

**Minutes of Meeting of Planning & Development, Heritage, Community, Arts & Culture)
Strategic Policy Committee (SPC3) held on the 15th June, 2016, 2015 at 3.00 pm in the
Council Chamber**

Chairman: Cllr. John Brennan

In Attendance: Cllr. M. Noonan, Cllr Patrick McKee, Cllr. P Dunphy, John Hurley, M. Brennan, Paul O'Brien, M. Melia DOS, A. M. Walsh SEO, Denis Malone, Nicolaas Louw, Lindsey Butler, Bríd Hynes, Mairéad Phelan LGMA, Aisling Nash ASO.

Apologies: Cllr. P. Fitzpatrick

The meeting commenced with Cllr. Pat Dunphy chairing as Cllr John Brennan was delayed.

Item 1 - Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 13th April 2016 were proposed by Cllr. P McKee and seconded by Cllr. M Noonan.

Item 2 – Building Control – Ms Mairéad Phelan, Local Government Management Agency, Project Manager

Cllr Pat Dunphy welcomed Ms Phelan. Ms Phelan gave a PowerPoint presentation on the main areas of building control. She gave an overview on Building Control Act, Building Control Regulations, Minimum criteria, administrative side and the framework for Local Authorities. She stressed that the onus to comply with building control is solely the responsibility of the owner of the building. Ms Phelan is involved with the National Building Control Project which aims to improve consumer protection standards. The governance of the board is represented by every area involved in building. They are collecting data on a national system, inspections should be standardised throughout the country. Cllr J Brennan thanked Ms Phelan for an excellent presentation. Cllr M Noonan commented on how fantastic it is to see Shared Service and asked how this system fits in with people doing their own build or building passive houses. Ms Phelan said that self builders have to sign as owner and builders and must comply with minimum standard regulations. Cllr P Dunphy commented that we need to be careful to keep a good balance of costs and doing the right thing. Denis Malone thanked Ms Phelan and said he can see an improvement since 2014. We need to have a culture of compliance by doing it right the first time to prevent having problems in the future.

Item 3 – Report from Community Development Section

Lindsey Butler, Senior Community Development Officer gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Local Economic and Community Plan which provides a road map for the next 6 years for the local economic and community development of County Kilkenny. This is a function under the Local Government Reform Act 2014. She outlined the structure, stages of preparation and implementation of the plan. Cllr M Noonan commended Lindsey and Bríd for their tremendous work on the plan. Cllr J. Brennan also thanked them and commented on how difficult it is to get money into rural areas.

Bríd Hynes gave a presentation on the Children and Young Peoples Services Committee (CYPSC). This is a diverse county level committee working together for children and young people aged from 0-25 years old. This committee feeds into the LECP and report bi-

annually to LCDC. They have a country wide directory of services for children. Cllr J Brennan wished Bríd continued success in CYPSC.

Item 4 – Solar Farms

Nicolaas Louw gave a PowerPoint presentation on solar farms. He explained that we have been getting an increased volume of applications for them and how Ireland needs to meet a 2020 target to reduce energy levels by 40%. Ireland will be fined if we don't meet targets. Industry is interested in Kilkenny as it is a preferred location in the Country. Prior to December 2015 the planning office had no enquiry or anyone interested in solar energy farms. Currently we have 4 applications (1 granted, 1 refused, 1 requested further information, 1 pending). Paul O'Brien suggested that the Council should not rush decisions. Denis Malone advised that Kilkenny County Council have policies for bio-diversity. Contributions were received from Paul O'Brien and Mary Brennan in relation to the following;

- Visual impact on the country side
- Responsibility for Natural Heritage
- Hedge Cutting
- Use of Agricultural land
- REPs Scheme

Item 5 – Vacant Site Levy

Ms. Anne-Maria Walsh gave a presentation outlining the primary purpose of the vacant site levy – to address housing supply. Kilkenny County Council has an obligation to have a register of vacant sites by 2017. It is hoped this will promote development of land that is underutilised. A levy of 3% of the value of the land will be applied from 1st January 2019. Cllr P McKee asked if this has to be paid each year. Anne-Maria Walsh said it would but if the site becomes used the levy will be gone.

Item 6 – Draft Development Contribution Scheme

Ms. Anne-Maria Walsh advised the meeting that the draft development contribution scheme discussed at the last SPC has been advertised and a number of submissions received. The submissions have been reviewed and the Chief Executive has prepared her report for the June Meeting. She is recommending adoption of the scheme without amendments. The main issues raised in the submission relate to increase to €10,000 per MW is unjustified, no incentive to encourage renewable developments. Another submission requested charge to be increased to €20,000 per MW.

Item 7 – National Taking in Charge Initiative

Ms. Anne-Maria Walsh informed the group that the national fund available is €10m, the provisional allocation for Kilkenny is €172,000. The purpose of this fund is to assist the acceleration of taken in charge of residential developments. The Council have prioritised 10 estates. The Council have requested funding of €254,000.

Item 8 – Any other Business

- a) Cllr J Brennan confirmed that SPC3 sent a letter to D Dalton, Dept of Environment stating our strongest objection to a shared service with Carlow for our library service.
- b) Cllr P Dunphy raised the issue of rural planning and families wanting to live in their home areas, discussion followed.

Item 9 – Fix date for next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 21st September 2016 at 3pm in Rothe house. Cllr P McKee will arrange this and a tour of Rothe House.