

Minutes of the Meeting of Strategic Policy Committee (SPC1)
**Economic Development, Enterprise Support, Tourism, Planning &
Development Policy**
held in the Council Chamber, Kilkenny County Council, John Street, Kilkenny
on Friday 6th March 2020 at 4.00pm

Present: Cllr. Ger Frisby (Chair), Ms. Marion Acreman, Cllr. John Coonan, Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, Cllr. Michael McCarthy, Cllr. Eugene McGuinness, Mr. John Bambrick, Mr. Brian Hamilton, Ms. Annette Jolly, Mr. Paul Brophy, Ms. Eileen Moyles

Apologies: Deirdre Shine

In attendance: Sean McKeown, Fiona Deegan, Martina Comerford, Denis Malone, Ailish Scott

The Chair welcomed the members to the first meeting of 2020 and congratulated former Cllr and member of the SPC - Malcolm Noonan on his recent success in the general election and thanked him for his contribution to the SPC. The Chairman further stated that Malcolm would be replaced by Cllr. Maria Dollard and welcomed Maria on the committee.

The Chair noted that the Standing Orders for SPCs which were adopted by the Council on 20th January were circulated with the Agenda.

1. Declaration of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th December 2019 were proposed by Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. Michael McCarthy and agreed.

3. Matters Arising

Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick expressed his thanks to Fiona Deegan and the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) team on a very successful #careerskilkenny event which took place in the Medieval Mile Museum on 28th December 2019, with approximately 1,000 job seekers in attendance on the day.

4. Progress Report by the Director of Service

Mr. Mc Keown presented the Progress Report stating that the Service Delivery Plan was adopted by the Council on 17th February 2020 which covers all programme areas of the Local Authority. Mr. Mc Keown stated that updates would be provided at future meetings on the implementation of same, noting that SPC1s areas of interest included 4 programme areas as follows:

- PLANNING, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & CONSERVATION;
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT;
- LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE & ENTERPRISE SUPPORT;
- & TOURISM.

PLANNING, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & CONSERVATION

Mr. Mc Keown stated that the core objective is to ensure that the City & County Development Plan and supporting planning and development policies promote sustainable economic growth and a better quality of life for all in Co. Kilkenny and stated that Mr. Denis Malone would make a presentation later in the meeting on same.

Mr. Mc Keown stated that other policy considerations for this SPC to review in 2020 were:

- Review of Development Contribution Scheme;
- An Active Land Management team to co-ordinate vacant sites and derelict sites legislation;
- Review of the Register of Protected Structures (RPS).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Mc Keown stated that the core objective is to promote County Kilkenny as an attractive location to invest in taking cognizance of actions set out in the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) whilst working collaboratively with agencies such as the IDA and Enterprise Ireland.

Mr. Mc Keown stated that priority initiatives for 2020 were:

- Invest Kilkenny website – to attract more foreign direct investment (FDI);
- Abbey Quarter & Belview Port;
- TUSE Campus;
- PACE & C4D;
- National Design Centre;
- URDF Application Call 2.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

Mr. Mc Keown stated that the core objective is to promote entrepreneurship and small business and that Ms. Deegan would make a presentation on the Local Enterprise Development Plan later in the meeting.

TOURISM

Mr. Mc Keown stated that tourism is a critical industry for Kilkenny with approximately 1 in 6 of the labour force employed in the sector. he said the core objective will be to maintain Kilkenny's position as the finest Cultural and Heritage destination in Ireland taking cognizance of Kilkenny's Statement of Tourism Strategy and Work Programme 2017 – 2022. Mr. Mc Keown stated that Ms. Comerford would make a presentation on the Kilkenny Orientation Study later in the meeting.

Mr. Mc Keown stated that other priority projects for 2020 included:

- Kilkenny Greenway;
- Unified attraction at the Tholsel and Medieval Mile Museum;
- Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme across the County;
- Festival Development.

The Chair stated that Mr. Brian Tyrrell was retiring in the coming weeks and is being replaced by Ms. Comerford in an acting capacity, and welcomed Ms. Comerford to the meeting and thanked Mr. Tyrrell for his contribution over the years and wished him well in his retirement.

Ms. Comerford provided the committee with a presentation on the Kilkenny Orientation Strategy covering the following:

- Key Findings;
- Key Recommendations;

- Wayfinding & Signage;
- Mapping – Map Kilkenny;
- Improved Crossings at the Parade & Key Junctions;
- Enlarging the Centre of Gravity;
- Visitor Access to Parking;
- Lighting up the City;
- Funding Opportunities.

5. Consideration of Policy Issues

Mr. Denis Malone provided a presentation on the City & County Development Plan – Local Area Plans and Masterplans, covering the following:

- National Planning Framework;
- Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) 2020;
- City & County Development Plan – process to date;
- Local Area Plans – Ferrybank/Belview 2017, Castlecomer 2018, Callan 2019, Thomastown 2019 & Graiguenamanagh 2020;
- Masterplans – Western Environs; Abbey Quarter - completed 2015; Loughmacask - underway; Fairgreen - initial public consultation to commence in May 2020; St. Canice’s Campus – joint plan with HSE – public consultation April 2020; Ferrybank – consultants to be appointed Qtr. 2, 2020
- Next Steps - complete background work on:
 - Climate Change Objectives
 - Retail strategy
 - Housing strategy
 - Rural Housing Policy
 - Core strategy
 - Renewable energy
 - Heritage
 - Environment
 - Transport

6. Consideration of position papers prepared for the Committee

There were no position papers for discussion.

7. Correspondence

There was no correspondence for consideration.

8. Future Work Programme

Ms. Fiona Deegan circulated a report on the activities of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) outlining Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) under job creation, financial assistance and core and management development training amongst other KPIs, which are agreed with Enterprise Ireland under a Service Level Agreement with Kilkenny County Council and monitored by SPC1.

9. Any other business

The Chair welcomed John Duggan & Paraic Nolan and employees of LoanITT Ltd to the meeting and stated that they had been selected to represent Kilkenny at the National Enterprise Awards 2020. He stated that the National Enterprise Awards were established by the national network of 31 LEO’s, formerly the County Enterprise Boards, and is celebrating its 22nd year in existence, the aim of which is to showcase, encourage and support a culture of enterprise and

entrepreneurship in Ireland. The awards are designed to celebrate the achievements of Ireland's micro-enterprise sector and recognize the achievements of companies supported by the LEOs. The Chair stated that LoanITT Ltd is an innovative new financial technology business which helps customers optimise their choice by creating a credit marketplace. Customers can log onto the LoanITT platform via the web or a mobile app and submit one credit application, which will then be sent to all lenders, returning the different rates that banks are willing to offer that customer. Customers are no longer limited by a standard rate available to everyone and instead have the ability to obtain risk-based pricing based on their individual credit rating report issued by the Central Credit Register. LoanITT Ltd has taken advantage of changes in European Regulations thus allowing them to become an innovative new open banking solution and technology provider to the financial lending market. The company was founded by John Duggan, originally from Tullahought in County Kilkenny and his colleague Pdraig Nolan, originally from Limerick. Both hold a MSC in Computational Finance and have a vast array of managerial experience in the financial sector; including risk & consumer credit, portfolio credit risk management and foreign exchange trading. Prior to the business commencing trading in March 2019, John entered Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur Competition and successfully made it to the National Final of the Competition in the Best Idea Category. Having since launched their company in November 2019, LoanITT has already received credit applications with a value of over €15 million in its first 3 months trading. LoanITT is currently closing its first investment funding round which will be used to accelerate the growth of its technology and open banking solutions to Institutions using credit data. Since launching LoanITT Ltd has hired 5 new staff in the past 3 months with this number to rise to 16 by the end of 2020. Since their inception the Local Enterprise Office Kilkenny has supported their initial growth and development in the form of both financial grant assistance and soft supports. The company has received €7,000 in the form of an investment fund as part of winning the County Final of the Best Idea Category in Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur competition. The company has also been approved €89,164 in the form of priming grants towards third party consultancy costs and salary contribution towards recruitment of new employees. The company has also availed of supports such as mentoring and participated in management development training.

The Chairman made a presentation to LoanITT Ltd and wished them well as they go forward to represent Kilkenny at the National Finals where there will be an announcement of winners from each region as well as the overall winner. The relevant region for Kilkenny also includes finalists from Carlow, Wicklow and Wexford.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of SPC1 to take place on Friday 3rd June 2020 in the Council Chamber at 3.30pm.

The meeting concluded at 6.00pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____

GER FRISBY
Chairman