

**Minutes of the Meeting of Strategic Policy Committee (SPC1)**  
**Economic Development, Enterprise Support, Tourism, Planning & Development**  
**Policy**  
**held via MS Teams**  
**Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

**Present:** Cllr. Ger Frisby (Chair), Cllr. John Coonan, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Cllr. Michael Doyle, Cllr. Maria Dollard, Cllr Eugene McGuinness, Bill O’Keeffe, Deirdre Shine, Paul Brophy, Eileen Moyles, Brian Hamilton, Fiona O Neill

**Apologies:** Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, Cllr. Patrick O Neill, Marion Acreman

**In attendance:** Sean Mc Keown, Martin Prendiville, Denis Malone, Fiona Deegan, Martina Comerford, Catherine Myers, Shauna McHugh (KCLR FM)

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and extended a special welcome to new members – Mr. Bill O’ Keeffe (replacing Mr. John Bambrick as the IFA Representative) and Ms. Fiona O Neill (replacing Ms. Annette Jolly from the Social Inclusion Sector). The Chair requested a letter of thanks be sent to John and Annette for their participation and contribution to SPC1.

Item	
1.	<p><b>Declaration of Interest:</b> There were no Declarations of Interest.</p>
2.	<p><b>Confirmation of Minutes:</b> The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September were proposed by Cllr. John Coonan, seconded by Cllr. Eugene McGuinness and agreed.</p>
3.	<p><b>Matters Arising:</b> There were no Matters Arising</p>
4.	<p><b>Progress Reports:</b> The Progress Report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and taken as read and questions were welcomed on same.</p> <p><u>Local and Economic Community Plan (LECP):</u> Mr. Mc Keown advised that the review of the LECP and preparation of the Plan is due to commence in 2021 and that guidelines are awaited from the Department. It was noted that one option being considered is deferral of LECP preparation after the CSO Census, which has also been delayed.</p> <p>Ms. Fiona Deegan advised that the update of the 13 Strategic Level Actions of the LECP were included in the Progress Report and that a full update on all of the actions contained in the current Plan would be provided in the Progress Report in advance of the next meeting.</p> <p><u>Kilkenny Greenway update:</u> Mr. McKeown advised that the South East Greenway (incorporating the Kilkenny Greenway) had secured grant-aid of €15.5M under from the National Greenway Fund, the full estimated costs of construction. He confirmed that the rail and sleepers lifting contract is nearly complete and that the awarding of the tender for the urban sections of the Greenway through New Ross and Ferrybank will take place in late Feb / early March 2021.</p> <p><u>Restart Grant Update:</u> Mr. Martin Prendiville provided an update on the Restart &amp; Restart Plus Grant which was launched by the Government in March and as part of the July Stimulus Package. This Grant provides funding</p>

to rateable businesses to assist with the costs of reopening and is equivalent to the rates bill of 2019. Mr. Prendiville advised that €11.1M had been paid out already with a further €11.4M due to be paid.

Rates Waiver Update:

Mr. Prendiville advised that the total value of the 9-month rates waiver to eligible businesses to year end was €8.6M and that the Government will compensate Kilkenny County Council for this amount.

Tourism Update:

Ms. Martina Comerford advised that an application had been submitted under The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) under Measure 3 for the development of the Biodiversity and Recreational Countryside Park at Dunmore. A Part 8 Planning Applications has also been made. Ms. Comerford also provided details in relation to the Measure 1 and Measure 2 ORIS applications. Following a question from Mr Paul Brophy in relation to Ormonde College, Ms. Comerford informed the meeting that she had contacted Ormonde College and awaited a response.

Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Update:

Ms. Fiona Deegan provided an update of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the LEO for which the SPC provide a monitoring role and advised that take-up on supports had increased dramatically which had increased the workload in the Local Enterprise Office. Enterprise Ireland had provided additional staffing to assist with the following:

- Training Programmes – noting a target of 650 for 2020 with current participants at 1530;
- One to one mentoring – noting a target of 375 with current numbers at 1067;
- Trading on line Vouchers – noting a target of 26 for 2020 with current numbers at 282.

Ms. Deegan advised that at the next meeting she would be in a position to present the full 2020 Outcome and also provide KPIs for 2021 for adoption by the committee.

Ms. Deegan provided an update on the #shopkilkenny campaign, which is an initiative of Kilkenny County Council and Kilkenny Chamber supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2020 with the aim of promoting shopping in Kilkenny City and County via signage and social media, whilst also promoting recipients of the Trading on Line Voucher Scheme.

Ms. Deegan outlined that a big focus currently is Brexit with the key objectives to ensure that local businesses are ready to comply with the new regulations, noting that the LEO is offering a range of Brexit supports through One to One Mentoring Clinics, Webinars and Customs Workshops.

**5. Consideration of Policy Issues:**

Rural Development Plan

Mr. McKeown advised that the Department of Rural and Community Development will publish a draft Rural Development Policy Strategy document in January.

Development Bonds

Mr McKeown provided an update in relation to policy changes sought with regards to development bonds, stating that to date, Kilkenny County Council charged Developers a bond of €5,000 per house. He noted that developers are having difficulty in securing bonds from banks for larger developments and as a result the developers are having to put in cash bonds which results in their cash flow being affected. Kilkenny County Council proposes to accept the following phased bond payments in the case of cash bonds for housing developments with >30 housing units:

- 50% of bond to be lodged on commencement of development; and
- Balance of bond to be lodged when development commences on more than half of the housing units in the development.

The proposed policy change was proposed by Ms. Eileen Moyles seconded by Cllr Michael Doyle and agreed.

	<p>There followed a discussion with a number of contributions. In particular, from Ms Eileen Moyles; Cllr Michael Doyle; Cllr Eugene McGuinness; Cllr Maria Dollard; and Ms Fiona O’Neill. The discussion covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance of open spaces in housing estates. Noted that the Council have responsibility for open spaces as part of the taking-in-charge (TIC) of estates process. Also noted that the Council provide Amenity Grants to resident associations towards the upkeep of open spaces;</li> <li>• issues in relation to telecommunications companies;</li> <li>• process for recovering a bond if necessary and the time limit on completing estates. Noted that a detailed report will be presented to each Municipal District in January with regards to the estates on the TIC list in their respective area.</li> </ul> <p><u>City and County Development Plan:</u></p> <p>Mr. Malone gave a brief overview on the Draft City and County Development Plan. Noted that there is one Plan with two volumes – City and County. The draft will go to public consultation for 10 weeks and there is a dedicated consult website <a href="https://ourplan.kilkenny.ie/">https://ourplan.kilkenny.ie/</a></p> <p>Mr. Malone also advised that there would be information webinars and virtual presentations. Submissions from the public can be made in writing or by email. Owing to the current restrictions, one to one meetings will be facilitated on a request basis only and group meetings will be held virtually. Noted all submissions received must be addressed in a report by the Chief Executive to the Members on the Draft. Any material amendments to the Draft will be subject to a further period of public consultation before the Plan is finally adopted. Mr. Malone also advised that there are targets set out in the Draft with respect to climate change and reducing Carbon Footprint. There followed a discussion with a number of contributions. In particular, from Ms Eileen Moyles; Cllr Eugene McGuinness; and Mr Brophy. The discussion covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Vacant Sites Levy (VSL). Noted that there are currently 30 sites on the register. Also noted that good communication is needed with landowners in relation to the VSL. The current rate of the VSL is 7% of the market value of the site.</li> <li>• Derelict Sites Register. Noted that the Council also maintains a Vacant Homes Register and that 20+ houses have been CPO’d by Kilkenny County Council in recent months with a view to bringing these back into use.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
9.	<p><b>Any other business:</b> None</p>
10.	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting:</b> The proposed dates and times for the 2021 SPC 1 Meetings were agreed. Due to current Covid19 restrictions, there was no decision made on whether meetings will be held in the Council Chamber or Virtually. The Chair extended a thank you to all for their participation in the SPC during the year and he wished everyone a very Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year. The next meeting of SPC1 will take place on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 3.30pm. The meeting concluded at 5.00pm</p>

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

GER FRISBY

Chairman