

KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

CLIMATE ACTION

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE 1ST DECEMBER 2021

10AM VIA MS TEAMS

Attendance: Cllr. Peter Hamilton (Chair), Cllr. Aidan Farrell, Ali Sherdian, Alan Dunney, Allan Shine, Cllr. Anne Connelly, Cllr. Bill Clear, Cllr. Brendan Wyse, Cllr. Ciara Galvin, Ciara O’Flynn, Cllr. Chris Pender, Cllr. Colm Kenny, Donal Hodgins, Cllr. Fiona McLoughlin Healy, Joe Boland, Cllr. Joseph Neville, Judith Browne, Cllr. Kevin Duffy, Cllr. Mark Stafford, Cllr. Naoise Ó Cearúil, Cllr. Noel Connolly, Cllr. Paul Ward, Paula O’Rourke, Steve Regan, Cllr. Susanne Doyle.

- 1. To note the draft Minutes of the Climate Action Strategic Policy Committee held on 12th May 2021 (copy attached)**

The minutes were accepted.

- 2. To consider any matters arising from the minutes**

No matters arising.

- 3. To receive presentation from Donal Hodgins on Sustainable Transport and Active Travel**

Cllr. Hamilton introduced Donal Hodgins, who is the Senior Engineer in the Transport Section. Donal introduced his presentation which aimed to give an overview of the Transport Section and its work on Sustainable Transport and Active Travel. He began by briefing the group on the importance of aligning national strategies concerning transport, such as the National Development Plan 2021-2030, the National Planning Framework and the Climate Action Plan.

He continued stating that under the National Development Plan 2021-2030, there are five strategic investment priorities to be developed in Greater Dublin, including Active Travel, Metro Link, BusConnects, Light Rail, DART+. Donal related how these projects will affect transport in Kildare, for instance the Metro Link will connect Maynooth, Glasnevin and Dublin Airport in addition to linking with Naas and Newbridge. The proposed BusConnects route will have connections with North Kildare and Park & Ride facilities will be focused along the M4 & M7.

He briefed the group on some of the specific functions of the Sustainable Transport section, such as implementing improvements to significant walking and cycling routes in Kildare, facilitating the delivery of public transport improvements, and increasing the rate of delivery for segregated cycling infrastructure. He presented an organisational chart of the section and briefly outlined the existing and new projects under the ‘Sustainable Transport Measure Grants: 2021 Allocation’. Finally, he concluded with a progress

chart on the NTA Programmes. Currently, ten schemes are at construction, ten schemes are at the preliminary design stage and three are at the detailed design stage.

A question-and-answer session ensued which focused on a number of aspects, including:

- Progress with the recent stimulus programme
- Balance between North & South of the county in terms of project prioritisation
- The timeline for certain projects
- Design aspects related to cycling schemes
- Whether the new team had access to sufficient resources

A general decision ensued wherein Donal, the Senior Engineer, asserted that there was significant prioritisation for cycling infrastructure which is backed by the Minister Ryan and NTA currently. There were a range of practical challenges in relation to design considerations including real time data, integration with other modes, the need for local consultation and possible conflicts with biodiversity logistics.

A further discussion ensued regarding specific design challenges in relation to the provision of segregated cycle lanes (which were currently were a priority). The need to learn from previous projects was also emphasised.

4. To discuss mainstreaming of Climate Action across all SPC's

The meeting noted the co-ordination role of the CPG, as well as the significant organizational progress that had been made in recent years. In addition, it was noted that, as agreed at the CPG, climate action would be featured across SPCs.

5. To receive presentation from Urban Foresight (Consultancy) on Draft Just Transition Plan for West Kildare (11.00am) (This item is to be made viewable by all Councillors)

The meeting was addressed by Sam Nair and Graham Thrower of Urban Foresight. By way of brief background, this consultancy is primarily focused on delivering action orientated plans particularly in the topics of economic development and sustainable transition.

At the outset, Sam set out the main points of the Local Just Transition Plan for West Kildare, as follows:

- Where we are:
 - What a Just Transition is
 - The three key themes in the plan for West Kildare: Economy, Society & Environment
 - The Just Transition outcomes
 - The data gaps in the plan, including precarious work, mental health and wellbeing, community cohesion and resilience, environmental rehabilitation/ remediation, renewable energy generation
 - The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in West Kildare
 - The Just Transition index created using Just Transition outcomes and data to benchmark performance against the national average.

- Approach:
 - Co-creation and bottom-up approach was taken by consulting with key organisations in Kildare
 - Actions have been co-created with stakeholders and focus on overcoming challenges and capturing opportunities
 - A total of 15 actions delivers the outcomes of Economy, Environment & Society. They are grouped by three opportunity headings: community and business development, nature and heritage-based tourism, energy efficiency and generation
- Next steps:
 - Develop an implementation plan for the actions and set up a monitoring and evaluation plan.

Cllr. Galvin recommended Urban Foresight to consult with the Unions and the Idea Institute as part of its stakeholder list.

Judith commented that the legal framework necessary for engaging with Bord na Mona will exclude certain community groups. Additionally, including data from Maynooth and Celbridge has skewed the economic metrics. She also stated that there appears to be an imbalance between local economic and biodiversity metrics. Graham replied stating that the evidence base has a lot more granular details regarding engaging with Bord Na Mona, and ultimately as Bord na Mona are the legal custodian of land they will be engaged in accordance with this.

Cllr. Wyse commented that the environment section in the report is lacking detail on rewilding, rehabilitation and restoration of ecosystems. Cllr. Wyse also made reference to the updated position of the Greenways and Blueways and agreed with Judith's point that Maynooth skewed the data. Going forward, he suggested that a committee which included a smaller network of community representatives could be used to engage with Bord Na Mona.

Cllr. Duffy stated that West Kildare needs to be defined more, and there is notably less emphasis given to areas such as Rathangan and Monasterevin. He supported the comments made about biodiversity and suggested case studies would be beneficial for the 'one stop shop' action.

Cllr. McLoughlin Healy disagreed with Cllr. Duffy, stating that there should be an emphasis on towns such as Newbridge. She continued stating that data on mental health is important to include and possibly could be sourced from the likes of the HSE, An Garda Síochána or the Family Resource Centre. In her view, the challenges were more immediate. In addition, there was no reference to the current consultation process relating to [the Curragh Plains initiative](#).

Cllr. Doyle suggested including a map to illustrate the boundaries. She mentioned that the 'one stop shop' action could include a mentoring element as the demographic in these localities are significantly older and engagement with these types of initiatives can wane over time.

Cllr. Stafford urged that this plan should include all relevant bog communities. He raised that Robertstown was previously identified to be included, but is absent from this report.

Sam and Graham thanked everyone for their comments and suggestions which would be incorporated in the next iteration of the plan.

Joe thanked that MDs for coming together and commended them for the quality of their input.

6. To note date of next meeting – To be announced

Ali raised that the delay in the agenda being sent out for the SPC had led to the PPN's Climate Action Meeting being cancelled. She raised the topic of assigning a secretary for the SPC group. She continued by commenting that it would be highly beneficial to get the presentations for the SPCs before the meeting to facilitate higher levels of discussion and conversation. Cllr. McLoughlin Healy seconded this recommendation. Paula apologised for the delay in the agenda being sent out. She had a high level of work built up during the Climate & Energy Week which caused a delay. She continued stating that the draft Just Transition Plan was circulated prior to the meeting but will circulate presentations to members in future where feasible.

Paula, Cllr. Hamilton and Cllr. Galvin are progressing the previously raised issue of LED lights and insect populations that preliminary academic research has identified as being potentially harmful. Cllr. Hamilton is in consultation with the Zoology Department in Trinity College Dublin and Paula has raised the issue internally with the Public Lighting Engineer in the Transport Section.

Cllr. Hamilton thanked the group for the time indulgence and their contributions. The meeting closed at 12:17pm.



CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

AT WORK