

Chairman's Report of

Meeting of Economic Development, Enterprise Support and Tourism (SPC1)

Held via MS Teams on Friday 3rd July 2020.

1. The Chair, Cllr Ger Frisby extended congratulations to Malcom Noonan TD on his recent appointment as Minister of State at the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.
2. Mr McKeown outlined some of the challenges to the local economy at the moment, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and stated that the main focus is to support businesses impacted. He provided an update on the supports available from the local authority, including the 3 Months Rates Waiver Scheme and the Restart Grant.
Mr McKeown said the Council will continue to promote Kilkenny as an attractive location for investment and he stated it was worth noting that UMPC had announced plans to open an operation in Kilkenny, leading to employment of up to 60 people. The meeting was also informed that two applications had been submitted under Phase 2 of the URDF. Update of same to be provided at a future SPC meeting.
3. Ms Martina Comerford outlined the work of the newly established Kilkenny Tourism Recovery Taskforce which was set up in partnership with Failte Ireland and Kilkenny County Council in June 2020. This Taskforce comprises of stakeholders, local state agencies and members of the tourism industry. The Recovery Action Plan will focus on three phases of Tourism Recovery – *Destination Recovery, Destination Restart and Destination Resilience*.
Ms Comerford also stated that the Re-Opening Kilkenny Survey, produced by the Local Enterprise Office, showed that of those surveyed, the majority were happy to return to shopping in Kilkenny and also to welcome visitors back to Kilkenny. It was noted that the temporary one-way system is one of a number of early measures introduced in Kilkenny City Centre to help support the re-opening of business and attractions and to instil confidence in terms of social distancing.
Ms Comerford also stated that Kilkenny Tourism had launched a local promotional campaign which would run across the following radio Stations – KCLR96FM, WLR and Midlands 103FM from 13th July 2020.
Ms Comerford also advised that they would continue to work with Festival and Event organisers to keep Festivals alive by cross promoting events on visitkilkenny.ie
4. Ms Fiona Deegan provided an update on the various supports that are offered through the Local Enterprise Office, namely Business Continuity Voucher, Trading Online Voucher, Online Training Programmes & Webinars.
Ms Deegan also provided details of the #ShopKilkenny campaign which was run in conjunction with Carlow County Council and KCLR96FM. This included a number of outside broadcasts across Kilkenny and the initiative was aimed at allowing retailers to promote their businesses and to encourage people to shop local.
Ms Deegan provided details with regard to the Kilkenny Welcome Team which consists of volunteers that would be out and about on the streets of Kilkenny assisting visitors with questions they may have.

Ms Deegan advised the meeting that Threesixty Marketing had been appointed following an RFQ to develop a new umbrella marketing brand for Kilkenny, which would include the development of a new website and a co-ordinated brand for Kilkenny.

5. Mr Denis Malone provided an update on the commencement of the City and County Development Plan, stating that the process had recommenced on the 11th May last, following deferral due to Covid-19. The next step is to produce a Draft Plan to include the Core Strategies. It is envisaged that the draft will be available for review by the elected members in September 2020 and following approval by the Council it will go for public consultation in November/December 2020. It is expected to be adopted in July 2020.

Mr Malone provided an update on the following projects:

- Graiguenamanagh /Tinnahinch Local Area Plan – Will be ready for public consultation in September 2020.
- Loughmascask – This is not ready for public consultation.
- St Canice’s Campus – Stalled due to Covid-19, but due to commence soon.
- Fairgreen – This may not recommence till 2021.

6. It was agreed that the next meeting of SPC1 would take place on Friday 18th September 2020.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

CLLR. Ger Frisby

Chairman