

Transportation, Safety and Emergency Services

Strategic Policy Committee

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 16 November at 3 p.m. via Microsoft Teams

- Attendees:** Councillor Paul Ward (Cathaoirleach);
Councillor Anne Connolly; Councillor Bob Quinn;
Councillor Angela Feeney; Councillor Nuala Killeen;
Councillor Joseph Neville; Brian Purcell
- Also Present:** Ms Celina Barrett A/Director of Services, Mr. Alan Dunney, Director of Services; Mr. Dónal Hodgins, Senior Engineer; Mr. Kevin Dunne Senior Executive Engineer; Mr. Derek McCormack, Executive Engineer; Mr. Mark McLoughlin, A/SEO; Ms. Carmel Lidieth, A/Admin Officer; Mr. Michael Hurley, Health and Safety Officer; Mr. Fergus Hogan, Assistant Staff Officer & Ms. Marie Kelly.
- Guests:** Councillor Aidan Farrelly; Councillor Vanessa Liston.
Councillor Noel Connelly.
- Apologies:** Councillor Paddy Curran; Darren Devane; Cormac Browne.
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Introduction

The Cathaoirleach Paul Ward welcomed all the members to the meeting. Mark McLoughlin advised the committee that Councillor Paddy Curran has replaced Mark Trafford on this SPC.

1. Declarations of Interest

The item was noted.

2. To approve minutes of the meeting held on the 7 September 2023

On the proposal of Councillor Angela Feeney and seconded by Councillor Joseph Neville, the minutes of the meeting of 7 September 2023 were approved.

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

Ms Celina Barrett, A/Director of Services gave an update on progress on Capital Projects.

She highlighted a number of areas of activity including:

- Work Programme for the Municipal District (MD) areas are in the final phase of completion.
- Winter Maintenance Programme operations from 16 October 2023 to end of April 2024. The objective of the Winter Maintenance Plan is to keep all principal roads in the county open to traffic, free from ice and safe to travel on the roads. The work on this programme has included refining the routes including the Athy Distributor Road (ADR) on the salting route. This programme has been extended to the maximum, given the resources that are available.
- ADR was officially open on 31 October 2023. Members were advised that ongoing discussions are in place with Department of Transport (DOT), Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and Kildare County Council (KCC) in relation to improving the former N78 in Athy.
- Planning permission has been received for the Newbridge Orbital Second Bridge. Kildare County Council will be looking for funding based on costing.
- Machinery Yard with a salting facility will be opened in 2024. 95% of the work on site is complete. Salting provision will only be provided for County Kildare in the first year of opening.
- Junction Programme includes 10 junctions with five gone to tender and five at design stage.
- Public Lighting Energy Efficient Programme (PLEEP) – The lead authority for this programme is Kilkenny County Council. It is hoped that surveying will commence in Quarter 1 2024 and works to commence in Quarter 3 2024.

- Kildare County Council are the lead authority on the EV Strategy with Meath, Louth and Wicklow. A pilot scheme in Maynooth is processing with 4 high power quick charge units. The civil works are completed by Maynooth Municipal District office.
- The bus corridor on the M4 from Maynooth towards South Dublin County Council was agreed by the members of the Council. The aim being to reduce journey time from Maynooth to the city centre.
- Bridge Rehabilitation are ongoing with Kildare National Roads Office (NRO) on the M7, Newhall.

Councillor Angela Feeney asked if any bus companies will be able to use M4 bus corridor. Ms Celina Barrett advised Councillor Feeney that it was her understanding that any bus provider could use this corridor, but she would contact National Transport Authority (NTA) for clarification.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Ms Barrett for the update which was noted.

4. Presentation from Dónal Hodgins, Senior Engineer, Sustainable Transport and Traffic Management

Mr. Dónal Hodgins advised the committee members that the origin of the presentation came from queries at Municipal District meetings.

He discussed the various pedestrian crossing facilities:

- Uncontrolled crossings
- Zebra crossings
- Pedestrian crossings
- Tram crossings
- Pelican crossings
- Toucan “Two-can-cross” crossings
- Puffin crossings
- Pegasus crossings
- Separate cycle crossings
- Nested pelican crossings

Mr Dónal Hodgins outlined other key areas to be addressed:

- Not to confuse the pedestrian's users.
- Prioritise pedestrians.
- Examine the Road User Hierarchy.
- Communication with disability groups.
- Locations are viewed as case-by-case bases.

Mr Dónal Hodgins discussed the current situation throughout the county. He confirmed that the Department of Transport's Traffic Signs Manual and the National Transport Authority's Cycle Design Manual must be adhered to when making a decision of the type of pedestrian crossing suitable for a specific location.

The members raised the following points:

1. Green light from traffic lights on bridges.
2. Variety of timing and locations throughout the county.
3. New developments requests with planning conditions.
4. Criteria to decide the type of pedestrian crossings.

Mr. Dónal Hodgins confirmed the following points:

1. The definition of green light can vary. The traffic light colour green should be dimmed at night.
2. Kildare County Council has a Traffic Management section set up since 2007. This section is the most experienced team outside of Dublin. He informed the committee that everything to do with traffic management is governed by regulations. In Naas, the Pathfinder will provide a plan and improve the location of the pedestrian crossings.
3. A proactive approach is required from a desire line, conditions in planning, to name but a few.

The Cathaoirleach and the committee members complimented all those concerned with the work achieved to date in the active travel area throughout the county.

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.

- Procurement of a new civil defence building in Clane is almost complete with the contract signed.
- Fire Station in Maynooth is gone to tender.
- Business Continuity workshops have taken place on the subject of blackouts. The next workshop will be on the subject of “not having access to a building”.
- Significant progress on fire certificates for Ukraine building at locations in Sallins and Punchestown.
- In light of the retained fire fighter’s acceptance of recommendations from the Workplace Relations Commissions, a recruitment drive will commence early in 2024.

5. Meeting Calendar for 2023

The following proposed dates for 2024 were agreed by the members but are subject to change as the proposed dates are scheduled into the draft meeting calendar which will be presented to the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) and to the Full Council for approval.

- Thursday 1 February 2024
- Thursday 2 May 2024
- Thursday 5 September 2024
- Thursday 14 November 2024

In light of the local elections in 2024, on the proposal of Councillor Bob Quinn and seconded by Councillor Joseph Neville dates 1 February 2024 and 2 May 2024 were agreed.

6. Update on the Sustainable Transport Forum

The Senior Engineer, Mr Dónal Hodgins gave an update on the progress on the Sustainable Transport Forum.

-The forum has held 2 meetings.

- The October meeting gave 4 presentations that included Dr. Darren McAdam O'Connell of Transport, Mobility Forum, Cork.
- Positive feedback was received on the items of quiet road and bicycle libraries.
- No work programme agreed to date.

7. Referrals from Full Council and Municipal District Meetings

7.1: *"That Kildare County Council partner with Local Link and a non-profit and/or commercial entity to trial a community car within an area of the municipal district that is poorly served by public transport"*.

Cllr Noel Connolly requested at the October 2023 Kildare/Newbridge Municipal District meeting that this motion be referred to the Transportation SPC. He highlighted that Fingal County Council has this type of a scheme in place since 2019 with 20 volunteers to assist for transport in rural Ireland. He informed the members of the committee that Kildare Newbridge Municipal District propose to assign €20,000 from Local Property Tax (LPT) to the scheme.

Mr. Dónal Hodgins advised Cllr Connolly that the National Transport Authority (NTA) did carry out discussions with Kildare County Council on this matter. He suggested that now is the time to revisit with direct discussions with Fingal County Council with a view to a pilot or draft policy of the scheme.

Cllr Ward asked Cllr Connolly to contact Mark McLoughlin on this matter.

7.2 *"That the council undertake an equality impact assessment as part of the parking Bye-Laws review process in the Municipal District"*.

Cllr Vanessa Liston requested at the September 2023 Celbridge Leixlip Municipal District meeting that the following motion be referred to the Transportation SPC.

Cllr Liston advised that parking bye-laws are required but to remember that while the Bye-Laws would be going through that they don't effect issues like equality, gender, age and sex base. She highlighted that United Kingdom have a traffic filtered equality impact assessment in place.

Michael Hurley, Health & Safety Officer was welcomed to the meeting.

He reiterated that as Access Officer, he informed the committee that any review of parking bye-laws, accessibility will be included in them. The Parking Section are assessing the times that parking bays are used during the day. He informed the committee that there are a number of parking bays in place for larger vehicles.

Cllr Liston encouraged the committee to commence testing with formally consultation with visually impaired people/disabled people to receive correct feedback to develop a policy.

Mr. Michael Hurley informed the committee that there are six Local Access Groups in the county where discussions to examine and consider the impacts on the public and consultation with these groups.

Cllr Ward said that this item could be examined in 2024.

7.3: “That the Council set out the mandatory accessibility requirements and or the provisions set in statute in respect of accessibility standards for public transport and public infrastructure projects, to include the planning, design and construction of cycle lanes, bus islands, pedestrian cross walks, pedestrian footpaths and pedestrian shared spaces”.

Cllr Aidan Farrelly requested at the Full Council meeting June 2023 that this motion be referred to the Transportation SPC. Cllr Farrelly encouraged the committee to work with disabilities and visually impaired people in the area of planning and design of development, cycleways etc.

Cllr Ward reiterated that marrying this motion with Cllr Vanessa Liston motion would be ideal in developing a policy.

Considering this, Mr Dónal Hodgins advised the committee that the Active Travel Team brought the Naas Municipal District members on site on the Kilcullen Road which showed awareness of any issues before the public comes to the Kildare County Council.

The committee members were informed that management collaborating, co-ordinating and working in partnership with all groups is vital for the success of any project.

Councillor Ward thanked the members for their attendance.

The next meeting will be held on 1 February 2024.

Cllr. Paul Ward

24.5.24