

**Chairman's Report of**  
**SPC 1 Meeting of Economic, Enterprise Support, Tourism, Planning and**  
**Development Policy**

**Held via MS Teams on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

1. **Declaration of Interest:** Mr. Brian Hamilton declared that his solicitors (Kenny, Stephenson and Chapman) are in consultation with Kilkenny County Council's John Harte and Co. concerning a number of property and boundary issues between Mr. Hamilton's residence and the Island Mill, which is leased by Kilkenny County Council to the Kilkenny and Carlow Educational and Training Board and also for the granting of a license for the use of his private laneway for the purposes of recreational access to the River Nore.
2. Mr. Denis Malone advised that the Targeted Rate Waiver Scheme which was agreed by Government on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2021 to support certain sectors was extended to include the first quarter of 2022. The value of the waiver is the equivalent value of 25% of the annual rate bill for 2022 for eligible categories of business.
3. With regards to the Abbey Quarter, Mr. Malone gave the following update: Glanbia and O'Neill Foley Accountants had taken tenancies in the Brewhouse and two further businesses were close to finalising agreements, meaning the building will then be fully occupied. He noted further works on the public realm are due to commence in Q1 of 2023. As part of the phase 2, a design team is now in place to progress the further development of the areas adjacent to the Brewhouse. The temporary car park is nearing completion.
4. Mr. Malone gave an update on the North Quay SDZ, noting that the main construction tender for the public realm and infrastructure elements of the development had a return date of 17<sup>th</sup> June and these submissions were currently being accessed. The upgrade of the approach roads to the North Quays and the delivery of the link road are currently at design stage and should go for planning at the end of this year. Mr. Malone noted that in this case a Part 10 planning application to An Bord Pleanala will need to be prepared.
5. Ms. Aileen McGrath gave an update from the Local Enterprise Office, noting that with regards to financial assistance, 50% of budget approvals capacity has been approved to date. Ms. McGrath also noted that the first Agile Innovation Grant had been approved to a Kilkenny based business. This is a relatively new grant fund aimed at supporting small business to carry out research and development on their products or services.
6. Ms. McGrath provided the following update on Tourism activities. The Kilkenny Cat Walk ended in May 2022 with an auction of the Cats. The South East Food Stories Initiative was launched on 13<sup>th</sup> June to help promote the wide variety of food producers, providers and makers. This pilot programme is a collaborative project of the 5-local authority-based Tourism Officers and is supported by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. At the recent Horizon Irish Open in Mount Juliet, Kilkenny Tourism showcased Kilkenny as a destination, while Made In Kilkenny and Taste Kilkenny were represented at this event.

7. Ms. McGrath advised that consultants, Turley & Co have been appointed to assist with the delivery of the LECP were working on an agreed timeline for project closure by April 2023. A meeting of the Advisory Steering Group took place on June 9th. Turley and Co. are currently drafting the higher-level goals of the LECP which needs to be agreed by the end of July to ensure the tight timeframe is maintained. Ms. McGrath added that it is proposed to hold a joint meeting of this SPC1 and the LCDC via MS Teams on the morning of July 21st to receive a presentation on and agree these draft high-level goals for the public consultation process.
8. Mr. Malone advised that following on from the adoption of the City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 and before it came into effect on the 15<sup>th</sup> October, the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) wrote to the Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage recommending a Draft Ministerial Direction in relation to Sections 11.4.1, 11.5.1 and Figure 11.4 of the Development Plan (relating to Wind Energy). The Minister issued a draft direction to the Council on the 15<sup>th</sup> October and this went on public display and the Chief Executive prepared a report, which was considered by a special meeting of the Elected Members on the 6<sup>th</sup> December. It was then delivered to the OPR and the Minister. The OPR considered the report and made further recommendations to the Minister. The Minister has yet to agree on the OPR recommendations and there is no time limit on the Minister's decision.

Mr. Malone provided an update on the following:

- There has been a drop off in planning applications over the last 6 months and added that applications are down 20% on last year (June 2021 v June 2022).
- There are currently 29 vacant sites on the register.
- There are currently 13 sites on the Derelict sites register at the moment.
- There are currently 2 grant schemes; - Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) and the Historic Structures Fund (HSF). Four conservation grants have been awarded for 2022 as follows:

Old Ennisag House - €50,000

Kells House - €38,000

St Canice's Cathedral - €27,820

Balief Farmhouse - €10,000

9. Ms. O'Neill proposed that the notice, agenda and minutes of the meetings should be electronically sent and no longer be posted in hardcopy to the committee. The Chair advised that the committee would be contacted to survey which method they would prefer – electronically only or by letter and electronically.
10. The Chair advised that the next SPC 1 meeting which was due to take place on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September will now be rescheduled to a later date in September. Ms McGrath to advise the committee on when the September meeting will take place.

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

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**Cllr. Ger Frisby**  
**Chairman**