

**Minutes of Meeting of Planning & Development, Heritage, Community, Arts & Culture)
Strategic Policy Committee (SPC3) held on the 21st September, 2016, 2015 at 3.30 pm
in Rothe House, Parliament Street, Kilkenny.**

Chairman: Cllr. John Brennan

In Attendance: Cllr. P Dunphy, Cllr. D. Kennedy, J. Hurley, J. Burke, M. Brennan, , A. M. Walsh Acting DOS, Nicolaas Louw, D. Breen, D. Ledwidge, R. Ryan, B. Strappe.

Apologies: Cllr. P. Fitzpatrick, J. Coyne & M. Butler

Item 1 – Site Visit to Rothe House

The meeting was preceded by a guided tour of Rothe House and Gardens by Grace Fagan, Executive Manager Rothe House.

Item 2 - Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 15th June 2016 were proposed by Cllr. D. Kennedy and seconded by John Hurley.

Item 3 – National Taking in Charge Initiative Update

A.M. Walsh advised the group that Kilkenny County Council, further to its application for funding under the National Taking in Charge Initiative in May, has been granted an allocation of €229,000 for 9 of the 10 estates applied for.

Works have already commenced on one of the estates and the taking in charge of same was initiated at the Council meeting on Monday 19th September. Works required on other estates have gone to tender. It is required that all works are completed by the end of December in order to claim the full amount allocated.

Kilkenny County Council is also prioritising works in developments that had bonds provided by Anglo Irish Bank now IBRC (in Special Liquidation) as funding may be provided by the Liquidator to cover some works.

A discussion followed with contributions being made by Cllr. D. Kennedy and Mary Brennan.

Item 4 – Proposed Variation to County Development Plans

D. Breen gave a powerpoint presentation on the proposed variations to the County Development Plan and the Kilkenny City and Environs Development Plan which are on public display at the moment and open to submissions until 30th September, 2016. Contributions to the discussion that followed were made by Cllr. Kennedy and M. Brennan.

Item 5 – Town & Village Renewal

Anne Maria Walsh gave an outline of the Town & Village Renewal Scheme that has been launched by the Department. Funding of €380,000 has been provisionally granted which must be matched by 15% funding by the Local Authority. The scheme is aimed solely at towns with a population of less than 10,000 and a maximum of 8 projects can be included in the application.

The final date for submission of the application by the Local Authority is Friday 30th September. It was agreed at the Council meeting on the 19th September that 4 schemes/towns would be targeted in order to achieve the maximum results for the chosen towns. Concerns were raised by M. Brennan in regard to the towns, such as Thomastown and Callan that have not been included. It is hoped that this scheme will be continued on an annual basis and further towns can be included next year. A presentation and workshop with representatives from development groups from each of the four chosen town/villages will take place on Friday 23rd September in County Hall.

Item 6 – Heritage Plan

D. Ledwidge commenced her presentation by giving the members an overview on some of the events that took place during Heritage Week at the end of August. The overall number of events has in fact doubled since 2007. Cllr. J. Brennan commended D. Ledwidge for all her work in making this week such a success.

D. Ledwidge continued her presentation by informing the group about The Kilkenny Fieldnames Project, an ongoing project for the past 6 years and which has been co-funded by the Heritage Council. The book on Kilkenny Fieldnames will be officially launched in the Newpark Hotel on 12th October. Ms. Ledwidge made special reference to the team of volunteers who have worked tirelessly bringing this project to fruition.

Ms. Ledwidge gave an update on Culture 2025, the national framework policy which is currently at draft stage, outlining the background behind it and its objectives and aims. She welcomed the fact that “Heritage” features more prominently in the second draft of this policy. The document is open for submissions until the end of this month and Kilkenny County Council is currently preparing its submission on same.

Concerns were raised by M. Brennan as to the Local Authorities policy on dealing with Japanese knotweed and its implications on access by the public to heritage sites. All of the questions and concerns were addressed by Ms. Ledwidge.

Item 7 – Update on Estate Management Grant Scheme

Ronan Ryan gave an update on the Estate Management Grant Scheme which is available for Local Authority housing developments. He outlined some of the works carried out to date under this scheme. A discussion followed with contributions being made by Cllr. P. Dunphy, Cllr. D Kennedy and M. Brennan. Cllr J. Brennan commended R. Ryan for all his work administering this scheme.

Item 8 – Any other business

- A. Maria Walsh advised the group that all future correspondence in regard to meetings will be sent electronically and asked all external members present to confirm their e-mail addresses.
- Cllr. P. Dunphy expressed concern that Kilkenny County Council has no policy in place in regard to solar farms. This concern was seconded by Cllr. D Kennedy. N. Louw advised that national guidelines are being drawn up by the Department and upon receipt of these the Planning Authority will look at introducing policy on solar farms.

Item 9 – Fix date for next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on the 18th January 2017 at 3.00 pm