

MINUTES

Transportation, Safety and Emergency Services

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Council Chamber

02 September 2021

Attendees:

Councillor Joseph Neville
Councillor Angela Feeney
Councillor Colm Kenny
Councillor Nuala Killeen
Councillor Mark Stafford
Brian Purcell
Gerry Dornan

Also Present

Evelyn Wright, Director of Services
David Reel, A/Senior Engineer
John McGowan, Senior Engineer
Pamela Pender, A/Senior Executive Officer
Michael Hurley, Health and Safety Officer
Donal Hodgins, Senior Engineer
Gillian Whitty, Clerical Officer

Apologies:

Councillor Anne Connolly
Councillor Paul Ward
Declan Keogh, Road Safety, Cycling and Sustainable Transport Officer.
Cormac Browne

Introduction

Cathaoirleach Neville welcomed all the members of the SPC to the September Meeting and expressed his thanks to outgoing A/Director of Services, Celina Barrett, for all her hard work and he welcomed Evelyn Wright as the new Director of Services. Evelyn expressed her thanks to Celina and is looking forward to working with the members of the SPC.

Item 1 – Minutes- 06 May 2021

On the proposal of Councillor Feeney and seconded by Councillor Killeen the minutes of 06 May 2021 were approved and taken as read.

Item 2 – Declarations of Interest

No Comment.

Item 3 – Referrals from Municipal District and Full Council Meetings to SPC

Referral from Councillor Ó Cearúil in relation to the Bike Scheme. Evelyn Wright, DOS confirmed that there have been contacts made previously with companies that are up and running. Councillor Killeen expressed an interest to try to keep the business local and within Kildare and Cathaoirleach Neville suggested when the time comes a discussion about putting it out to tender can occur. Pamela Pender A/SEO confirmed there was no further update to be provided at this time.

In relation to referral from Councillor Liston. A brief discussion occurred highlighting that it is unsafe to walk or cycle the short distance from Maynooth to Celbridge/ Leixlip and that perhaps pedestrianised mapping could take place through the public consultation portal. This would also link in with the heritage sites in the area. Cathaoirleach Neville advised that Stephen Cummins previously gave a presentation on this, so a lot of this work is done already. Pamela Pender, A/SEO introduced Donal Hodgins, SE who then advised that they are currently working on prioritising cycle schemes but the pedestrianisation was under the remit of the public realm team. Donal Hodgins, SE has agreed to give an update at the next SPC meeting in November.

Referral from Councillor O'Dwyer in relation to HGV Policy in Kilcullen. It was agreed that it was not in the remit of the SPC to consider as there are no alternative routes to consider in Kilcullen. David Reel, SE explained that the Hauliers have to get permission on the routes travelled through their initial planning applications and this is done on a case-by-case basis. Evelyn Wright reiterated where there is a HGV ban in place enforcement lies with An Garda Siochana.

Item 4 - Update from Cllr Neville following his presentation on behalf of the Transportation SPC to the June Council meeting.

Everyone got a copy of the presentation. Gerry Dornan queried would it be possible to have an editable database showing the works programme that could be updated on a continuous basis. Cathaoirleach Neville agreed that this might be something beneficial to all parties. Evelyn Wright, DOS agreed that once the information goes to full council it is then in the public forum and can be shared. Pamela Pender, A/SEO will bring it to IT to see what the possibilities are will update the members by email.

Item 5 - Update from Pamela Pender on Item 4 from the SPC meeting of 06th May 2021 re shorter term parking of 15 minutes in certain area.

Most of the main towns have maximum parking time of one hour on the main streets. To add separate time zones of 15 minutes outside of banks, post offices or shops etc would cause confusion. The idea of pay parking in Kildare is to show consistency and that it is easy to engage with across the county. It can be looked at again as part of the parking bye laws. Cathaoirleach Neville sought clarification on the 30-minute grace period which is still in place and Pamela Pender A/SEO advised that would be up to the members to discuss in a MD meeting. Councillor Stafford thanked Pamela for her report and requested liaising with other county councils and gave Laois as an example to see how the 15-minute parking spaces are working. Councillor Killeen also suggest Carlow as they have a similar town size to towns in Kildare. Pamela Pender, A/SEO has agreed to make contact.

Pamela Pender, A/SEO update on Bike Week which is starting 12-09-2021. There are a number of events taking place and when the agenda is finalised it will be circulated to the members.

Update from Donal Hodgins, SE on the current projects that are underway. The Royal Canal Greenway from Maynooth to Leixlip has gone to tender. There are issues with the width in certain areas which will require a revised part 8 to widen certain sections. Councillor Killeen queried will this delay the project. Donal advised it will not delay the project as it has already been agreed with the NTA, Waterways Ireland and the council. He also confirmed that other design projects have also started. Brian Purcell has requested an update on what projects are currently underway and Donal has agreed to give an update of all the projects at the next MD meetings.

David Reel, A/SE updated the members that the Athy Distribution Road is at the stage of awarding the tender but are awaiting confirmation from the minister in this regard. MERR is at the detailed design stage. Celbridge – Hazelhatch link road has an emerging preferred route. For the new bridge at Newbridge approval to commence the process has been received and tender has gone out to get consultants. The Naas transport strategy and Athy transport strategy has been completed. The Kildare transport strategy due to be completed by the end of October. Maynooth transport strategy has commenced, and the Newbridge transport strategy is in progress.

John McGowan, SE updated the members on the Winter Maintenance Plan and gave an oversight as to the amount of km's covered (680km) the work that is involved and the staffing involved in running it successfully. Kildare currently grit 31% of its roads which is currently higher than any other county. Priority is given to primary routes or other routes deemed necessary through volumes of traffic, accidents, requests from An Garda Siochana and other factors are taken into consideration. There is no capacity to take on new routes at this time. Last year the gritters were out twice a night particularly between Christmas and New Year. Councillor Killeen asked about how all the new roads that will be built over the coming years will be incorporated into the winter maintenance plan, but John reiterated at the moment there is no capacity to increase the routes. Councillor Stafford asked John a number of questions relating to the number of roads not treated and if there will be a capacity to increase from 31% and that last year some

roads were freezing earlier and how is this monitored. John advised that the weather is monitored through information received by Met Eireann and the decision to send out crews is based on this. Councillor Stafford then asked if salt could be left out for locals to use. John said there were a number of issues involved in this such as resources, public liability and knowing the correct times to spread salt and currently this is not something that is being considered. Gerry Dornan enquired if cyclists and pedestrians were going to be considered and asked as to why the footpaths and town centres are currently not being gritted. John advised that it is currently not part of the works schedule and they do not have the machinery. Evelyn Wright, DOS advised that the fleet will be examined with the building of the new machinery yard. John McGown, SE also explained that gritters leave from Prosperous, Newbridge and Gallowshill. David Reel, A/SE also advised that each route can take 4-5 hours which means that crews working at night may not be available to go out first thing in the morning as health and safety has to be taken into consideration and the appropriate breaks need to be given under the working times act. Councillor Feeney thanked John for the information.

Michael Hurley, Health and Safety and Accessibility Officer spoke to the members and advised that he works closely with all the outdoor workers and active sites around the county to ensure all staff are supported and following all the health and safety procedures and recently covid compliance throughout. He also explained that as accessibility officer he is currently working closely with the public realm teams in terms of streetscapes, disabled parking bays and street furniture that provides inclusivity to all.

Evelyn Wright, DOS updated the members that the LGMA has issued guidance on EV Fleet and charging to assist all Local Authorities in this role. The guidelines can be found on the CARO and LGMA websites. This policy will also have to include Climate Change SPC and Environment SPC and a draft policy will in time be brought to the full council for an assessment of needs for example if we require medium or fast charging hubs. Currently the charging hubs are not on street and are in car parks. Councillor Killen and Cathaoirleach Neville asked about the funding and running costs. Evelyn Wright, DOS said the funding may be an issue as there may be a large gap between what is given per charger and the real installation cost of

each charger, but all the information will be brought forward as it comes available. Councillor Killeen also asked would KCC be partnering with other business' or departments for example heritage sites and Evelyn confirmed at this time KCC would be working alone. Gerry Dornan asked about the provision for charging for electric bikes and was advised that as part of a planning application there has to be provision for EV charging for vehicles but was not sure about EV charging for electric bikes at this time.

Item 6 – Sustainable Transport Forum (incorporating Cycle Forum)

Cathaoirleach Neville thanked everyone for their updates. He introduced the cycle forum and that if setting up a new committee it would be a sub committee of the SPC and queried if they would start with it in house and expand from there. Councillor Killeen agreed but added it would be better to have the thoughts in manageable chunks to review and that way the progress can be monitored. Pamela Pender, A/SEO agreed it could start small but the idea is to have a representative from other groups. Gerry Dornan added that the cycling forum was initially set up so that cyclists would have an input into the infrastructure. Councillor Feeney advised that Cork CC had a good template, and it might be worth speaking to that lady. Evelyn Wright, DOS advised the idea of a forum and inviting everyone is to ensure there is a broad input and requested direction from the SPC to send invitations to the 13 individuals or groups that have been asked for their input also to Cork CC to have a meeting over teams. Cathaoirleach Neville agreed this could go ahead and proposed to have the meeting before the next SPC in November and aiming for before the October Bank Holiday.

Item 7 – Speed Limit Bye Laws – public consultation

Cathaoirleach Neville started by confirming that the date of submission was extended until the 16th September. Evelyn Wright, DOS reiterated that this is a reserved function. Donal Hodgins, SE advised that the Department is currently setting up an appeals process for those that are not happy with the change of speed limit. However he advised it is not for those that are unhappy or want the speed reduced but for when people think technical errors have occurred in assigning the speed limits as per the guidelines given. The local appeals board will be no charge but if someone wants to bring their appeal further to the regional appeals board there

will be a fee and that information will be shared when it is finalised. Councillor Killeen asked will the public's appeals be upheld if they make them and Donal Hodgins, SE advised the NTA will be looking at the application of the speed limits in relation to the appeals. Cathaoirleach Neville asked what the process is when submissions close and clarified that the speed limits will have to be agreed by full council. Donal Hodgins, SE advised that they will be meeting with each MD to again to discuss the relevant submissions. Councillor Stafford stated that most people are looking for a reduction in speed and how will we deliver this to the people without disappointing them. Donal Hodgins, SE advised that the submissions received will be looked at for technical or engineering solutions and that discussions will happen with the members on these submissions before it's brought to full council to vote on.

Item 8 – Other Business

DART + is now at second consultation phase with the preferred route being picked with changes made and is now in public consultation. Councillor Stafford attended the launch of DART+ and advised that the least controversial route was selected as most of it is on Irish Rail owned land and should not impact the people of Kildare. If the DART++ from Hazelhatch to Kildare begins then there will be a lot of problems and CPO's needed.

The next meeting will be held on the 4th November in the Council Chamber.

Joseph Neville