

## MINUTES

### Transportation, Safety and Emergency Services

#### STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

05 May 2022

#### **Attendees:**

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

**Special Guest:** Grainne Fleming, Co-ordinator for Kildare Public Participation Network.

#### **Also Present:**

Evelyn Wright, Director of Services; Stephen Deegan Senior Engineer, Dónal Hodgins Senior Engineer, John O'Neill, Senior Executive Engineer, Declan Keogh Roads, Safety, Cycling & Sustainable Transport Officer, James Doyle, Senior Staff Officer, Anita Power, Acting Health and Safety Officer, Pamela Pender, A/Senior Executive Officer and Marie Kelly, Assistant Staff Officer.

#### **Apologies:**

Councillor Mark Stafford, John McGowan, Senior Engineer, Michael Hurley, Health and Safety Officer and Cormac Browne.

#### **Introduction**

Cathaoirleach Paul Ward welcomed all the members of the SPC to the May meeting and welcomed the guest speaker, Grainne Fleming, Co-ordinator for Kildare Public Participation Network.

### **Item 1 – Minutes- 03 February 2022**

On the proposal of Councillor Connolly and seconded by Councillor Feeney the minutes of 03rd February 2022 were approved and taken as read.

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

No Comment.

### **Item 3 – Update from Director of Services**

The Director of Services, Evelyn Wright gave the members an update and a brief background on the government's response to the impact of the war in Ukraine on the energy system in Ireland. As we emerge from the pandemic, she informed the committee members that the car parking framework needs to be examined taking into considerations many proposals put before Council during the pandemic.

She informed the committee members that the National Transport Authority issued a Bike Life Report which incorporates the Kilcock area.

The Department of Transport published in April, an EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025 and will welcome submissions up to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022. The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy was circulated to the committee members prior to the meeting. Kildare County Council awaits the final Strategy document which will provide much needed detail on the capital funding needed. It is expected that any funding proposal contained in the document will require match funding by the Council which will be a challenge. She advised the committee members that the council has representation on the national working group in this area and is monitoring the matter for budgetary implications.

**Item 4 – Kildare Public Participation Network- Presentation from Co-Ordinator Grainne Fleming**

Grainne Fleming, Co-Ordinator from Kildare Public Participation Network (PPN) was welcomed to the meeting. On foot of this, she expressed her sincere gratitude to the Cathaoirleach for the opportunity to speak about the Network to the Transportation SPC.

Grainne updated the members on the role that the Network carry out on behalf of communities in Kildare. Kildare Public Participation Network has a network of over one thousand community groups, covering three pillars:

- Environmental,
- Community
- Voluntary and Social Inclusion

She confirmed that their membership has experience and expertise in many areas such as submissions on Climate Matters, Policy documents like the County Development Plan, creating awareness of local initiatives, partaking in consultations, and undertaking training in various areas of interest in the community.

Grainne made the following points during the discussion with the members:

- The PPN plays a crucial role in facilitating the movement of information between the community and the local authority using formal and informal settings.
- The PPN has a key representation on ten committees and SPCs within the Local Authority here in Kildare, ensuring that the voice of the community is heard and respected.
- The primary purpose of the PPN is to enable the PPN member groups to input into and have their voices heard within the formal decision-making structures of the local authority.
- She highlighted that the PPN is now the main avenue for local authorities to connect with groups active in their area. Whenever the local authority needs people to participate in consultations or sit on the committees like Local Community Development Committees and Strategic Policy Committees, the

council is obliged to call on the PPN to select representatives from within its membership to serve on those committees.

She reiterated that Kildare PPN is now well established, she outlined that 2021 was spent reviewing internal policies, establishing new ways, and strengthening their communication methods, delivering on training schedules to help strengthen the skills, competencies, and efficiency of member groups.

PPN believe that it is a privilege of representing community groups and ensuring that their voice is heard and not just to their success but also to the success of the Local Authority and the county.

The Network will endeavour to represent the views of member groups to the best of our ability, which will in turn strengthen decision making at all levels.

The Representative Charter outlines the

- role of the representatives
- Rights of the Representative
- Election
- Resignation and it outlines the expectation for engagement.

The members raised the following points:

1. Recognise a drop off from Covid.
2. Elections
3. Communication Policy
4. PPN Website

Grainne Fleming made the following points during discussion with the members:

- The Network is made up of 1,000 groups registered. She assured the committee members that the key work programme for 2022 was to work with their members and improve the perception of the PNN with the members and the public. During Covid 19 did see a decline in numbers as did every organisation but post pandemic the numbers are rising again.

- In relation to elections, she assured the committee that they are governed under a democratic system. She informed members that elections held under one of the pillars recently Environmental to elect a representative to the Climate Action SPC.
- She assured the committee members that they are committed to improving their communication platform going forward in 2022.

She expressed a sincere thank you to Director of Services Evelyn Wright, Councillor Paul Ward, and Pamela Pender for allowing her to the time at the Transportation SPC May meeting.

Grainne concluded her briefing and extending an invitation to all chairs of SPCs to meet with her, to discuss how the PPN and their Representatives can best meet their mandate. Kildare PPN along with all representatives will support the local authority in any way possible.

The Cathaoirleach, Paul Ward and the committee members complimented Grainne presentation given at the meeting. Cllr Ward expressed great appetite to meet again with her in the coming months.

#### **Item 5 - Referral from Full Council Meeting and Municipal District Meetings**

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr Ward referred to Cllr Connolly motion from the full council meeting on February 2022 that it would be discussed later in the meeting when the County Parking Policy Framework document is being be discussed.

“That Comhairle Contae Chill Dara enact Car Club Bye-laws and provide infrastructure if necessary to facilitate the operation of Car Clubs”.

[https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/2018-08/Car\\_Club\\_ByeLaws\\_2013.pdf](https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/2018-08/Car_Club_ByeLaws_2013.pdf))

Cllr Kenny requested at the March 2022 Naas Municipal District Meeting that the following motion be referred to the Transportation SPC.

“That the council invite tenders for the provision of a local bike rental scheme in the Naas Municipal District, similar to the Dublin Bike scheme and modelled on similar schemes operating successfully in cities and towns across Europe”.

Cllr Kenny requested that active travel in the surrounding area of Naas should be explored to promote a bike rental scheme. He highlighted that Westmeath, Athlone and Dublin have adopted a bike rental pilot scheme and he expressed his interest in exploring a pilot scheme north of the county.

The Director of Services, Evelyn Wright discussed the current situation that the National Transport Authority (NTA) are commencing a bike share scheme and as Kildare in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). Kildare will be part of this scheme, leaving the doors open for funding.

Committee members were informed that the NTA are establishing a steering group for the Bike share Scheme.

The members were advised of the Transportation SPC approach and challenges:

- Managing the procurement system.
- Funding is critical
- Location of the Pilot scheme
- Kildare will benefit from NTA strategy and Scheme as it sits in the GDA

The members of the committee were informed that Maynooth has been selected to be the county’s decarbonization zone. The town held off stiff competition from 15 other applicant towns in a criteria-based selection by Kildare County Council (KCC) Climate Action Team. The zones will contribute to reaching ambitious targets set out in the Climate Action Plan focused on a 50% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030.

Kildare County Council will take a lead and carry much of the workload, supports and climate action funding.

Several decarbonisation opportunities have been identified for Maynooth including household retrofitting, community energy, cycling and pedestrian network, youth engagement and working with Maynooth University to name but a few.

Cllr Neville expressed his concerns on the bike schemes being considered for the north of the county and requesting that other towns in the county should be considered to ensure no town loses out.

It was agreed by all members of the committee that Cllr Kenny motion would be examined.

### **Item 6 – Update from John O’Neill, Senior Executive Engineer on the Noise Planning Advice Document**

The Senior Executive Engineer, John O’Neill thanked the Cathaoirleach for the welcome to the Transportation SPC. He proceeded with introduction and gave the members a brief presentation on the Noise Action Plan 2019-2023 and the Planning Advice Note.

Firstly, he advised the members of the committee that the Noise Action Plan contains a lot of technical information. There is currently no national planning guidance

- No hard and fast legal threshold noise limits.
- No standard procedures in noise assessments.
- No national consistency.

He informed the committee that the planning advice note only deals with noise from transportation noise sources, using best international practice to minimize problematic sites in the future. The members of the committee were advised that this Planning Advice Note is available as guidance for new developments and to provide consistency for all Kildare County Council staff when assessing planning applications.

The Senior Executive Engineer advise the committee members of the progress route of the Planning Advice Note

- DoEHLG will eventually issue national guidance, but their acknowledgment is still some way off.
- Internal KCC -Working Group -EPA facilitated - multidisciplinary - 20 plus LA/HSE.
- Internal feedback received from members of the Working Group.

- Informal Third Party feedback received from LAs, EPA, TII to name just a few.
- Purpose is to fill the gap of no official guidance.
- It is an informal KCC Advice note.
- To get the best possible solution at planning stage.
- Avoid creating new legacy problems.

John O'Neill expressed the importance of the guidance for new residential developments and acknowledged that the initial noise approach should be considered at the early stages of the planning process so as to avoid the delay in the planning permission being granted.

The following queries and comments were raised by the members:

1. Planning Advice Note is a legal binding document.
2. Noise between houses
3. Clarification on what type of building it applies
4. Noise level on N4- Kilcock- Maynooth
5. Noise Levels, Vibration on site

The Senior Executive Engineer confirmed the following points with the members

1. The planning advice note is not a legal binding document. It is a guidance document on how the council assess the noise level at an early stage of the planning application process.
2. Limits are identified for internal noise level guidelines in the Professional Practice guidance on Planning and Noise for new Residential Development, reference element 2 of the acoustic design statement.
3. Existing Residential developments beside a transport source gives recommendations when building extension onto existing building or new developments close to transport corridor.
4. Noise monitoring within a development would be part of the planning conditions for the development.
5. The planning condition imposed on site would be determined by the environment department whose function is to monitor the level imposed and ensure compliance.



John O'Neill concluded his briefing that going forward the Planning Advice Note will be used by Kildare County Council as a backstop figure, consistent analysis and looking at each individual site particularly for infill type development.

The members of the committee complimented John O'Neill on his detailed presentation.

**Item 7 – Update from Donal Hodgins, Senior Engineer on the delivery of Permeability Measures in the Naas Municipal District**

Dónal Hodgins, Senior Engineer was welcomed to the meeting, He gave a brief background on the work that his team has delivered on the permeability studies completed in Clane, Naas, and Maynooth.

The members of the committee were advised that the principle of permeability is to ensure that community safety, security and residential amenity is not compromised by connectivity. Balancing safety and permeability.

The Senior Engineer informed the committee members that the work of his team is to demonstrate the benefits of permeability improving the linkage between estates and providing facilities.

He informed the members that going forward the NTA funding scheme would be incorporated into new estates.

The members raised the following points:

1. Policy development
2. Design is Key
3. Plans to open between estates
4. Work Plan

The Senior Engineer confirmed the following points:

1. Permeability permits the movement of people by walking or cycling and such projects need an origin and a destination. Projects like Newbridge Cycle,

Green Lane and Meadowbrook are areas that will be moved forward. Each of these projects will demonstrate significant benefits.

2. He assured the committee members that permeability is about raising the bar, demonstrating that it would be done properly and getting it high on the agenda from day one. He reiterated that more inclusive measures will be considered, so that no member of society is left behind.
3. He assured the members that permeability is the right thing to do, and that good communication is a key factor with the public to illustrate the positive approach against the negative approach.
4. He informed the committee that Active Travel, Sustainable Transport and Climate Action plans demonstrate the need for successful projects.

Cllr Connelly highlighted that the Main Street, Newbridge has received some push back, but the council need to learn from this and move forward.

Gerry Dornan highlighted that permeability benefits the whole community and he requested that the public are encouraged to make submissions on these types of schemes.

#### **Item 8 – Briefing from James Doyle, Senior Staff Officer on the Kildare County Council Parking Framework**

James Doyle, Senior Staff Officer was welcomed to the meeting, and he updated the members on the County Parking Policy Framework Document. This document was circulated to the committee members prior to the meeting.

The members of the committee were informed that this Policy was adopted by the Elected Members of Kildare County Council. He reiterated that this policy has been prepared with the objective of achieving consistency across the county from regulation of parking byelaws, tariffs regulations and accessibility.

James Doyle informed the committee members that the following areas could be examined and possibly included in the new framework document:

- Ev charging points

- Club Cars byelaws

The Director of Services, Evelyn Wright informed the members that in 2017 “Go Car’s “were placed on 6-month trial in Naas, Athy and Maynooth.

She requested the committee members to look at the items like Ev charges when considering the revised framework and to be mindful of the Climate Action Plan. She reiterated that the framework must be measurable and consistent throughout the county.

The Director of Services highlighted that the Kildare County Council must reply to the Department of Transport on the issue of increasing costs on street parking due to the raised costs of carbon. This review is very important.

Cllr Kenny requested clarification on whether the Age Friendly spaces on Popular Square in Naas is defined in a policy and enforceable for illegal parking.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr Ward referred to Councillor Connolly motion previously mentioned that the Club Car byelaws should be incorporated into the framework document. Cllr Ward encouraged members to identify items for inclusion in the revised framework and that the committee will communicate back to Evelyn Wright and James Doyle.

Cllr Ward stated the members should have a draft of the Kildare County Council Parking Framework presented at the September SPC meeting with the view to having the policy in place by the end of 2022.

The members of the committee complimented James Doyle on his presentation. A lengthy discussion did take place on the proposed changes for this document, and they reflected on the challenges to deliver the new framework.

James Doyle concluded his briefing asking that the committee members make their submissions on what changes they request but to be mindful that the changes would affect all towns across the county.

### **Item 9 – Update from Anita Power, Assistant Health and Safety Officer**

Anita Power, Assistant Health and Safety Officer was welcomed to the meeting.

Anita Power extended Michael Hurley, Health and Safety Officer apologies who was not able to attend this meeting due to a prior engagement.

Anita informed the committee members of the key highlights for 2021:

- 369 Covid Compliance inspections completed across the organisation
- Online VDU Assessments -334 completed
- European Health and Safety Week- 2 webinars held:
  - Value of the Brain” Wake up to Brain Health”
  - “Let’s talk about Menopause”
- Flu Vaccine made available to staff
- H&S Training in conjunction with HR included Safepass, Signing, Lighting and Guarding, and Manual Handling

She confirmed to the members that the number of site inspections to date since March 2022 was 11 and with the intention to increase to 3 per week going forward.

She advised the members of the following plans on health and safety within Kildare County Council in 2022

- Bimonthly H&S Management Committee Meeting
- Bimonthly Safety Committee Meeting with Safety Reps
- 2 off site inspections per week- commenced March 2022 on removal of covid restrictions.
- Weekly Lead Worker Reps Meeting
- Overhaul of H&S Portal on Intranet
- Investigation of all Accidents and Incidents
- Co- Chair of Local Authority Safety Offices Group Eastern Region
- Implementation of a Lone Working System
- Review and Updating Risk Assessments and Method – identifying where there is none in place.
- Safety Leadership Training workshop- the next meeting of H&S Management Committee is planned for the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2022 and will be an extended

meeting to facilitate a workshop around Safety Leadership. The training is a multimedia dramatization of the worst disaster in aviation history.

- Some of the areas covered in the workshop will include:
  - System failure
  - Team dynamics and empowerment
  - and leadership styles.
  - The workshop will accommodate 30 attendees.

The Health and Safety section are focusing their attention predominantly on the mental health and wellbeing of council staff post pandemic. Training to staff will help them be more aware of the mental health status of their colleagues encouraging them to follow easy to remember TALK steps

- Tell
- Ask
- Listen
- Keep safe

She encouraged the committee members to visit the "See change" website.

See Change is Ireland's national programme working to change minds about mental health problems in Ireland. The 6-step workplace pledge plan is a statement of our organizations intent to work towards creating an open culture around mental health in the workplace and to reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with mental health problems.

The 6 steps include:

- Training management
- Developing and implementing a mental health policy
- Training and informing staff
- Empowering and training staff champions
- Engaging your network: staff, board, clients, and others
- Earning your certificate and joining the Seechange network

The members of the committee were advised that the Green Ribbon Campaign in September 2022. The Green Ribbon theme for 2022 is 'shame'. See Change will explore what shame is, how shame presents itself and how shame impacts on people with mental health difficulties.

She assured the members of the committee that the Annual Health and Safety Conference – is scheduled for Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and with the theme of “How Do You Look After Your Mental Health” with 2 speakers for the morning and afternoon sessions

- Barbara Brennan Project Coordinator SeeChange
- Dr Harry Barry – International Best-Selling Author and regular contributor on national airwaves.

She assured the members that the health screening will be exercised in orderly fashion with offering the flu vaccinations to all staff and a basic health screening programme in 2022.

Cllr Ward expressed the committee members interest to have the options made available to all members of the council.

Cllr Ward complimented Anita and the Health and Safety team on the excellent work carried out and positive picture having Kildare County Council to the forefront on health and safety for their staff members.

### **Item 9 – Work Programme 2022/2023**

The proposed work programme 2022/2023 was circulated to the members prior to the meeting. A lengthy discussion did take place at the meeting on the Work Programme 2022/2023.

### **The following Proposed Work Programme for 2022/2023**

1. Public Parking- That the council review the policies around public parking in the context of urban renewal, cycling and pedestrian amenity with associated benefit to health and wellbeing, changing economic models and the transition towards carbon-neutral societies.
2. Permeability – Permeability between Housing Estates and Public Roadways- this issue to be jointly examined by Planning and Roads Department.
3. Access & Disability – Access and Disability Progress – Development of Accessible Public Realm Streetscapes.
4. Cycle Infrastructure -Policy on segregated cycleways.
5. Greenways & Blueways -Focus on Royal and Grand Canal Greenways and Barrow Blueway to a high-quality standard plan amenity to make them into thriving connections and tourist destinations.
6. Cycle and walking signage- That in a bid to increase driver awareness of walkers and cyclists, that the council would invest in and roll out cycle and walking friendly signage, solar powered speed signs with particular emphasis around the schools.
7. Bike Week- To develop and deliver a comprehensive agenda for the annual Bike Week programme.
8. Road Network and Congestion- Focus on road developments that allow us to reclaim our town centres, develop town centre, communities, vibrant main street and reduce congestion and pollution in our towns.
9. Fire Officer – Report on activities and developments from the Chief Fire Officer
10. Electric Vehicles – Policy on Electric Vehicles in relation to free parking
11. Park & Strides- For consideration by the SPC - this would also align with School Street initiatives.

The Director of Services, Evelyn Wright requested the full agreement from the members of the committee that the above Proposed Work Programme 2022/2023 be issued for referral and agreement from the Corporate Policy Group (CPG).

It was agreed by all the members of the committee that the work programme would be issued to the Corporate Policy Group for agreement.

Gerry Dornan expressed his concerns that no decisions were being made at the Transportation SPC. He requested clarification on the establishment of the Sustainable Transport Forum.

The Director of Services discussed the current situation that it is very important to receive updates on the work the National Transport Authority (NTA) and the Climate Action Team are carrying out to avoid duplication of work being carried out by the Transportation SPC.

Evelyn Wright advised Gerry Dornan that Kildare County Council are finding it difficult to find stakeholders with interests in establishing the Sustainable Transport Forum. She highlighted that the objectives of the proposed forum may now be falling into the new Sustainable Transport Team remit. A decision will be made on this.

She advised the members of the committee that their role was to influence policy and expressed her concerns on the specific work required to proceed through the Transportation SPC Work Programme.

Evelyn Wright reiterated that a comprehensive meeting was held with Gerry Dornan, Pamela Pender and Donal Hodgins and assured Gerry and all committee members that some of his 12 submission papers have been used and are being examined by the Sustainable Transport Team and Department of Transport.

### **Any other Business**

Pamela Pender (A/SEO) referred to the draft Kildare Digital Strategy and the presentation from Padraic McGuinness of PMG Consultant at the Transportation SPC February meeting.

She outlined that a lot of information was gathered through consulting with businesses, partner agencies, community groups and directly with citizens to inform the elements of the emerging Digital Strategy:



- 115 Digital online Surveys
- 52 Youth Digital online Surveys
- 15 public consultation submissions

The Kildare Digital Strategy is an important document for Kildare and there is a requirement from Government to have such a strategy in place. It is anticipated that a draft will go before Council at the May meeting for approval.

It was agreed by all the members of the committee that the final analysis would be presented to them for agreement prior to the May Council meeting.

The A/SEO agreed with members and dates for a special meeting would be circulated.

Cllr Ward concluded the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

The next meeting will be held on 01<sup>st</sup> September 2022.

*Cllr Paul Ward*