

Chairman's Report of
Meeting of Economic Development, Enterprise Support and Tourism, Planning and
Development Policy (SPC1)

Held via MS Teams on Friday 4th December 2020

1. A progress report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and had been taken as read. Ms. Fiona Deegan advised that an update of the 13 Strategic Level Actions of the LECP were contained in the progress report and that a full update of all LECP economic actions would be provided at next SPC1 meeting. Mr. Sean McKeown advised that the review and preparation of the LECP is due to commence in 2021, following guidelines from the Department.
2. Mr. McKeown advised that the South East Greenway (incorporating the Kilkenny Greenway) had secured grand-aid of €15.5M under the National Greenway Fund. The Tender for the urban sections of the Greenway are due to be awarded in late February / early March 2021
3. Mr. Martin Prendiville provided an update on the Restart and Restart Plus Grant stating that €11.1M had been paid out with a further €11.4M due to be paid. Mr. Prendiville also advised that the 9-month rates waiver to eligible businesses to year end was €8.6M and the Government would compensate Kilkenny County Council for this amount.
4. 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. Ms. Comerford also provided details in relation to the Measure 1 and Measure 2 ORIS applications
5. Ms. Fiona Deegan provided an update on the following:
 - The KPIs for the Local Enterprise Office, stating that the take-up on supports had increased dramatically in the form of Training Programmes, One to One Mentoring and Trading on Line Vouchers. Due to the increase on the take up of supports, Enterprise Ireland has provided 2 additional staff members.
 - Brexit supports available Customs Training Workshops, One to One Mentoring Clinics and Webinars.
 - #ShopKilkenny Campaign, 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 to promoting shopping in Kilkenny City and County.

Ms. Deegan also advised that at the next SPC1 Meeting she will be in a position to present the full 2020 outcome and KPIs for 2021 for adoption by the committee.

6. Mr. McKeown, advised that the Department of Rural and Community Development will publish a draft Rural Development Policy Strategy Document in January.
7. Mr. McKeown provided an update on the policy changes sought with regards to development bonds which were proposed by Ms. Eileen Moyles and seconded by Cllr. Michael Doyle, as follows:

Kilkenny County Council will 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 discussion also covered:

- The maintenance of open spaces in housing estates, noting that the Council has a responsibility for these spaces as part of the taking-in-charge (TIC) of estates process.
- The issues with telecommunications companies.
- The process of recovering a bond. A report will be sent to each Municipal District in January with regards to the estates on the TIC list in their area.

8. Mr. Denis Malone provided an update on the Draft City and County Development Plan, stating that there is now one plan with two volumes – County and City. Mr Malone advised that it would go for public consultation for 10 weeks and that there is a dedicated consult website <https://ourplan.kilkenny.ie> Mr Malone went through the process.

Mr Malone also advised that there are targets set out in the plan with regards to Climate Change and reducing carbon footprint. Rural Housing Policy, Renewable Energy Strategy and the Transport Plan are all to feature in the Policy for Climate Change.

The discussion also covered:

- 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.
- 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.

9. It was agreed that the next meeting of the SPC1 would take place on Friday 5th March 2021.

CLLR. Ger Frisby

Chairman

Date: _____