

## First steps in exciting redevelopment plans for Diageo site in Kilkenny



*Kilkenny County Council Chairman, Cllr. Pat Millea, Robert Murphy Alan Dempsey of Diageo Ireland, together with Acting Chief Executive John Mulholland, and Philip O'Neill, Council Director of Services at the signing of the contract for the purchase of the Diageo site by Kilkenny County Council.*

Kilkenny County Council and Diageo Ireland this week announced the official signing of the contract for the former Smithwicks Brewery site in Kilkenny City, following an agreement in principle reached in 2012

The contract signing is a significant event for the citizens of Kilkenny City & County and it allows Kilkenny County Council to move forward with the redevelopment opportunity which this site presents.

Kilkenny County Council is developing a masterplan for the Smithwicks site with proposals to include the provision of a Linear Park on the banks of the Nore, the conservation of historic buildings on the site, landscaped spaces including a new public square and sustainable and energy efficient strategies for individual buildings on the overall site.

In what the Council describes as the “first steps” in the development process, contracts were also signed between Kilkenny County Council and Reddy Architecture and Urbanism for the commencement of design proposals for the Mayfair and Brewhouse buildings on the brewery site. These buildings will require sensitive design to bring them up to contemporary standards, including energy efficiency and flexibility of use.

Initial expressions of market interest have been received, indicating active interest in the exciting possibilities of converting industrial heritage buildings into modern offices and work spaces. The Brewhouse building can accommodate 5,000sq m of office space, and the challenge here is to design a contemporary use into a sensitive industrial heritage setting.

The design for both buildings will go through a Part 8 Planning process with a high level of public consultation and collaboration.

A further and somewhat more vital part of the plan is the potential to see it develop as a location for Creative industries, Research and Development, Incubation Clusters, University Faculties and Cultural Institutions.

Kilkenny County Council has already made progress with certain aspects of the plan as both Waterford and Carlow Institutes of Technology have agreed in principle to establish a 10,000 sq. ft Research Centre at the site which could provide for an expanded Technology and Software Systems Group (TSSG) which the Council and the TSSG have established at St. Kieran's College and which is in need of expansion.

Developing the former Smithwicks site into one which will compete for the business of both national and international companies is expected to involve the investment of €30m - €35m. To fund this development, Kilkenny County Council has already undertaken discussion with a number of banks and investment companies to establish if they would be in a position to either fully or partially fund the proposals. It is likely however that funding will come from a mixture of investment companies or developers, loans from banks and indeed the Council's own resources which will allow the site to develop on a phased basis. Some development will take place through a public private partnership between an Investment company and the Council.

The masterplan will identify implementation mechanisms to ensure the delivery of the development on a phased basis, by the public and private sectors, over the next 10 to 15 years, subject to the vitality of the local and national economy.

In summary the Abbey Creative Quarter presents Kilkenny with a unique opportunity among Irish and European cities to create a modern intervention adjoining its medieval core which enhances its cultural heritage, improves its sustainability and allows it to compete in the knowledge economy of the twenty first century.



**Kilkenny County Council Chairman, Cllr Pat Millea, with Acting Chief Executive John Mulholland, Ronan Kelleher and Mark Kennedy of Reddy Architecture and Urbanism, and Brian Tyrrell, S.E.O., at the signing of contracts for the design of the Mayfair and Brewhouse buildings**

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Figure 1 Diageo site, Kilkenny



Figure 2 Digital image of restored Mayfair building at Parliament Street (draft option)



**Figure 3 Digital image of refurbished Brewhouse (draft option)**