies programmes and initiatives.
- Once Archivist is recruited, work to develop plans and policies to ensure appropriate preservation, access and long-term accommodation for both current and future collections.

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.
- Expand upon our existing evaluation methods by focusing on effective, evidence-based reporting to analyse statistical data for reporting
- Enhance local service indicators, including online metrics, to ensure comprehensive monitoring and reflection of usage patterns
- Compare and track the usage of all library services while staying informed about best practice models for library measurement

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.

Core Objective

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 2025 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Finalise the draft digital strategy for 2025 to 2027 for Kilkenny County Council for adoption and monitoring by SPC 1.
- Agree and commence delivery of the Kilkenny County Council Digital Strategy Implementation Plan 2025 – 2027. This will include supporting the delivery of actions under four pillars: Pillar 1: Digital Infrastructure; Pillar 2: Digital Skills Pillar 3: Digital Transformation of Business and Pillar 4: Digitisation of Public Services
- Consider the availability of *Smart Data* within Kilkenny County Council and in the County and consider how to create a baseline of existing data.
- Facilitate commercial broadband and mobile operators with appropriate development strategies to maximise benefits and use for Kilkenny County Council and Kilkenny County.
- To maximise the potential of broadband access for Kilkenny, assist where possible with the rollout of broadband initiatives in line with the Government's National Broadband Plan and NBI
- 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.
- Support the WIFI4EU Initiative across County Kilkenny.

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

To promote and protect the environment of County Kilkenny in a sustainable manner for the benefit of current and future generations.

Lead and support the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity-rich, sustainable and carbon neutral economy.

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 2025 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Coordinate with all service areas on the implementation of the Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029
- Coordinate and support the Council's Climate Action Steering Committee
- Monitor and report annually on climate action including to the following: EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, NOAC Local Authority Performance Indicators, LGMA Local Government Climate Action Key Performance Indicators, and the SEAI Public Sector Monitoring and Reporting Programme.
- Partner with and support the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office (CARO)
- Partner with and fund the South East Regional Energy Unit to secure funding under the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) Pathfinder Programme for delivery of climate action targets on Council assets

- Deliver the Community Climate Action Fund in partnership with the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications
- Support the Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC's) programme
- Co-fund and collaborate with the South East Energy Agency (SEEA)
- Deliver the annual "Reduce-Your-Use" Programme to improve energy efficiency
- Maintain ISO50001 Energy Management accreditation
- Deliver a climate action awareness raising and communication programme

WASTE MANAGEMENT

To achieve the environmental outcomes set out under the National Enforcement Priorities, safeguard the environment and human health, deter and tackle litter and illegal dumping, address unauthorised waste activities and carry out enforcement actions as appropriate.

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 2025.
- 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.
- 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 2025.
- Continue to assess planning application referrals with respect to environmental protection.

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

To promote the development and delivery of environmental awareness and education and to implement the objectives of the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024-2030.

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.

Plans and Strategies

- Implement the 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.
- Identify and deliver projects aimed at tackling illegal dumping 'black spots' throughout the County under the Anti-Dumping Initiative (ADI).
- Continue to promote waste prevention community initiatives and support businesses with greening initiatives to improve their environmental performance.
- Promote local education and awareness across air, noise, water, waste, recycling, litter, climate action, biodiversity and sustainability.
- Meet and implement the objectives of the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024-2030.

AIR QUALITY AND NOISE

To protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of air and noise pollution.

- Promote local awareness of air quality.
- Hold events that promote clean air quality with the public.
- Install additional air quality monitors in the county.
- Establish an Air Quality Strategy.
- Continue to implement and enforce Solid Fuel Regulations.
- Continue to implement and enforce legislation for the regulation of paints, varnishes and vehicle refinishing activities.
- Continue to implement and enforce legislation for the regulation of installations and activities using organic solvents.
- Continue to implement and enforce legislation for the regulation of petroleum vapours.
- Assess Air Pollution licence applications and monitor existing licenses.
- Continue to assess planning application referrals with respect to environmental protection.
- Execute actions identified in the Noise Action Plan 2024-2028.

WATER QUALITY

To implement National Programs such as the National Agricultural Inspection Program and the National Inspection Program for septic tanks to improve and achieve good water quality.

- Prepare and implement RMCEI Water Quality Environmental Inspection Plan 2025 to include inspections of rivers, businesses, septic tanks and farms.
- Continue to achieve targets for farm inspections as set out in the National Agricultural Inspection Program.
- Continue to achieve targets for septic tank inspections as identified in the National Inspection Program.
- Assess Discharge Licence applications and Nutrient Management Plans and issue authorisations.
- Continue review of existing discharge licences and issue revised authorisations.
- Participate and monitor the National Sampling Programme for the Water Framework Directive.
- Continue to assess planning application referrals with respect to environmental protection.
- Collaborate with the local LAWPRO office through regular meetings and a coordinated work plan.
- Continue to investigate environmental complaints to achieve positive environmental outcomes.
- Monitor and rectify missed connections

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

Core Objective

To support Kilkenny's economy through strategic sustainable measures which boost employment, positioning Kilkenny as a great place to live, visit, work and to do business

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 2025 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Support SPC 1 to monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the 2023 – 2024 LECP Implementation plan.
- Development and delivery of the agreed actions as set out in the 2025 – 2026 LECP Implementation plan of the Kilkenny LECP framework 2023 to 2028.
- Identify and pursue further funding opportunities to assist in economic development and job creation including opportunities under URDF and Enterprise Ireland Smart Regions Funds.
- Progress feasibility of developing a 'Landing Zone' for start-up businesses or businesses locating in Kilkenny.
- Identify opportunities and activities to support the Belview port area including the Waterford Estuary project, South East off shore renewable energy working group.
- Co-ordinate the administration of the URDF Steering and Operational Working group for all projects under live URDF calls.
- Determine the demand amongst employers for delivery of *Careers Kilkenny* in early 2026. Action next steps as appropriate depending on demand.
- Support the promotion of the 'Kilkenny Offer' as a great place to live and work, focusing on and Invest and Belong Kilkenny brand collateral including the development of the Kilkenny Ambassador publication and online materials.
- Continue building relationships with local stakeholders and national agencies to assist with their client's expansion and ensure sufficient availability of enterprise infrastructure including delivery of industry and stakeholder information sharing events based on sectoral need.
- Work with planning section of KCC to consider the presentation of designated industrial areas in Kilkenny.
- Focusing on sustainability support the delivery of a Green showcase event for Kilkenny

- Building on the designation of 'World Craft Council Craft City and Region' finalise the Kilkenny Craft Strategy (2025 to 2027) and commence implementation of agreed actions and continued promotion of Kilkenny as a centre of excellence in Design
- Deliver housing and economic monitors to assess Kilkenny economic performance under various measures.
- Continued roll out of the updated Small Business Vacant Premises Incentive scheme.
- 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.
- Support retail businesses throughout the County through the promotion of the Shop local message, #ShopKilkenny brand
- Entrepreneurship: Foster, promote and support local entrepreneurship
- Competitiveness: deliver schemes to 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.
- 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.
- Develop the Night Time Economy within Kilkenny City and enhance and diversify the evening and night time experiences for visitors, residents and local businesses.
- Support the Stakeholder Forum and SPC 1 to fully implement and access the outcomes of the pilot Night Time Economy action plan and to embed and maximise the night time economy as a key strategic opportunity for Kilkenny

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

Core Objective

To achieve balanced sustainable development while affording protection of the natural and built environment of the County to ensure:

- Enhanced physical and socio-economic infrastructure,
- Enhanced quality of life for the County's residents and
- A sound economic base on which to deliver local sustainable employment in both rural and urban locations throughout the County.

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 2025 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Forward Planning

- Complete the Local Area Plan for Ferrybank/Belview
- Complete a new Settlement Plan for Castlecomer and incorporate into the City & County Development Plan 2021- 2027 by way of variation
- Complete the joint retail strategy for Waterford Metropolitan Area (MASP) in conjunction with Waterford City and County Council.
Complete the Blue and Green open space strategy for the Waterford Metropolitan Area (MASP) in co-operation with Waterford City and County Council
- Complete a Masterplan for the St. Canice's Hospital lands at Lacken in Kilkenny City
- Commence a masterplan for the Fair Green in Kilkenny City
- Complete the following Masterplans as part of the next phase of Town Centre First Plans:
 - Mooncoin, Callan and Graiguenamanagh, in accordance with objective 4La of the City and County Development Plan.
- 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 Mobility 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.
- Commence the formal review of the 2021 - 2027 City & County Development Plan in September 2025.

Development Management

- Manage planning applications as submitted to the Council and ensure planning decisions reflect adopted policy for the County and the relevant Ministerial guidance are transparent and are decided in accordance with statutory requirements.

Taking in Charge

- To advance Taking in Charge for schemes in the County with a minimum 10 developments taken in charge in 2025.
- Monitor bonds monthly and submit claim on bonds as required.
- Minimise risk on residential developments through bond compliance.

Active Land Management

- Continue to administer the Residential Zoned Land Tax mapping process on behalf of the Department of Housing and Local Government, and the Revenue Commissioners.
- Continue to implement and monitor the Vacant Site Register and the levy in accordance with the legislation.
- Commence and progress the Butts Area Regeneration Plan in conjunction with Housing & the Town Regeneration Office.

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

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

Administrative

Continue to update and revise the Planning Department's Procedures Manual and ensure all admin and technical staff are trained in each aspect of the planning functions to provide cover when necessary.

Town Regeneration

Key Actions for 2025 are as follows:

- Complete Town Centre First Health Checks for Callan and Mooncoin
- Complete Town Centre First Health Check and Plan for Graiguenamanagh
- Support and engage with Town Teams
- Respond to any Funding calls under TCF in 2025
- Progress RRDF Project – Callan Friary Complex & Bridge Street Properties
- Submit Cat 2 RRDF Application for Urlingford
- Submit Application under THRIVE Strand 2 for Carnegie Library and Public Realm area
- Deliver Draft Framework Plan for Butts Area Regeneration Programme
- Prepare an Implementation Plan for delivery of Framework
- Progress acquisition of properties under URDF Call 3
- Progress CPO of Derelict Properties in City and County
- Promote and process applications under the Croí Cónaithe Towns Fund Scheme to bring vacant and/or derelict properties back into residential use
- Take appropriate action under Derelict Sites legislation to address dereliction in Kilkenny City & County

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

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 2023-2029, the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027, Kilkenny County Council's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030, the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025.

A number of the projects targeted for 2025 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.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2025 ARE AS FOLLOWS:-

Capital Delivery Project Office

- Expand Capital Delivery Office to develop, progress and manage a larger project portfolio.

South East Greenway

- In conjunction with our partners, Wexford and Waterford Local Authorities, assist in the construction of the 24km South East Greenway located between Ferrybank, South Kilkenny and New Ross, County Wexford;
- 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 (Phase 1) from New Ross to Glenmore and associated infrastructure;
- Open a second 6km section of Greenway (Phase 2) from Curraghmore to Ferrybank and ensure resources are in place for the ongoing maintenance of same;
- Continue to advance to detailed design and construction stage the remaining sections of the Greenway, a circa.10km section from Ballyvereen to Curraghmore and all other works associated with same.

Related South East Greenway Projects

- *Greenway Link to Glenmore* - Engage the services of a Multi-disciplinary Engineer Led Design Team to the advance the project through detailed design, tender award and construction stage in conjunction with progressing the acquisition of lands required to deliver the scheme. This project will also see the delivery of the Pink Rock Cycle -Loop funded under Rural Regeneration Development Fund.
- *Greenway Southern Connectivity Link to Slieverue* - Secure planning consent for the Southern Connectivity Link under the Part 8 Planning Process. Thereafter, seek to identify potential funding streams to advance through detail design, land acquisition, and construction stage.
- *Greenway Northern Connectivity Link to Slieverue* - Engage with relevant stakeholders to determine potential of advancing the Greenway Northern Connectivity Link to Slieverue village.

Woodstock to South East Greenway Link (Nore Valley Greenway)

- Complete Phase 1 Concept and Feasibility Stage and advance Phase 2 Option Selection of the Woodstock to South East Greenway in accordance with the Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Project Management Guidelines.

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)

- Progression of funded applications under the ORIS across all Measures;
- Prepare and submit new funding applications under the 2024 – 2025 ORIS.

Museum of Medieval Kilkenny

- Progress restoration and enhancement works to The Tholsel building, which when complete, while continuing to act as the seat of local Government in the City, will form a key element of Kilkenny's newest tourist attraction which will see the unification of The Tholsel and the Medieval Mile Museum (*formerly St. Mary's Church*) under the heading of the Museum of Medieval Kilkenny

Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) & Town and Village and Sport

- Assist in the identification and delivery of projects.

Historic Structures Fund

- Complete Phase 2 of works to remove vegetation and stabilise external walls of Woodstock House.

Clover Centre, Ferrybank

- Prepare a masterplan for the future development of a high quality, community centred and multifunctional 19.5 acre local park on the Clover Site at Ferrybank.

Park & Playgrounds

- Collaborate with community groups to plan, fund, and create playgrounds and play spaces, especially in areas that currently lack these facilities;
- Continue to ensure playgrounds are well-maintained and adhere to European safety standards EN1176 and EN1177 for playground equipment and surfacing;
- Continue the development of Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park;
- Maintain and enhance Garringreen Neighbourhood Park, Newpark Marsh and Park, the River Nore Linear Park, Silaire Wood Trail and Boardwalk, and the Pocket Park in Graiguenamanagh;
- Implement tree planting programme within parks such as Slieverue Linear Park and Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park;
- The Parks Section will include the new Gowran Playground in its weekly inspections once taken in charge and will also assist in the construction and implementation of the Bigwood Playground;
- Continue to manage Annual Tree Planting and Tree Surgery Programme.

Sports Pitches

- Establish short-term lease agreements with sports clubs, granting them access to Council owned pitches for games and training. Currently, there are five pitches available for lease;
- Maintain and upgrade pitches and Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) by addressing wear and tear and Perform weekly inspections.

Woodstock Gardens & Arboretum

- Enhance the spring bulb planting program by continuing the bluebell displays along the woodland and establishing new naturalized spring flowering bulb collections under the trees in the arboretum;
- Ensure the walking trails from Inistioge Village to Woodstock Gardens such as the Woodstock Loop Walk, Ladies Loop Walk and Woodstock Waterfall Loop Walk are well-maintained and kept in excellent condition;
- Host a diverse range of outdoor events to draw the public to the gardens, such as Schools Orienteering, Dawn Chorus, Light Up Gold, National Tree Day, Yulefest Santa Reindeer Trail, and Plant Fair;
- Make the gardens available for weddings and other private events where appropriate;
- Schedule events to align with Play Day and Heritage Week celebrations;
- Implement a planting program to replace valuable specimen trees lost to age or storm damage, focusing on the Noble Fir and Monkey Puzzle Avenues, and engage in a propagation program to take cuttings from mature trees throughout the garden;
- Focus on enhancing the walled garden, showcasing a variety of flowering plants in the central border, along with flourishing vegetable gardens and fruit trees and bushes;
- Implement native meadow areas throughout the garden, with a notable new meadow area on the croquet lawn to support biodiversity;
- Continue offering garden tours to visitors and provide a mobility service for those with limited mobility.

Kilkenny Countryside Park Maintenance

- Continue to implement chemical-free and environmentally sustainable practices for weed management along with an traditional meadow management regime, which is crucial for local wildlife;
- Assist with proposed installation of art panels depicting Kilkenny's heritage, from the mythical founder of the Kingdom of Ossory, to be located at the viewing platform.

Amenity Grants

- Management of the Amenity Grant programme to assist communities and resident associations in maintaining their local areas and continue to offer advice on planting schemes, pollinator planting, and meadow management.

Roundabouts Sponsorship Scheme

- Roll-out significant landscape planting sponsorship scheme across three key roundabouts in South Kilkenny in the Newrath and Ferrybank area.

Maintenance of Residential Amenity Areas

- Continue to manage grass maintenance in parks, playgrounds and certain residential estates, where the size of the grass area warrants assistance.

Performance Standards

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

INTEGRATION

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 LAIT works in conjunction with the Department of Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth and the Local Government Management Agency to roll out supports which are provided under the 'Local Integration Model – International Protection Applicants and Refugees' and work closely with the Community Integration Forum to ensure that the supports required by these cohorts of people are provided in an effective and efficient manner. The LAIT are the lead organisation for new arrivals ensuring assessments to signpost onwards to local agencies.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2025 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Action 1: Continue drop-in and appointment-based clinics working with all cohorts of people.

Action 2: Hosting orientation and information sessions covering: Health; Housing; Legal Rights; Employment Rights; Education; Independent Living; Navigating the rental market and Managing a Home.

Action 3: Integration through cultural awareness raising events – monthly cultural features; Refugee Week; Africa Day and Cultural Competency workshops.

Action 4: Strategic development with partner organisations to ensure all integration gaps of cohorts are addressed proactively.

Action 5: Monthly development of the Ukrainian Monitor to ensure that all statistics in relation to the Community Integration Forum supports.

Action 6: Co-ordination of the Community Integration Forum to ensure that agencies and community groups are aware of the needs and requirements of new arrivals and the development of supports to meet those needs.

Action 7: Promotion of 'Offer A Home' within the County to provide follow-on accommodation.

Action 8: Working closely with the Irish Red Cross in procuring pledged properties for follow-on accommodation.

Action 9: Co-ordination of Community Recognition Fund to ensure projects are delivered in areas who have welcomed newcomers.

Performance Standards

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

Core Objective

The core objective for the Fire Service is to provide for the safety of persons and buildings both new and existing by way of fire prevention and by operational response in the case of fire or accident.

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.
- Obtain planning approval and construct 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 and Open Days Process Fire Safety Certificate applications and hold Fire Safety Clinics.
- Develop and implement the Fire Service Management System.
- Implement Kilkenny Fire & Rescue Service Fire Safety Plan 2021-2026.
- Assess Licensing applications under Intoxicating Liquor, Dangerous Substances legislation.
- Carryout the online fire safety certificate process
- Review of buildings under the Fire Services Acts.
- Implementation of the new fire management system for fire charges
- Review Major Emergency Management Plan.
- Review and test TransStock EEP in conjunction with AGS and NAS under Seveso Regulations.
- Review and implement Flood Emergency Response and Severe Weather Plans.
- Develop Pre-Incident Plans.
- Implementation of a Risk Based Approach II - nearest available resource
- Monitor all Fire Brigade response and attendance times.
- Review of Safety Statements.
- Carryout a pilot programme on the BfireSafe@School
- Implement Kilkenny Fire & Rescue Service Safety Management Plan 2025.
- Deliver quality training e.g. QQI Initial Firefighting skills, QQI BA, BA refresher, CFBT, ESDS, Emergency First Responder (EFR) and EFR recertification, CISM, CAFS, CAFS Instructors, QQI Pump Operators, QQI Transportation Incidents, Chainsaw, Abrasive Wheels QQI Hazardous materials, Swift Water training , Managing Fire service incidents 1, and NDFEM courses

- 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.
- Implement the fire services' climate action plan-
- Implement the recommendations of the WRC proposals e.g. Recruitment, Training of Staff, Fortnightly pay

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