

Minutes of the Meeting of Strategic Policy Committee (SPC1)
Economic Development, Enterprise Support, Tourism, Planning & Development
Policy
held via MS Teams
Friday 17th September 2021

Present: Cllr. Ger Frisby (Chair), Cllr. John Coonan, Cllr. Michael Doyle, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Cllr Eugene McGuinness, Cllr. Maria Dollard, Cllr. Patrick O Neill, Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, Brian Hamilton, Fiona O Neill, Marion Acreman.

Apologies: Eileen Moyles, Paul Brophy, Deirdre Shine, Bill O’ Keeffe, Martina Comerford

In attendance: Sean McKeown, Martin Prendiville, Fiona Deegan, Denis Malone, Catherine Myers.

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

Item	
1.	<p>Declaration of Interest: There were no Declarations of Interest.</p>
2.	<p>Confirmation of Minutes: The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25th June 2021 were proposed by Cllr. Michael McCarthy, seconded by Cllr. Eugene McGuinness and agreed.</p>
3.	<p>Matters Arising: <u>Decarbonisation Zone (DZ)</u> Mr. Sean McKeown advised that the feedback from the Department has been positive to date but we will hold off on implementation until formal approval is obtained. Changing Places Facility Mr. McKeown advised that the application to be prepared under Call 3 of the URDF, expected in early 2022, will include provision for a Changing Places Facility in the Abbey Quarter.</p>
4.	<p>Progress Report by the Director of Services: The Chair noted that the Progress Report was circulated to all committee members along with the agenda and is taking it as read.</p> <p>Mr. McKeown advised that Waterford City and County Council (WCCC) has recently terminated the contract with Falcon Real Estate Development for the redevelopment of the North Quays SDZ. WCCC are still committed to the regeneration of the North Quays project and intend to go out to the marketplace to secure another development partner. The approved funding of c€108M from Govt sources, including under the URDF, is still secure. Approximately €14M of the URDF funding will go towards the following projects located in Co Kilkenny:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The upgrade of the approach roads to the North Quays (i.e. the Abbey Road and Belmont Road). - The delivery of the Belmont Link Road from the Belmont Road to the Abbey Road. - The upgrade of the N29 Port Road. - Greenway Connectivity to provide for greater access to the Greenway in the Ferrybank area as a smarter travel option for people. <p>Mr. McKeown gave an update on the Greenway . He said the construction of the Greenway is being carried out in 8 lots, the contracts for 3 have been awarded as follows:</p> <p>Lot 1- c3km urban section from Mountelliott to Raheen through New Ross Lot 2 – c2km urban section from Ferrybank to Abbeylands Lot 3- c6km rural section from Raheen to Ballyverneen, Glenmore</p>

Works are progressing well on these sections. Detailed design to be obtained by the end of October on the remaining Lots and they will then go out to tender. Due to delays caused by the Covid-19 restrictions, it is envisaged that it will now be Summer 2023 at the earliest before the Greenway is fully open. Mr. McKeown also advised that the National Greenway Fund is now being managed by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

Ms. Marion Acreman asked a question with regards to the Regional Retail Strategy to which Mr. Denis Malone replied that this matter was raised during the preparation of the City & County Development Plan. It was noted that both Kilkenny County Council and Waterford City and County Council are committed to preparing a Joint Retail Strategy. It was also noted that the Council are liaising with stakeholders involved in the Ferrybank Shopping Centre to have that development put to good use.

Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Update

Ms. Fiona Deegan provided an update on the Outdoor Seating and Accessories for Tourism and Hospitality Scheme, noting that it has been very successful. To date, 159 applications have been submitted through the online portal and 71 of these applications have been approved grant-aid totalling €207,000. The amount of €85,353 has been paid out to the applicants to date. The closing date for the scheme is 30th September 2021 and the deadline for receipt of claims is 31st October 2021.

Ms. Deegan noted that Logistics and Hospitality Sectors are experiencing issues with recruitment at the moment. Careers Kilkenny continues to showcase and promote new job opportunities as they arise.

Ms. Deegan stated that LEO Kilkenny has launched their Autumn Training Programme which will continue to be run predominantly online.

Ms. Deegan noted that the Remote Working Information Seminar took place on Friday 10th September and the aim was to inform people who are considering working remote in Kilkenny, about the supports and opportunities that are available. Cllr. Maria Dollard has set up the Grow Remote Kilkenny Chapter. Candice Firth McDonald provided an insight on what it is like to work in Kilkenny as part of a UK company. Ms Deegan provided information on the 8 remote working hubs planned for Co. Kilkenny (2 in the city and 6 in the county). Funding has been approved to provide 4 remote spaces which are planned to be opened by Christmas. There will be childcare facilities attached to them.

The South East Going Green for Micro Enterprise Conference will be held on the 15th October and the keynote speaker is Duncan Stewart. Funding has been received to assist businesses to implement green strategies to allow them to reduce costs and improve resource efficiency.

National Women's Enterprise Day will take place on Thursday 7th October and Ms. Kay Lyng from K Kajoux Jewels is representing Kilkenny and will form part of the panel discussion.

Ms. Deegan also advised that Kilkenny County Council in conjunction with Carlow County Council conducted a series of Outside Broadcasts with KCLR96FM in various locations in both counties to encourage people to shop local. The prize of €1,500 worth of Radio Marketing will be awarded to a Local Business in due course.

Taste Kilkenny has received funding from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The footage from the recent road-trip with Jacqui Hurley and Jackie Tyrrell will be used in a National Marketing Campaign to promote local producers, hotels and restaurants and market Kilkenny as a Food Tourism Destination (Eat, stay, enjoy Kilkenny)

Tourism Update

Ms Deegan provided an update as follows:

- Kilkenny County Council has received capital investment from Failte Ireland and the Department of Tourism, Arts, Culture, Media, Sports and the Gaeltacht to create and develop an outdoor space for live performances adjacent to the Watergate Theatre and also to provide a weatherproofed outdoor dining space at the Market Yard. Works are due to commence towards the end of 2021.
- Kilkenny County Council has also received funding from Failte Ireland for an Urban Animation Project for the City which will include murals and street lighting.
- Kilkenny County Council has received funding towards the development of a Water Sports Hub, which will be located in the grounds of County Hall and will provide visitors with access to the river for water-based activities, toilets and changing facilities. Kilkenny County Council has progressed to stage 2 of this compliance requirements for this scheme.
- Kilkenny Day will be held on Sunday 10th October and will consist of events across the city and county which will showcase all Kilkenny has to offer. The Kilkenny Cat Walk will be launched on Kilkenny Day. The Kilkenny Cat Walks is a trail of 21 sculptures by local artists which will be located across the City.

Cllr. John Coonan asked about the provision of childcare facilities in the Remote Working Hubs, to which Ms. Deegan advised that three of the remote working hubs would have childcare facilities (2 community and 1 private).

Cllr. Coonan noted concern that there could be anti-social behaviour in the outdoor seating area in the Market Yard, to which Ms. Deegan said that Mr. Tim Butler has been in contact with the Gardai in relation to policing of anti-social behaviour in the City.

Ms. O Neill had a query with regards to disability access and asked was there an Officer in Kilkenny County Council with responsibility for this. Ms. Deegan advised that Ms. Evelyn Graham is the Access Officer in the Council and also noted that all Area Engineers were focussed on the Council's access for all strategy.

5. Presentation from Ms Hazel Peavoy, Walton Institute:

The Chair welcomed Ms. Peavoy, Senior Strategic Business partner at the Walton Institute who provided an update on the Precision Agriculture Centre of Excellence (PACE).

Supported by Kilkenny County Council and Waterford Institute of Technology, PACE is a new digital innovation hub, that will deliver advanced ICT software to the Irish agriculture and food sector, delivering advanced ICT software to the Irish agriculture and food sectors. PACE will be located in the Abbey Quarter.

Ms. Peavoy's presentation was circulated to all committee members following the meeting.

Following questions from contributors at the meeting, Ms. Peavoy advised the following:

- In the short-term there will be 3 employees located in Kilkenny and an increase in employees in the long-term would depend on capital.
- There is a report prepared for Minister Eamon Ryan with regards to the supports available to Farmers with regards to Climate Change.
- There is a number of projects being developed to assist farmers to monitor their carbon footprint.

<p>6.</p>	<p>Consideration of Policy Issues</p> <p>City and County Development Plan</p> <p>Mr. Malone advised that the City and County Development Plan, which is in two volumes (City and County) was adopted by the Elected Members on 3rd September and will come into effect on the 15th October. Climate Change is featured heavily in the plan.</p> <p>Some of the main provisions in the plan include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Mitigation and Adaption • Population Growth • Compact Growth • Public Transport • Rural Housing <p>The Chair thanked Mr. Malone and the Planning Department for all their work on the Plan.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Any Other Business:</p> <p>Mr. McKeown advised that the recently launched, Housing for All Plan, is the Government’s Housing Plan to 2030, and there is likely to be a number of policy related initiatives in connection with same that are likely to be considered by the Committee in due course. . Following a question from Cllr. Maria Dollard with regards to derelict properties, Mr. McKeown advised that Kilkenny County Council has powers to direct property owners to undertake certain works to render properties non-derelict. He said the Council has also used its CPO (Compulsory Purchase Order) powers in recent times to repurpose derelict buildings around the County for social hosing.</p> <p>Cllr. Dollard also queried if there social housing planned for the Abbey Quarter (AQ). Mr. McKeown confirmed that as per the Masterplan housing will be delivered as part of the redevelopment of the AQ. He advised that application being prepared in advance of the URDF Call 3 has a strong focus on delivering housing.</p> <p>Mr. McKeown advised that the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2021 will require Local Authorities to set out in Climate Action Plans on how they will reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 7% per annum by 2030, and by 50% by 2030 and to be Carbon Neutral by 2050. Once Minister Ryan has signed the Order in connection with this part of the Act, Local Authorities will have 12 months to develop their Climate Action Plan. He said this will be a major policy issue for the Committee to consider as part of its work programme.</p> <p>Ms. O Neill asked if the Disability Plan 2008 is to be reviewed by the Council. Mr. McKeown advised that he was aware that the Council had recently adopted a Strategy for Housing for People with a Disability and that he would confirm the position in relation to the Disability Plan and revert at the next meeting.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance at the meeting.</p> <p>The next meeting of SPC1 will take place on Friday 3rd December at 3.30pm in the Council Chambers. The meeting concluded at 5.00pm.</p>

Signed: _____

Date: _____

GER FRISBY
Chairman