

Transportation, Safety and Emergency Services

Strategic Policy Committee

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 7 September at 2 p.m. via Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Councillor Joe Neville (Chair);

Councillor Anne Connolly; Councillor Bob Quinn;
Councillor Angela Feeney; Councillor Nuala Kileen;
Mr. Darren Devane.

Also Present:

Councillor Bill Clear; Mr. Niall O’Riordan, A/CFO; Mr. Alan Kerry, Local Link; Mr. Alan Dunney, Director of Services; Mr. Mark McLoughlin, A/SEO; Michael Hurley, Health and Safety Officer; Ms. Gillian Whitty,

Apologies:

Councillor Paul Ward; Ms. Celina Barrett, A/Director of Services

Introduction

The Cathaoirleach Joe Neville welcomed all the members of the meeting and gave apologies for the Chair, Councillor Ward who was unable to attend to the September meeting and welcomed new member Councillor Bob Quinn. Mark McLoughlin advised the committee that Councillor Mark Stafford has resigned. Gerry Dornan has resigned from this SPC to sit on the Sustainable Transport Forum.

1. Declarations of Interest

The item was noted.

2. To approve minutes of the meeting held on the 10 May 2023

On the proposal of Councillor Angela Feeney and seconded by Councillor Anne Connolly the minutes of the meeting of 10 May 2023 were approved.

3. Update from Director of Services, Transport, Mobility & Open Spaces

Mr. Mark McLoughlin, A/Senior Executive Officer gave an update on progress on capital projects, sustainable transport schemes and open spaces on behalf of the Director. He highlighted a number of areas of activity including:

- Significant progress on Athy Distributor Road which will open ahead of schedule.
- TII examining locations for Park and Share locations on M9.
- Inaugural meeting of Sustainable Transport Forum held in June.
- Construction of Allenwood playground to commence in September 2023.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. McLoughlin for the update which was noted.

4. Update from Director of Services, Planning, Enterprise, Economic Development & Emergency Services

Mr. Alan Dunney informed the members that his update only related to the Emergency Services aspect of his Directorate.

- Retained fire fighters had accepted the recommendations of the Workplace Relations Commission and that it was a relief that everyone was back to work.
- Procurement of a new civil defence building in Clane is progressing.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. Dunney for the update which was noted.

5. Update from Mr. Niall O'Riordan, Acting Chief Fire Officer

Mr. Niall O'Riordan, Acting Chief Fire Officer gave an update on the activities of the Fire Service.

- Operations in Newbridge, Naas, Athy, Maynooth, Monasterevin, Leixlip.
- Significant increase in incident attendance matching 2018 figures.
- Maynooth Fire Station proceeding to tender.
- Fire Safety Certificate activity on the increase.
- Major Emergency Plan updated in December 2022.
- Significant budget implications from WRC agreement in respect of industrial action.

Cllr Anne Connolly asked if there was any central government funding for the agreement that resulted from the industrial action, were the increase in calls as result of road traffic accidents (RTCs) rather than fires. Councillor Feeney commended the fire service on their work and asked if the new location on Maynooth would result in a quicker response to incidents.

Mr. O’Riordan advised the members that there were no written guarantees given on additional funding for the agreement. He said that the Fire Service were called to a significant amount of RTCs, however, fire alarms in domestic properties caused a significant level of additional callouts which were usually false alarms. He said that the new location in Maynooth would make it easier for appliances to get out during traffic congestion and improve response times.

6. Update from Mr. Michael Hurley, Health and Safety Officer on access and Disability

Mr. Michael Hurley gave an update on the following areas of work:

- CKAN meetings ongoing on a monthly basis.
- Changing Places Facility opened in Newbridge. Nassd Library due to open on Quarter 4.
- Walkability audits of towns completed for Naas, Newbridge and Leixlip.
- Reports for Disability Participation Awareness Fund completed.

Councillor Feeney thanked Mr. Hurley for his work and asked if there was anything that this committee could do to assist. Mr. Hurley said that he was working with the Executive on additional resources.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. Hurley for his presentation which was noted.

7. Presentation from Mr. Alan Kerry, Manager, Local Link Kildare – South Dublin on Local Link – Connecting Ireland

Mr. Alan Kerry gave the members an update on delivering the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan for Kildare.

- Public consultation held by National Transport Authority (NTA) to improve transport connectivity.
- Plans put in place for five additional routes.
- Route 880 Carlow to Naas: increased frequency.

- Route 821 Newbridge to Sallins Train Station: Established in October 2022
- Route 129 Dunlavin to Newbridge: Extended to Dunlavin/Brannockstown in 2024.
- Route 888 Athy to Allenwood via Lullymore expected to commence in Quarter 2 2024.
- Route CtN Celbridge to Naas via Ardclough expected to commence in Quarter 3 2024.

Councillor Joe Neville asked who pays the shortfall if routes are not profitable.

Mr. Keery said that the viability of routes is not measured on profitability but on the value for money / usage.

8. Referrals from Municipal District meetings to SPC

- Councillor Clear – Bike Week

Cllr Clear was welcomed to the meeting. He said that there was little engagement with bike week this year and that next year he would like the Council to write to cycling groups in the county and ask them would there be anything that they would like to do for bike week, or would they like to host an event but that cycling groups will get plenty of notice.

Mark McLoughlin, A/SEO advised Councillor Clear that his points were valid and that his request would be taken on board for next year's programme.

9. Any Other Business

Mr. Darren Davane advised the members that the new concrete levy has come into force placing an additional 5% cost on all concrete products. He said that this would need to be taken into consideration in respect of all infrastructure projects.

Councillor Neville thanked the members for their attendance.

The next meeting will be held on 3 November 2023.

