

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC POLICY  
COMMITTEE (SPC) MEETING IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER/ (MICROSOFT  
TEAMS/HYBRID) HELD ON MONDAY 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025 2.30pm**

**Present:** Cllr. Caroline Winstanley, Michael Nicholson, Máire Halvey, Cllr. Melanie Corrigan, Cllr. John Snell, Cllr. Pat Kennedy, Irene Sweeney, Niamh Wogan, Cllr. Miriam Murphy (Hybrid)

**Apologies:** Lorraine Dunne, Mai Quaid, Colm Moules

**In Attendance:** Susanne Hall, Stephanie Lang, Izzie Kinsella, Marion Van Der Wel, Diarmuid O' Keeffe, Eilidh Dunlop, Laura O' Callaghan (Hybrid) (Disability Federation Ireland)

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Chairperson Cllr. Caroline Winstanley opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

**Item 1. Adoption of the minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2024 were noted and adopted by Cllr. Melanie Corrigan and Niamh Wogan. Máire Halvey gave the list of apologies.

**Item 2. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the last meeting.

**Item 3. Presentation by Laura O' Callaghan from Disability Federation Ireland**

Laura O'Callaghan, the Chairperson of DISC gave a hybrid presentation on DISC's strategy which is in place for 2024 to 2028. She covered the actions of the strategy and whether they are in progress, outstanding, or complete. Laura talked about different disability experiences, with people with disabilities coming in and out of the services. Laura added that the Disability Federation are also conducting training on things such as Plain English through NALA, as per some Councillors requests, and there is also Disability Equality Courses been run by the Federation. Laura also stated there are EU Guidelines on accessibilities coming into effect this year. In terms of Strategy, it is a hope to get numbers up to 6% of staff employed who have a disability.

**Item 4. Presentation by Stephanie Lang on Co. Wicklow Age Friendly Strategy**

Stephanie Lang gave a presentation on the Age Friendly Strategy, including what does age friendly entail, and its 9 different themes, and the actions which are complete, in progress or to be completed. Stephanie noted that the Co. Wicklow Age Friendly Strategy 2023-2027 is a comprehensive document, and the actions are ambitious but measurable, and there is continuous feedback to the Age friendly Alliance. She noted that Wicklow County Council will continue to embed the Age friendly Ethos into our daily business. Stephanie also noted that the older persons AGM took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2024 in the Arklow Bay Hotel with over 200 attendees and speakers included The Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly and the Cathaoirleach Cllr. Paul O' Brien. Stephanie mentioned Information Clinics have also took place in Arklow & Wicklow informing the older person of the Mobility Aid Grants that are available to improve their homes. The Chair asked for a Traffic Light system report on the Age Friendly Strategy to be circulated.

#### **Item 7: Workplan for the SPC for 5 Years**

The chair decided to adjust the Workplan into Agenda at this stage and opened it to the floor.

Michael Nicholson gave an update on the Local Community Safety Partnership. Interviews will be held soon for the Grade 7 position and the Chairperson has been selected but they are awaiting the Minister of Justice to sign off on it.

Michael noted that the first task of the Local Community Safety Partnership is to prepare a safety plan and that the SPC will have significant input into this. There was a discussion on this regarding the scope of the SPC in the process, as well as the public consultations that will be carried out. Michael Nicholson clarified that there will still be policing input into the Partnership, but it is much broader than the JPC remit and will include all aspects of public safety. The Chair stated that the SPC members will need to knowledge themselves in order to work on the safety plan. She suggested that they invite speakers to the meetings who are doing positive work in this area and asked members to suggest speakers to invite. It was also suggested that MECPATHS could be invited as they are a good example of different community groups working together, and due to the trafficking issues in Bray.

The Chair enquired about other strategies that are in place and Michael Nicholson stated that during the lifetime of the SPC, a new Age Friendly Strategy and DISC strategy will be needed. The Chair requested an update of areas requiring supports within the strategies.

There was further discussion on what will be included in the Local Community Safety Partnership Strategy and several topics such as road safety, addiction, anti-social behaviour, lighting, and road issues, as well as a lack of sporting facilities.

Michael noted that the new Government must adopt the legislation, and work begins soon after the recess.

Michael noted that every County is different but in mind, he added we do public consultation, urban drug issues and rural crime are big on the agenda. He added that there will be meetings and feedback, and it all stages the SPC will be involved.

#### **Item 5: Project Ireland 2040 Rural Regeneration Programme Updates**

The chair asked if there were any questions on the report updates, and no questions were asked of these matters.

#### **Item 6: Other Updates**

The chair asked for any questions on these issues.

Cllr. Melanie Corrigan asked for an update on the Healthy Communities Programme. Izzie Kinsella gave an update on Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme regarding the funding awarded for a Housing Officer for the Bray Travellers Community Development Group, as well as the feasibility study. Mary Immaculate College have been employed to do a pre and post evaluation of the play therapy project and a play therapist has been hired. Izzie stated that she is working on projects with Niamh Wogan. Michael added that it was very positive news that Co. Wicklow were awarded this funding, as only 4 Counties were awarded in the Country.

In terms of the Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme, Marion Van der Wel noted that she is getting more referrals and connecting with older people and helping them apply for the Housing Adaptation Grants. Marion also noted that the care and repair team is due to be set up soon. Michael added that Marion is getting the highest referrals in the Country, which is very positive news.

Michael Nicholson gave an update on CYPSC and that a project lead for the child poverty projects FACES will be appointed soon. The national review of CYPSC is underway and the 2025-2027 plan is also underway.

Michael Nicholson also raised Storm Eowyn and noted that because Wicklow did not get the worst of the storm, the Council would be preparing an inventory of resources to lend to other local authorities. Miriam Murphy noted that it is possible to inform the ESB if you use a medical electric device in case of power outages. She

suggested this information could be put on the council website to let more people know about it. There was a further discussion on the storm and what resources could be available to people such as libraries and community groups that have generators. Irene Sweeney noted that elsewhere in Ireland Sports Clubs are using generators to help people charge phones and other devices in times of power cuts. Michael added that you can also charge phones and devices at the libraries if you have no power. Irene noted that maybe the libraries should have backup generators too just in case of power cuts. Michael agreed but noted that generators are in very short supply at the moment.

- The chair thanked those in attendance and closed the meeting.

Signed:

Caroline Winstanley

Date:

24/03/25

**Cllr. Caroline Winstanley,  
Chairperson.**