

## **MINUTES**

### **Transportation, Safety and Emergency Services**

#### **STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**03 February 2022**

#### **Attendees:**

Councillor Paul Ward; Councillor Anne Connolly; Councillor Angela Feeney.  
Councillor Colm Kenny; Councillor Nuala Killeen; Councillor Mark Stafford.  
Councillor Joseph Neville; Brian Purcell and Gerry Dornan.

#### **Special Guests:**

Dr Darren McAdam-O'Connell - Transport Mobility Forum, Cork and Padraic  
McGuinness of PMG Consult.

#### **Also Present:**

Councillor Chris Pender; Councillor Bill Clear, Chair of Climate Action SPC; Evelyn  
Wright, Director of Services; John McGowan, Senior Engineer; Lorcan Brennan,  
A/Senior Executive Engineer; Rory Hopkins, Head of Information Systems; Michael  
Hurley, Health and Safety Officer, Pamela Pender, A/Senior Executive Officer; Claire  
Whelan A/Administrative Officer and Marie Kelly, Assistant Staff Officer.

#### **Apologies:**

Donal Hodgins, Senior Engineer; Stephen Deegan Senior Engineer; Declan Keogh,  
Roads Safety, Cycling and Sustainable Transport Officer, Councillor Suzanne Doyle,  
Chair of Environmental and Water SPC; and Cormac Browne.

#### **Introduction**

Cathaoirleach Paul Ward welcomed all the members of the SPC to the February  
meeting and welcomed the two guest's speakers, Dr Darren McAdam-O'Connell  
from the Transport Mobility Forum (TMF) Cork and Padraic McGuinness of PMG  
Consult on the emerging Kildare Digital Strategy.

### **Item 1 – Minutes- 11 November 2021**

On the proposal of Councillor Feeney and seconded by Councillor Connolly the minutes of 11 November 2021 were approved and taken as read.

### **Item 2 – Declarations of Interest**

No Comment.

### **Item 3 – Sustainable Transport Forum -Presentation from Dr.Darren McAdam-O'Connell of Transport Mobility Forum Cork (TMF)**

Dr.Darren McAdam O'Connell thanked the Cathaoirleach for the warm welcome to the Transportation SPC. On foot of this, he expressed his sincere gratitude to Pamela Pender A/SEO for her help and experience that she shared with him. He proceeded with introductions and the members of the committee were informed that Sandy McGroarty is currently Chairperson of the Transport Mobility Forum in Cork. A video presentation was shown to the committee members on how the Transport Mobility Form, Cork addressed their mission to date, to increase the number of people travelling through sustainable active travel in Cork.

Dr. O'Connell confirmed the strength of the Cork TMF stemmed from its wide range of membership it enjoys, it is not an arm of the Cork County Council but the Council is a useful member. The Forum is made up of a combination of groups which members include planners, engineers etc. The group engages with public consultation processes across a broad range of topics such as housing density, permeability measures, the importance of what is built and that is it built in the right place.

The members raised the following points:

1. Initiatives to encourage more girls to cycle
2. Funding and advice on how to access
3. Different groups in the Forum
4. Permeability Studies
5. Making a submission to the County Development Plan
6. Communication channels with NTA and Local Authority
7. Shared spaces

8. Modal Shift by commuters
9. Collaboration – business community
10. Traffic counts
11. Parklets
12. Commencement of the Forum

Dr. McAdam O'Connell made the following points during discussion with the members:

- When the Forum was first established they had no funding for the first 5 year and still achieved significant modal shift and the introduction of local link. Since then they have received funding from Healthy Ireland and some funding from the 2 Local Authorities in Co. Cork. He highlighted to the committee members that there is a lot of funding available through Sustainable Projects.
- The Forum is made up of representatives from Cork University, HSE, Transport providers, Chamber of Commerce, one presentative from Local Authority, Senior Executive Officer -Transportation and a staff member from the Planning department to name but a few. This forum generally doesn't see members of the Council, but they are welcome to join when they have an interest.
- Cannot underestimate the importance of permeability. Permeability audit is necessary when pulling together planning – schools, shops etc within walking/cycling distance of an area. No cul-de-sacs, can't have a wall facing a wall.
- The Transport Mobility Forum meet every 2 weeks to assist individuals and groups who wish to make submissions on any public consultation that is taking place. Discussions held with engineers/Cllrs about pushing items forward.
- The Forum has a good working relationship with the National Transport Authority and the Engineers in the two Local Authorities. He reiterated that the Forum works as a team, all colleagues coming together with the same objectives. At times they were considered confrontational when lodging planning objects, but they were only asking for change to make things better.
- The role of the TMF is to promote and support sustainable forms of travel including walking, cycling and public transportation. Shared spaces are illustrated throughout Cork that are working well showing the need for segregation routes.

- Statistics are not good in quantifying the change in modal split. 70% of those living in the city, at last census, showed huge numbers engage in cycling/walking. Don't see that in urban ring, rural, suburban – no change in modal shift. For example, no amount of infrastructure will have someone cycle from Athy to Dublin 30-40km. It won't happen, it's about concentrated, compact permeability.
- Indicators include traffic/bike counts, steady sustainable growth in cycling/pedestrian number which were negatively impacted by the arrival of the pandemic. Nationwide, figures are down, and it is hoped that these will steadily increase once people return to the office.
- Active travel is not a financial issue in Cork, large multi-national employees, majority of population in the city centre and most walk/cycle or use public transport. In other regions they drive because everyone does but in Ireland they don't because people actively walk and cycle.
- Counters – Cork Cycling Campaign carried out some counts. Some are being trialled, now devices can be put in windows or shops/business. Testing/verifying reliability and technology is getting better and always improving.
- One proactive business looked for a parklet and it proved a great success with greater footfall in the area and in turn more businesses benefited from the parklets. As result of this incentive Parklets are in high demand in Cork.
- The Forum has very clear objectives.
  - Provide a networking opportunity for stakeholders to coordinate sustainable and active travel projects, programmes and services.
  - Influence travel infrastructure and policy at the national, regional and local levels.
  - Advertise /promote sustainable and active travel.
  - Support and promote sustainable and active travel events.

Brian Purcell highlighted to the committee members that funding is available for a trial e-bicycle and e-scooters in Maynooth from the Chamber of Commerce. Sinead Rowan from the Chamber of Commerce has requested a meeting with Declan Keogh, Roads Safety, Cycling and Sustainable Transport Officer.

The Cathaoirleach, Paul Ward and the committee members complimented all those concerned with the work achieved by the members of the Transport and Mobility Forum in Cork.

The Director of Services, Evelyn Wright expressed her sincere gratitude to Dr. Darren McAdam O'Connell for taking the time out to give the excellent presentation to the Transportation SPC and to Pamela Pender A/SEO for co-ordinating the presentation.

Dr. Darren McAdam O'Connell concluded his briefing and affirmed that he would circulate a copy of their submission to the County Development Plan.

#### **Item 4 – Kildare Digital Strategy -Presentation from Padraic McGuinness of PMG Consultant**

Padraic McGuinness of PMG Consult was welcomed to the meeting. He proceeded with introduction and gave a brief background on the work that he has delivered with other Local Authorities.

He highlighted that Kildare County Council had launched a public consultation and is seeking engagement on the key themes of the digital strategy:

- Digital Economy
- Digital Infrastructure
- Digital Skills
- Digital Society
- Digital Services

There is also a requirement from Government for all local authorities to develop their own digital strategy. It will set out a vision for the county outlining the core objectives, priorities and actions over the short, medium and long term.

The new National Digital Strategy (Harnessing Digital) was released early February 2022 by An Taoiseach with contributions from Tánaiste Leo Varadkar TD (Enterprise

Trade & Employment) and Robert Troy TD Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Digital & Company Regulation. Padraic McGuinness assured the committee members that key themes set out in the emerging digital strategy for Kildare are in line with the National Digital Strategy.

He assured the committee members that Co. Kildare is committed to facilitating the rollout of the Nation Broadband Plan (NBP) and recognises the vital role broadband will play in economic and social development. In line with the NBP deliverables, Kildare County Council (KCC) is developing this digital strategy to maximise the opportunities of digital transformation for the benefit of our society and economy, ensuring that Kildare is among the best places to live, work, invest or visit.

The strategy will create awareness and connections to training and supports for businesses and citizens to reduce the skills gap and encourage more young people into digital careers.

Padraig is currently consulting with businesses, partner agencies, community groups and directly with citizens to inform the key elements of the emerging digital strategy.

He reiterated that the pandemic has changed many aspects of our lives. Many more people are working remotely or learning online as well as engaging in online shopping and digital public services.

He outlined other key areas for consideration

- Hosting actual events going forward
- Stakeholders have a lot of information to examine and what to focus on with the digital strategy.
- Surveys- to examine the quality of the Broadband in one's area and what work they would like to envisage.
- Community participation is very important for the establishment of the strategy.
- Press releases.

- Input, ideas and views from Councillors, Business and individuals are vital for the success of this first Digital Strategy.

He discussed the three Broadband Connection Points which reflects that Kildare is in a good position to bring Broadband into homes.

1. Lullymore Heritage Park
2. Crookstown Education & Training Centre
3. Bigstone, Castledermot

Rory Hopkins, Head of Information Systems informed the members that the area of Open Data is critical. Legislation enacted in July 2021, with obligations to provide Open Data. As a Council we need to be cognisant of what can/cannot be shared.

Councillor Feeney requested clarification on whether the council have links

- Universities
- Secondary schools
- Youth and Educated sector-Transition Year Students
- Funding of Hubs

Padraic McGuinness discussed that another survey could be organised for the youth in the county allowing them to express their activity experience online.

The Director of Services, Evelyn Wright expressed the important of this Strategy for Kildare and acknowledged that the timeframe was short in which to deliver a final draft. It is expected a draft will be before Council at the May meeting for approval. She highlighted that Tipperary County Council are carrying out a Pilot smart space Lighting project. This project is co-financed by European Union. This lighting project will contribute to CO2 reduction. This lighting system uses technology such as motion detectors to monitor movement and adjust accordingly, dim down lights where there is no public movement detected and light up an area once the system detects pedestrians or cars approaching. She assured the committee members that Kildare County Council will monitor the outcome of this pilot project.

Councillor Clear, Chair of the Climate Action SPC was concerned about the elderly and their suspicion of digital society. A lot of forms, banking, revenue now moved on line and they are being left behind. Is there room for the human side of this to remain rather than turning into a digital space. Can buildings in towns/villages develop digital hubs, reuse derelict buildings for example? It was agreed that the tone of the document needs to reflect that no one will be left behind, the option to come and pay your car tax in the office or a parking fine, etc will be there for those who don't engage in the digital services.

Padraig commented that a shared management centre maybe an option where 4/5 hubs could be managed by one manager.

Rory Hopkins raised the issue of cybersecurity and the recent cyberattack at HSE was of major concern, we need to be aware of these possibilities and address them. MU/IVI have agreed to examine the SWOT analysis, ensuring it encompasses everything digital and verify the Draft Report.

A draft outline of the Kildare Digital Strategy will be brought to the SPC in May, before finalizing the Draft and bringing to Council. In the meantime, he encouraged the use the council networks to refer interested groups/individuals to the consultation portal and the citizen digital survey.

The Cathaoirleach Councillor Ward complimented Padraic McGuinness on his presentation and he reflected on the challenge to deliver on this strategy.

The Director of Services, Evelyn Wright gave the following updates to the Committee:

- The Road Safety Strategy 2021 will be led by Declan Keogh, Roads Safety, Cycling and Sustainable Transport Officer. One of the objectives of the revised framework is to examine the setting of speed limits, including introducing 30km/h limits as the default in urban areas. The Director is a



member of a National Working Group, examining best practice in other countries and they will be required to report to the Minister at year end.

- She complimented the Local Link on the service that they provide to the public and especially during the pandemic where they helped people to stay connected. She informed the committee members that Local Link are a key service provider and are in discussion with the NTA to provide additional routes to the network.
- She reiterated that the success of the Sustainable Transport Forum depends on finding the profile of people to assist in various projects e.g. temporary cycle and seating infrastructure along Main Street & Edward Street, Newbridge. The scheme has been designed to current standards and as a temporary project will be the subject of monitoring and review.

#### **Item 5 - Referral from Full Council Meeting**

Cllr Pender requested at the November 2021 Full Council meeting that the following motion be referred to the Transportation SPC.

“That the council investigate locations to install parking bays for people with hidden disabilities/autism similar to those installed by Waterford County Council throughout the county”

Pamela Pender, A/SEO informed Cllr Pender that following contact with the Department of Transport, there is no review of the 'blue badge' system scheduled nor could the department advise of any proposed changes to legislation to provide for 'hidden disability bays'.

The Director of Services, Evelyn Wright discussed the current situation on the County Parking Strategy agreed in 2016 and she suggested that now is the time to revisit the strategy and standardise the plan. She informed the members that the strategy could be examined bearing in mind the following headings priority parking, parking hours in each town and enforcement issues to ensure consistency across the county in the provision of parking service across all towns in County Kildare.

It was agreed by all the members of the committee that the strategy would be revisited.

Cllr Pender highlighted that he would be happy to see this complete area being examined.

**Item 6 – Work Programme 2022/2023**

Evelyn Wright highlighted the importance of the SPC work programme for 2023. She advised that there is the issue of duplication on the current work programme with other departments in the council that needs to be rectified.

The members were advised of the current work programme and items that could be removed with the agreement of the members of the Transportation SPC eg Transport Link, Permeability, Cycling/Walking and Electric Vehicles to name but a few.

She assured the members that she will examine/streamline the work programme and circulate it to the members before the next meeting scheduled for 05<sup>th</sup> May 2022. The Director of Services would hope to have the revised work programme 2022/2023 agreed by the committee members at the May SPC meeting.

**Any other Business**

Gerry Dornan highlighted that he submitted 12 submission papers which were not listed or noted. Pamela Pender assured him that his 12 submission papers were noted at a previous meeting in 2021 and would form part of the documents to be considered by the Sustainable Transport Forum.

Evelyn Wright reiterated that she was not aware of the submissions as he submitted them to Roads Department prior to her appointment. She assured him that she would examine them in the next few weeks and revert back to him.

The next meeting will be held on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

Cllr. Paul Ward

Cathaoirleach SPC.