

Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces Strategic Policy Committee

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday, 21 May 2026, 3.30 p.m. in Committee Room.

Attendees: Councillor Kevin Duffy (Chair), Councillor Peter Melrose, Councillor Noel Connelly, Councillor Tracey O'Dwyer, Mr. Gerry Prendergast, Mr. Eamonn Mahoney.

Online: Councillor Paul Ward.

Also Present: Ms. Siobhán Scully A/Director of Service, Ms. Claire Whelan A/Senior Executive Officer, Mr. Chris Galvin, Senior Engineer, Mr. Cyril Buggie A/Senior Engineer, Mr. Simon Wallace A/Senior Parks & Landscape Officer, Mr. Michael Yallop Executive Parks & Landscape Officer, Ms. Noeleen Smullen, Senior Staff Officer, Ms. Marie Kelly, Assistant Staff Officer.

Apologies: Mr. Mark McLoughlin, Senior Executive Officer.

Not Present: Mr. Daragh Conlan, A/ Senior Engineer, Councillor Ger Dunne, Councillor Paul Brooks, Mr. Cormac Browne.

Item 1 - Declarations of Interest

Noted.

Item 2 - Minutes of 5 February 2026

The minutes of 5 February 2026 were approved on the proposal of Councillor Noel Connelly, seconded by Mr. Eamonn Mahoney.

Item 3 - Director's Update

The committee received a broad update on the 2026 Roads Programme, capital projects, active travel, national roads, parks, fleet decarbonisation, and storm response. Members were advised that Kildare County Council has received €20

million from the Department of Transport for the annual roads work programme, covering restoration, maintenance, bridge rehabilitation, safety improvement works, drainage and climate resilience measures. It was noted that the reduction in overall funding for 2026 reflects the fact that works on the Athy Distributor Road are largely finalised. Members were also advised of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) allocations of €750,000 for public lighting and winter maintenance, together with a further €4.9 million for national road works including bridge rehabilitation, Park and Share and bus priority measures. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has also allocated €9.5 million for active travel schemes and €500,000 for bus stop enhancements.

Requests / Follow-up: A copy of the Annual Roads Programme is to be circulated to members after the meeting. Councillor Peter Melrose requested the locations of the county tree planting programme; Mr. Simon Wallace agreed to circulate this information.

Members were updated on progress across a number of major schemes, including the Maynooth Eastern Ring Road, where substantial works are expected to be completed by Q2 2026; the Celbridge-Hazelhatch Mobility Corridor, with a decision from An Coimisiún Pleanála expected in July 2026; and the Newbridge Southern Ring Road, where funding has been allocated to progress design. Updates were also provided on active travel schemes in Maynooth, Monasterevin, Leixlip, Prosperous and Naas. The committee further noted progress on the M4 Bus Priority Scheme, ongoing Park and Share works on the M9, and the commencement of preparations for special speed limit bylaws, with public consultation expected in Q3 2026. Bike Week 2026, the Just 1 Life Programme, continued fleet decarbonisation, and the post-event review of Storm Chandra were also noted.

Item 4 - Outdoor Recreation Plan

Mr. Simon Wallace, A/Senior Parks and Landscaping Officer, presented an overview of the County Outdoor Recreation Plan, including the consultation process, key findings, and the resulting strategic objectives and action plan. Members discussed issues such as volunteer involvement and environmental assessment.

Resolution: The committee agreed that the Outdoor Recreation Plan should proceed to full council for approval.

Item 5 - Landscape Policy

Mr Simon Wallace A/ Senior Parks, Landscaping Officer and Mr. Michael Yallop, Executive Landscape & Parks Officer presented on the developing Landscape Policy, with particular focus on tree management, grass maintenance, landscape maintenance, biodiversity, and the protection of trees and hedgerows within development sites. The presentation outlined the environmental, climate, social, heritage and public health benefits of retaining and managing trees appropriately. Members were advised that trees on development and brownfield sites can provide significant local ecosystem services, but that there are continuing challenges in securing retention and protection through the planning and construction process.

Members sought clarification on whether a protected structure list includes trees, whether a tree preservation list exists, how developers are responding to tree retention, and enforcement options to improve protection of trees and hedgerows.

The presentation was noted. The discussion highlighted the need for stronger tree and hedgerow protection through planning and development processes.

Item 6 - Annual Work Programme 2026

Item 6 was taken before Items 4 and 5. Ms. Siobhán Scully outlined the importance of the 2026 Annual Work Programme and emphasised the need to avoid duplication of actions with other SPCs. The Cathaoirleach reminded members that the role of the SPC is to influence policy development. Members were advised that submissions circulated after the February meeting had been reviewed and prioritised. A detailed discussion then took place on the contents of the programme and the areas to be progressed during 2026.

Councillor Tracey O'Dwyer requested clarification on the pilot locations under the Traffic Calming Policy and on the Junction Programme. The committee was advised that Junction Programme locations include Allenwood, Prosperous, Bert Cross, Blackwood Cross, Watchhouse Cross, Thompsons Cross, Allen Cross, Firmount Cross, Cloncurry Cross and Perrystreet Cross.

Work Programme 2026

1. Outdoor Recreation Policy

Policy that will guide the sustainable development of outdoor recreation in the county as well as supporting more residents and visitors to take part in outdoor activity.

2. Traffic Calming Policy

Review of Guidance document on the 'Selection and Implementation of Traffic Calming Measures', adopted by Kildare County Council – September 2020.

3. Road Safety / Location of Interest – Junction Programme

Consideration of prioritisation of junction improvements in the context of 'Locations of Interest'.

4. Public Lighting Policy

Review of 'Street Lighting Policy and Planning Guidance' (2016) including Kildare Lighting Infrastructure Priority Schedule and technical specifications.

5. County Parking Policy

Review of 'County Parking Policy' framework adopted by Kildare County Council in December 2022.

6. Landscape Policy

Development of a strategy for trees and landscape maintenance including tree and hedgerow protection.

Resolution: The committee agreed the Annual Work Programme 2026 for submission to the Corporate Policy Group and to full council.

Item 7- Any Other Business

Committee Vacancy: Ms. Siobhán Scully advised that Ms. Lily O'Donohue had been nominated by the IFA to represent the Agriculture/Farming Pillar on the SPC.

Ratification of Ms. Lily O'Donohue was expected to be considered at the full council meeting on 25 May 2026.

Conclusion

The Cathaoirleach thanked all members for attending. The meeting then concluded.

