



**Minutes of meeting of Full Council held at 3:00 p.m.
Monday 25 March 2024 in the Council Chamber
Áras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas, Co Kildare**

Members Present: Councillor D. Fitzpatrick (Cathaoirleach), Councillors V. Behan, A. Breen, A. Breslin, F. Brett, B. Caldwell, B. Clear, M. Coleman, A. Connolly, N. Connolly, P Curran, I. Cussen, S. Doyle, K Duffy, T. Durkan, , A. Feeney, P. Hamilton, R. Heather, N. Heavey, I. Keatley, C. Kelly, N. Killeen, M. Leigh, V. Liston, P. McEvoy, S. Moore, J. Neville, N. Ó Cearúil, P. O'Dwyer, T. O'Dwyer, C Pender, R. Power, B. Quinn, E. Sammon, B. Weld and B. Wyse.

Online: Councillors, F. McLoughlin Healy, P Ward, and B Wyse

Apologies: Councillor A. Farrelly

Also Present: Ms. S. Kavanagh (Chief Executive) Ms. A. Aspell, Ms. M. Higgins, and Mr. E. Ryan (Directors of Service) Mr. G Conlon and Ms. C. Barrett, (A/Director of Service), , Ms. E. Hanlon Head of Finance, Ms. C O'Grady (Meetings Administrator), Mr J Hannigan (Meetings Secretary) and other officials.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed everyone to the March meeting of the Council.

01/0324

Declaration of Interests

The Cathaoirleach sought from the members any declarations of conflicts of interest or pecuniary or beneficial interests under Section 177 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended. There were no declarations.



02/0324

Minutes and Progress Report

The council considered the draft minutes of the monthly meeting held on 26 February 2024 and the progress report.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Caldwell seconded by Councillor McEvoy and agreed by the members present that the draft minutes of the monthly meeting held on 26 February 2024 be adopted.

The progress report was noted.

03/0324

Chief Executive's Monthly Management Report

The members noted the Chief Executives monthly management report.

04/0324

Section 183 Disposal of Land

The members considered the disposal of lands pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended (Statutory notice of 08 March 2024 circulated previously and attached).

- i. Disposal of 0.0235 hectares of land at Clonkeen, Carbury, Co.Kildare.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Weld seconded by Councillor Feeney and agreed by all that the Disposal of 0.0235 hectares of land at Clonkeen, Carbury, Co. Kildare be approved.

05/0324

Annual Service Delivery Plan 2024

The members considered the Annual Service Delivery Plan 2024.



Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Power seconded by Councillor McEvoy and agreed by all members present that the Annual Service Delivery Plan 2024 be approved.

06/0324

Roads Programme 2024

The members considered the Roads Programme 2024
A copy of the report had been circulated to the members.
The report was noted.

07/0324

Draft 2024-2026 Mid East Region Homelessness Action Plan

The members considered the Draft 2024-2026 Mid East Region Homelessness Action Plan.

Mr. O Brady from the Housing Team gave a presentation on the Draft Mid East Homelessness Action Plan. He advised that in preparing the Plan that stakeholder engagement with agencies involved in homelessness services included: Meath and Wicklow County Councils, The Homelessness Action Teams, the Housing SPC, the HSE, Tusla, the Irish Prison Service, Drugs Task Force, and the Mental Health teams across the region.

The Action Plan was prepared on an evidenced based approach drawing on statistical data for the last 3 years thereby informing strategic development of homeless services in the region for 2024-2026.

He advised that this was a challenging time in terms of increasing presentations and outlined the impacts of coming out of Covid Measures, the subsequent lifting in March 2023 of the ban on notices to quit, and the start of the war in Ukraine.

He referred to increasing national homeless figures which could be seen in increased presentations in Meath and Kildare, with a slight reduction in Wicklow in 2023.

Regionally there was an increase from 2105 to 2830, a 25% increase. Kildare presentations went from 1261 in 2021 to 1967 in 2023.



He outlined how HAP proved invaluable in moving families from Emergency Accommodation, with 5,508 households assisted to the end of 2023.

He outlined that across the region how the council focused on Allocations, transitional allocations and HAP tenancies. This supports the objectives of National Homelessness Policy i.e. enabling people to move into and sustain housing with appropriate levels of support. He also informed the members of progressions to Housing First tenancies and that the ultimate objective is helping people live independently in their own home and integrate into their communities.

He advised that monthly meetings took place with service providers and supports regarding cases/nominations and targets.

He advised that the Mid-East Region have a protocol to reduce the likelihood of released prisoners presenting as homeless without prior engagement and this is operating successfully.

The National Quality Standards Framework is also a focus of the plan with an objective to promote safe and effective services to persons experiencing homelessness.

Expenditure in the region had increased from €9.5 to €12.5 million from 2021 – 2023, and this is likely to increase as services continue to be improved. He explained how expenditure breakdown for the years was divided between:

- Prevention
- Emergency Accommodation
- Personnel and Support Costs

He explained that this plan was a blueprint for delivery of services to the homeless for the next 3 years and thanked the elected Members for their continued support in the delivery of homeless services.

The members raised the following.

- Who was responsible for recording rough sleepers in the county.
- Solutions to homelessness were never easy and that great work had been done by the Housing Department, but that provision of dry houses for single women was a particular need.
- How were dependencies on other agencies managed under Housing First?



- There was more finance provided to Meath, but Kildare had higher numbers of presentations, why was this?
- The council should be looking at purchasing houses as they came to the market.
- There were wraparound services for refugees is there a similar service for homelessness?
- What level of modelling was used to predict future requirement and numbers.
- Dublin City had premises in North Kildare and were used by their clients, how do the council address this?
- Commended the quality of service in Kildare compared to certain other local authorities.
- That HAP rates were not adequate as a support to prevent people entering homelessness.
- That members of the travelling community may not be engaging with homeless services and may be understated as a proportion of homeless figures.

Mr. Brady advised that:

- Rough sleepers were identified by a team of 3 who were involved on the streets.
- The Council are working on providing supported accommodation for single females in the Naas MD and are currently tendering for this.
- The Council liaise formally and informally with all support agencies and partners
- There appeared to be an anomaly between Meath and Kildare, and this is explained by more people being accommodated by MCC as a result of presentations whereas Kildare are more successful in taking preventative measures.
- Wrap around services are provided to homeless clients but needs can often be complex.
- Modelling for service demands is carried out nationally.
- The use of premises in North Kildare by Dublin local authorities is outside the control of the council.



- As accommodation comes on the market the council look at all options to provide potential emergency accommodation.
- Homeless don't always get the support services required from all agencies but the council are engaging and improving this relationship on an ongoing basis through constant engagement with services.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Weld seconded by Councillor Durkan and agreed by all members present that the Draft 2024-2026 Mid East Region Homelessness Action Plan be approved.

08/0324

Gnó an Cathaoirleach/Cathaoirleachs Business

The Cathaoirleach informed the members that he had attended the following events:

- National Enterprise Week organised by the Local enterprise Office.
- Student Enterprise Awards.
- Pride of Place Awards in the Riverbank Theatre
- Podcast launch at Barberstown "Allenwood: Changing Times" featuring former President of Ireland Mary McAleese.

He also gave details of the itinerary of the official visit to New York.

He welcomed to the meeting, Carmel Mangan, Chairperson of the County Kildare Association of New York and invited her to address the members.

Ms Mangan thanked the Cathaoirleach and the members, stating it was a great honour as a proud Kildare person and Chairperson of the County Kildare Association of New York to address the members. She thanked the members for their support and stressed the importance of the annual visit for St Patricks Day and how important the Christmas message from the council is to all former Kildare people at this time of year. She explained that the Association was a charity and advised if young people were coming over to New York on a J1 visa that the Association would try and help them. She also commended John Duggan and Chris Burke for their work on behalf of the Association. She said it was interesting to hear the issues discussed in the chamber



and they were no different to what was happening in New York except New York's were on a different scale.

Members thanked Ms Mangan for her hospitality and the Association's work on John Devoy statue and wished her well.

09/0324

Comhfhreagras/Correspondence

The Meetings Administrator confirmed four items of correspondence had been circulated to the members along with the progress report. These included three referrals from other Local Authorities and one acknowledgement from the ESB to a motion referral.

- Resolution from Cork County Council re Reduction in Vat Rate for Hospitality.
- Resolution from Cork County Council re Reduction in Vat Rate for Pubs.
- Resolution from Louth County Council re Abolition of the Current JPCs.
- Acknowledgement from ESB Networks re Invitation of ESB Management to briefing at Full Council.

The correspondence was noted.

10/0324

Conferences and Training

The Meetings Administrator referred to the conference and training report which had been circulated to the members.

Retrospective approval was sought for AILG Training Webinar "How to Use Canva to Create Marketing Images – Beginner Level", Friday 15 March 2024, Cllr N Connolly. "Local Election 2024 Preparation – A Briefing from the Electoral Commission", in Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone Saturday 23 March 2024 cost €80, Cllr N Connolly had attended.

Approval was sought for Training:



“Security training- Protecting Yourself when Canvassing” Webinar, to be held on 5 April 2024. Cllr N Connolly was attending.

“Defensive Social Media Training – Protecting Yourself Online” to be held on 12 April 2024. Cllr N Connolly was attending.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor McEvoy seconded by Councillor Hamilton and agreed by all members present that the Conference and Training report be approved.

11/0324

Bereavements

The Cathaoirleach extended his sympathy to the families of the late:

John O’Neill, Newbridge, former Councillor, Town Commissioner, and staff member of Kildare County Council. John was Chair of Kildare County Council on three occasions, 1976, 1993 and 2002.

Emmet Stagg, former TD and Councillor and Chair of Kildare County Council 1982.

Bridget O’Brien, Mother of Margaret O’Brien, Building and Development Control.

William Kenny, Father of David Kenny, Community Warden.

Angela Hyland, former Staff Member, Finance.

Dina Dillon, Mother of Tara Dillon, Housing, Mother-in-law of Catherine Barry, Corporate Services, and Aunt of Annette Aspell, Director of Services for Housing and Regeneration.

Derek Gaynor, Father of Stephen Gaynor, Finance and Andrew Gaynor, LEO.

A minute’s silence was observed.

12/0324

Impacts of Investment in Energy Retro Fit Programmes

The following motion in the names of Councillors Rob Power and Anne Connolly was considered by the members.



That the council carry out a survey of local authority tenants to determine the impacts of investment in energy retro fit programmes that the council have conducted. Survey should profile BER ratings achieved, work conducted on houses (windows/ doors/ insulation/ air to heat etc) with associated costs, current heating costs for tenants and previous costs for comparative analysis.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Power and seconded by Councillor A Connolly

A report from Ms A Aspell, Director of Service, Housing and Regeneration stated that In the Housing SPCs work programme it was agreed that a performance analysis would be conducted to establish the energy usage for a number of units completed under the Retrofit Programme. This involved the installation of meters specific to the Air to Water heating systems and recording electricity usage. The findings of the analysis will be reported through the Housing SPC and can be provided to the elected members. This work is ongoing. The SPC receive updates at their quarterly meetings in relation to the energy retrofit programme as it relates to social housing.

Councillor Power explained that it was important to get value for money for the upgrade. He noted that it was important that we achieved a B energy-rating. He advised that tenants were paying for the electricity to run heatpumps and enquired if works carried on the doors and windows were part of the retrofit. He asked that the value of the work should be the focus of the analysis.

Councillor A Connolly advised that while the retrofit was good there was a knock-on effect for tenants with extra electricity costs.

The members raised the following:

- That measurement of the impacts of this was essential before making judgements.
- That doors, windows and attics needed to be included.
- That air to water electricity costs were high with temperatures not set correctly.

Ms. A. Aspell advised that the technical team would be conducting a survey and would be reporting back to the SPC. They were seeing an increased interest in the scheme



and more positivity from tenants towards it. It was important to note that while there may be increased electricity costs in part due to inflation also, that heating costs are lowered, due to reduced heat loss. In relation to windows and doors the scheme was very specific on what was include but the team were looking at how this could be done. The temperature for the pump was set when installed. The technical team had dispelled some of the myths but any specific questions members had would be brought to the team. The results would be brought back to the Housing SPC. The scheme was improving as it develops.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Power seconded by Councillor A Connolly and agreed by the members that the report be noted.

13/0324

Review of the Dog Warden Service

The following motion in the names of Councillors Naoise Ó Cearúil and Michael Coleman was considered by the members.

That the council carry out a review of the dog warden service and establish if it needs to be expanded.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Ó Cearúil and seconded by Councillor Coleman.

A report from Ms M Higgins, Director of Services, Climate, Community, Environment and Water stated: The ISPCA provides a dog warden service (employing two wardens) on behalf of Kildare County Council and its personnel work closely with other agencies including An Garda Síochána.

The number of full-time wardens compares favourably with most other Local Authorities who have between 1 and 2 wardens.

The warden's role and responsibilities include:



- Dealing with queries and complaints from the public, court cases etc.,
- Investigating complaints from the public and An Garda Síochána in relation to dogs
- Working in close co-operation with An Garda Síochána in relation to matters pertaining to control of dogs
- Co-ordinating activities in relation to the control of stray animals and the operation of the pound

The service is regularly reviewed with senior management within the ISPCA. Any expansion of the service would of course be subject to funding being made available. There is no provision in the current budget for additional resources.

The Department of Rural and Community Development has policy and legislative responsibility for the area of Dog Control in Ireland.

The members may be aware that the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, recently (5 March) announced the establishment of a Dog Control Stakeholder Group.

The Group is made up of representatives from key Government Departments and Interest Groups and will make recommendations on strengthening the policy and legislation around dog control.

A broad range of interest groups is represented including farming and welfare organisations.

The Group is to consider dog control issues under the policy remit of the Department of Rural and Community Development. Discussions will focus on “immediate improvements within the limitations of the current situation, whilst also scoping a way forward for longer term changes and improvements. Themes include ‘restricted dogs’ legislation, guidance on proper dog control, dog breeding establishment standards and general awareness raising.”

For the members’ information the group consists of:



Kildare County Council

Chair: Mr John Twomey

and representatives from:

Department of Rural and Community Development

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Department of Environment, Climate and Communications

Association of Pet Dog Trainers Ireland

Blue Cross

CCMA

Comhairle na Tuaithe

Dogs Trust

DSPCA

Hunting Association of Ireland

IFA

Irish Kennel Club

Irish Veterinary Nursing Association

ISPCA

Madra

NARGC

UCD School of Veterinary Medicine

Veterinary Ireland

Councillor Ó Cearúil welcomed members of the IFA to today's meeting.

He explained that the dog population had grown as towns and villages expanded and grown closer to farmland. There had been an increase in dog attacks on sheep and cattle, with Kildare one of worst statistically. There was a need for an increase in the



Dog Warden service. He asked when the next review was and if a meeting could be arranged with the ISPCA and the IFA.

Councillor Coleman compared the services provided in Cork and Kildare

Cork has 5 full time and 4 parttime wardens and had an income of €627,000 Kildare has two wardens and an income of €157,000. He also compared the number of dog licences issued in Cork and Kildare. He believed that Kildare should go the way of Cork and increase resources and that this would bring in revenue and tackle the issue.

Councillor Weld said all dogs should be micro chipped. Farming and the bloodstock industry are crucial in Kildare. Attacks cause massive financial and lasting distress to families and this needs to be acknowledged with more resources. This is an important matter for the Finance committee to consider in November.

The members raised the following:

There should be a Dog warden per Municipal District to have proactive enforcement.

Gardai and Dog Wardens needed to work together to deal with lamping.

The Budget was the best way to deal with this.

The issue of out of control dogs was also an issue on Greenways.

A poor cultural attitude to responsible dog ownership has set in, due to lack of enforcement and education.

A resources review, limits to legislation, lack of controls on restricted breeds, provision of chip readers, free microchips should also be included in a review and fed back to the Finance Committee.

A scheme had been proposed to provide free dog chipping service, what had happened to this.



The council had invested significantly in Portersize Dog Pound, an assessment of value for money was needed.

The council had not appointed a Veterinary Officer, how are these responsibilities being managed.

Ms Higgins advised that the best way to deal with this was to consider increasing the resources put into the dog warden service as part of the budget process but noted that the costs would not just be in dog wardens but that administrative staff support needed to be considered. The results of the Government review should be known by budget time. She undertook to bring the member's feedback to the ISPCA. It was noted also by Ms Higgins that there are national negotiations ongoing related to Veterinary Services.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Ó Cearúil seconded by Councillor Coleman and agreed by the members that the report be noted.

14/0324

Ash Dieback

The following motion in the names of Councillors Brian Dooley and Noel Heavey was considered by the members.

That the council clarify its responsibilities regarding Ash Dieback and how it intends to address the growing problem in the county.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Dooley and seconded by Councillor Heavey.

A report from Ms C Barrett, A/Director of Service, Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces stated that Kildare County Council is only responsible for trees with Ash Dieback that are located on lands in our ownership. Any trees located on lands that are privately owned are a matter for the individual owners. It is not possible for us to monitor all trees with dieback but where representations or concerns are expressed about any trees or issues are noticed with trees as part of the ongoing maintenance of parks and open spaces in the county these are inspected and programmed for works



or removal depending on the condition of the tree as part of the tree works programme for each Municipal District.

Councillor Dooley welcomed the report and called for a multiagency. Residents and landowners had to bear the expense of dealing with this problem. Councillor Heavey compared its effects to foot and mouth outbreak. He explained that we had witnessed other tree types being eradicated by other blights. He advised that action was needed. The IFA had solutions and needed to be listened to.

Members made the following points:

The only way to dispose of ash dieback trees was to burn them and exemption was needed to allow this, and that a letter needed to issue to the Minister for Agriculture and also to the Minister with responsibility for the Environment.

Had a survey been carried out of the trees effected by dieback?

Protocols needed to be developed for the disposal of trees.

They highlighted the danger of trees falling across roads.

Schemes appeared to be in place for forestry but not farmers.

30% of trees are affected and the matter of tree replacement needs to be considered.

Ms Barrett explained that this was a national issue. The Department of Agriculture had a scheme for site clearance. This was a national scheme. She would not recommend that the council develop its own scheme.

Ms Barrett said she would write to the Department of Agriculture to raise the issue of burning of trees felled by the disease.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Dooley seconded by Councillor Heavey and agreed by members that a letter would issue to the Department of Agriculture and Department of the Environment requesting that farmers be allowed dispose of trees by burning them.



15/0324

Update on Speed Limit Review Process

The following motion in the names of Councillors Bill Clear and Nuala Killeen was considered by the members.

Given the significant increase in road fatalities so far this year and the urgent necessity to reduce speed limits, that the council write to the Department of Transport requesting a timeline outlining what stage the speed limit review process is at and when guidelines will be issued by the Minister.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Clear and seconded by Councillor Killeen

A report from Ms C Barrett, A/Director of Services, Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces stated that The Road Traffic Bill 2024, which completed the Dáil Éireann Fifth Stage in March 2024, is being introduced to address a number of key road safety issues, in light of the recent upward trend in road deaths. It also includes several minor and technical amendments. One key measure relates to speed limits. In September 2023, the Department of Transport published a Speed Limit Review. Among the recommendations are key changes to the law on default speed limits, which will now be implemented through the Bill.

Default speed limits will be amended as follows –

- Built-up area roads – reduction from 50km/h to 30km/h
- Local roads – reduction from 80km/h to 60km/h
- National Secondary Roads – reduction from 100km/h to 80km/h

Local authorities will retain the power to provide for different limits ('special speed limits') on particular roads in their areas if they see fit. Amended guidelines for setting speed limits are due to be published shortly and a letter can be sent to the Minister requesting a timeline for its publication.

Councillor Clear informed the members of the backlog for driving tests and highlighted the number of young people killed in road accidents. People were not observing the speed limits. Councillor Killeen stated average speed cameras needed to be used to



ensure compliance. 18- to 24-year-olds and 65 plus were the groups that were most vulnerable.

Councillor Sammon advised that a similar letter had issued on behalf of the Naas municipal district.

Ms Barrett informed the meeting that the letter had issued on behalf of the Naas municipal district. She would send a letter in the name of the council. She was awaiting a circular from the Department.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Clear, seconded by Councillor Killeen and agreed by members that a letter would issue to the Department of Justice seeking clarification when the guidelines would issue.

16/0324

Protocols for Farm Inspections

The following motion in the name of Councillor Veralouise Behan was not considered by the members.

That the council develop new protocols for farm inspections in liaison with the farming community.

Councillor Behan advised that she wished to defer the motion. She was advised that she would have to re-submit the motion for April's meeting.

17/0324

Upgrade and Repair Bus Shelters

The following motion in the name of Councillor Peggy O'Dwyer was considered by the members.

That Kildare County seek funding from the NTA to upgrade and repair bus shelters at busy town centre public transport stops for Universal Access Design.

The motion was proposed by Councillor P O'Dwyer and seconded by Councillor Duffy.



A report from Ms C Barrett, A/Director of Service, Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces stated that an allocation of €500,000 for 2024, has been provided by the National Transport Authority in respect of a “Bus Stop Enhancement Programme”, which is intended to allow the upgrade of bus stops in various locations across the county, including the installation of bus poles and hardstanding areas, plus bus shelters in agreed locations.

The details of the implementation of this programme have not been communicated to the council yet but it is expected that a programme of bus stop locations and associated works will be agreed with the NTA in advance of any construction commencing under this programme, as with previous allocations. Improvements at key town centre stops can be included in the programme, subject to the funding agency’s agreement.

Councillor P O’Dwyer informed the meeting that the bus shelters needed to be upgraded, and asked to see a list of the bus stops to be upgraded.

Members raised concerns around the standard of accessibility design, citing examples of difficult slopes/angles and lack of hardstanding as clear issues.

Ms Barrett advised that there was huge demand for bus stops and shelters, and that a €500,000 would not address all the bus stops. The council had to follow the guidelines supplied by NTA when installing bus shelters and stops.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor P O’Dwyer seconded by Councillor Duffy and agreed by members that the report be noted.

18/0324

In-House Feasibility Studies

The following motion in the name of Councillor Tracey O’Dwyer was considered by the members.

That Kildare County Council explore the possibility of carrying out small scale feasibility studies in-house for future projects rather than outsourcing to consultants for



public realm projects such as Town Master Plans and Healthchecks that are required for the purpose of being eligible to apply for funding.

The motion was proposed by Councillor O'Dwyer and seconded by Councillor P O'Dwyer.

A report from Ms A Aspell, Director of Service, Housing and Regeneration stated that the Strategic Projects and Public Realm (SPPR) Team is a small, multi-disciplinary team. The main focus of the team is, through evidence-based data and urban design analysis, to collaborate with communities to develop transformative Public Realm/ Urban Design solutions to create more vibrant town and village centres from concept right through to construction. The team is currently managing several successful applications already made to the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, Town and Village Fund, with some projects progressed to construction stage. Additional applications / business cases will continue to be submitted as funding opportunities arise, to ensure that the work programme is delivered.

It would be preferable to progress feasibility studies for future projects in-house, however, the capacity to do this will depend on availability of resources at any given time. The development and publication of a Town Renewal Plan for Rathangan already forms part of the Strategic Projects and Public Realm work programme. This will be the first plan delivered in-house by the SPPR team, with the initial assessments underway. However, should specialised consultant input be required, and the skillset/resource is not available in-house, a consultant will be procured for that element.

Councillor T O'Dwyer noted that feasibility studies were expensive. If the council could use in house staff to prepare the studies for small schemes, the money saved could be used to spend on the scheme. She used the Athgarvan masterplan as an example.

Ms Aspell advised that the approach depended on the resources available and that there can be considerable movement of staff. She stated that while it would be preferable if all work could be done inhouse, it was necessary to avail of consultancy.



Resolved on the proposal of Councillor T O'Dwyer seconded by Councillor P O'Dwyer and agreed by members that the report be noted.

19/0324

Survey of Parking Spaces

The following motion in the name of Councillor Suzanne Doyle was considered by the members.

That the council carry out a survey of public and privately run car parking spaces in town centres across the county. Where pay parking bye laws exist that this survey be compared to quantum of parking spaces that existed in 2014 or nearest date to 2014 where previous review of bye laws was carried out. That this data be used to identify a ratio for recommended level of car parking that should be provided having regard to town's population and commercial function of town centres.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Doyle and seconded by Councillor Ó Cearúil.

A report from Ms C Barrett, A/Director of Service, Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces stated that the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 contains a number of objectives in respect of the promotion of our town centres as our primary retail centres. Furthermore, a number of other strategies and guidelines are in place to promote town centres including the Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area, the Kildare 2025 Economic Development Strategy, Retail Planning Guidelines and the Town Centre First policy. A number of these policies and guidelines identify the objective of facilitating a shift towards increased access to retailing by public transport, cycling and walking. While the provision of parking, both public and privately run, is recognised as an important element in assisting visitors to town centres, it is not the most appropriate measure to create buoyant town centres. The County Development Plan outlines car parking standards for categories of proposed development including retail and commercial development, but parking is generally discouraged for town centres in particular where development is close to or can avail of public transport.



Councillor Doyle informed the meeting that there was no answer to her question in the report. She gave a list of main towns in the county with details of the pay parking spaces available to the residents. She stated that the figures were not consistently aligned with population or retail business. She informed the meeting that the council were wasting URDF money unless this is addressed. The council were supporting the modal shift but not supporting the rate payers where there are no transport links to town centres and this data was needed to inform decision making.

The following points were raised by the councillors:

Reducing car parking spaces has adversely affected business in town centres, such as Leixlip.

Leixlip will lose parking in the Leixlip plan and feedback about revenue earned from parking spaces was also required.

That spatial information not ratios that was required, along with consideration of demographics and safety in reducing car parking and hence car use.

That many people want pedestrianization and there was a clear trend towards car parking reduction.

That in towns where parking is reduced that park and ride options, with public transport links have not materialized and are badly needed.

That there were over 1000 spaces in Clane and the issue was that the Main Street was saturated with traffic and people cannot access it. What was required was an increase in the number of bus stops, cycle routes, safe and sustainable options.

There was a disparity between the ratios, there should be a minimum standard.

Ms Barrett advised the members this was not policy and would not be in the future, with a clear national objective of returning the town centres to pedestrians and sustainable transport users. She accepted that there were different views points, but



that car parking needed to be linked to accessible public transport outside town centres, such as park and ride facilities.

Councillor Doyle said this issue was multifaceted but that rate payers were at a competitive disadvantage as a result of these changes. The survey needed to be carried out so that the data collected could be used to inform decisions.

Ms. Kavanagh informed the meeting that the implication was to pull resources from somewhere else to identify the data sought. She did not believe there was a one size fits all solution, for example Leixlip's needs would be very different to Kildare Town's. The optimum time to assess these issues was during Healthchecks and ABTAs. The approach sought in the motion is against national policy, modal shift and climate action objectives, and even if parking is reduced in phases, the general direction is towards reduction, not increase.

Councillor Doyle advised that she wished to amend her motion, to read:

That the council survey of towns be conducted to collect data sets to include public parking, private parking, public transport, access to public transport, that this data be used to inform town centre development with regard to establishing primacy of town centres.

This was seconded by Councillor Kelly.

Following further debate, the revised motion was put to a vote, with 10 members voting in favour and 12 members voting against, the motion fell.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Doyle seconded by Councillor Kelly, That the council survey of towns be conducted to collect data sets to include public parking, private parking, public transport, access to public transport, that this data be used to inform town centre development with regard to establishing primacy of town centres, be put to a vote, and with 10 members voting in favour and 12 members voting against ,the motion fell.



20/0324

Non-Application of Zoning Conditions

The following motion in the name of Councillor Joe Neville was considered by the members.

That the council outline what are the ramifications of the non application of zoning conditions as set out by Councillors in areas zoned for housing in Local Area Plans.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Neville and seconded by Councillor T O'Dwyer.

A report from Mr. G Conlon, A/Director of Services, Planning, Enterprise, Economic Development and Emergency Services stated that the preparation of Local Area Plans for settlements in County Kildare are supported and informed by a series of evidenced based assessments including (but not limited to) Social Infrastructure Audits, Area Based Transport Assessments and other Environmental Assessments which inform the policies, objectives and actions of each plan based on the unique characteristics of the receiving environment.

More specifically, these assessments often result in the inclusion of an objective requiring the delivery of a piece or pieces of infrastructure to facilitate the development. Once the LAP is adopted and becomes effective these requirements must be addressed in detail through the Development Management process.

Councillor Neville asked if a condition of zoning was not included in planning permission does the planning permission that was granted stand up. He asked what was the impact of this and the legal basis of the permission if it was not included.

Mr. Conlon clarified that there are no conditions on Zoning in the LAP or indeed the County Development Plan but there are objectives in either that are taken into account in the Development Management Process when assessing planning applications.

Mr Conlon advised that the Director of Services for Planning and Economic Development had discussed this particular matter in detail with Cllr. Neville. He



outlined the training that had been provided to prevent errors occurring. An Bord Pleánala should apply the same rules as the council when granting a permission.

Ms Kavanagh reminded the members that this had to be a general discussion.

Mr Conlon further advised that any objective of a Local Area Plan should be considered as part of a planning application. In the instance raised by Cllr. Neville the permission was granted by An Bord Pleanala. The same legislative provisions apply to an Bord Pleanala; they should consider any objective in a Local Area Plan in their decisions.

Kildare County Council will ensure that all LAP requirements are considered through the Development Management Process.

Ms Kavanagh explained an objective as part of a Local Area Plan becomes policy and should be adhered to.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Neville seconded by Councillor T O'Dwyer and agreed by members that the report be noted.

21/0324

Oversight of OMCs

The following motion in the name of Councillor Chris Pender was considered by the members.

That the council provide a detailed report on the management fees paid, broken down by town and development, to ensure accountability and effective use of funds in supporting community welfare and housing quality improvements and that further oversight of these OMC (Owners' Management Companies) be explored with a view to Kildare County Council nominating either a staff member or a community representative, into a position on the OMCs.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Pender and seconded by Councillor Killeen.



A report from Ms A Aspell, Director of Service, Housing and Regeneration stated that the Council has an annual budget for 2024 for €500,000 for management fees and has procedures in place for the payment of these fees. OMCs are responsible for managing and maintaining the common areas in a multi unit development and fees are paid on receipt of the following documents:

- Notice of AGM
- Service Charge Budget along with copy of the filed accounts as lodged with the Companies Office
- Block Insurance Policy Schedule
- Evidence of Sinking Fund
- Fire Safety Inspection – Last date of fire inspection and Cert.

A report is being prepared in relation to management fees paid and will be circulated when completed.

The Council doesn't nominate staff as directors to OMCs as the responsibility of being a Director attaches to the individual rather than their official council role. Consideration has previously been given to the appointment of professional directors to represent the interests of the Council and this is an option that may be explored in the future.

Councillor Pender advised that a detailed breakdown of these significant funds was required. This was a significant amount of money and the council may not have responsibility or control of where these monies were spent. Someone needed to be appointed to these companies to represent the council. Councillor Killeen advised that the different companies would have different terms and conditions. The council needed to make sure it was getting value.

Ms Aspell advised that she circulate the report, when it was ready,

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Pender seconded by Councillor Killeen and agreed by members that the report be noted.



22/0324

Urban Bike Storage

The following motion in the name of Councillor Peter Hamilton was considered by the members.

That the council develop proposals, plans and approaches to support urban bike storage, with outline timing for pilots in the county.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Hamilton and seconded by Councillor Liston.

A report from Ms C Barrett, A/Director of Service, Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces stated that the development of urban bike storage solutions was discussed at the Sustainable Transport Forum and was identified as a potential item for the work programme. With the members agreement, the Sustainable Transport Forum will investigate best practice in this area and report back to the Transportation, Safety and Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Hamilton seconded by Councillor Liston and agreed by members that the report be noted.

23/0324

Progress on Biodiversity Recovery

The following motion in the name of Councillor Vanessa Liston was considered by the members.

That the council provide an update on any indicators of progress on biodiversity recovery across the county, as well as the current status of the associated research project.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Liston and seconded by Councillor Hamilton. A report from Ms M Higgins, Director of Services, Climate, Community, Environment and Water stated that a presentation was made in March to the Municipal Districts to inform on this matter. The work and outcomes are summarised below.



The 'Alternatives to Glyphosate' project commenced in 2019 to address the need for alternatives to glyphosate while enhancing biodiversity to tackle the climate and biodiversity crises. Highlights are as follows:

- Masters by research – completed; resulting in guidelines for 'Increasing Biodiversity & Alternatives to Herbicides in Public Open Spaces'. Document printed and disseminated to funding partners the week commencing 18 March 2024. The guidance informs operational matters using the alternative maintenance methods outlined to maintain open space and public realm locations while simultaneously protecting and providing opportunity for an increase in biodiversity.
- PhD by research commenced in 2023 to look at the effects on the soil biome (organisms living in soil) by glyphosate and the potential alternative methods researched along with comparisons of public realm types based on data collected to date. This will increase our understanding of soil management in conjunction with maintenance operations.
- Completed spin-off trial project 'Grass to Gas' pilot in 2022 and 2023 to ascertain the volume of biogas production from waste grass and associated carbon capture.
- To understand the potential of Grass to Gas a project commenced in 2023 to create an electronic 'Dashboard' using sites in Kildare as a baseline to extrapolate the potential overall gas production from council lands being maintained using the guidance researched. The dashboard will assist in calculating the future potential to decarbonise the council's fleet. Dashboard to be completed Q3 2024.
- 2024 seeking to increase the functionality of the Dashboard nationally and increase data accuracy using ArcGIS data held locally.

The above work is in conjunction with the Parks Department, Climate Action Office, Maynooth University's Geography Department and Terrain Ai team, and Green Generation with funding from Kildare County Council, funding partners (10 Local Authorities, Waterways Ireland and GAA), Public Service Innovation Fund, and future funding streams being investigated for the dashboard.



Within the current grass maintenance schedule across the county 60ha of grass margins/ parks / open spaces are maintained under a reduced cutting cycle. This means the areas are cut on a 1,2 or 5 cuts basis between March and Oct. This contrasts with the normal cutting regime which is normally 16 cuts per season.

Biodiversity recovery is difficult to assess given the lack of baseline data available for comparison. The master's research gives 2 years of data collection and analysis for the sites chosen and there is potential for a biodiversity indicator scoring system to be developed under the PhD should the faculty consider it appropriate. Should the option be considered positively the resulting score board most likely would be available in late 2025. In the absence of such a scoring system citizen science is a wonderful tool to glean information, for example, the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) pollinators app. The app providing continuous data collected by the citizen over the growing season on pollinators nationwide creating awareness of the need to improve habitats and food supply to lynchpin species within the natural ecosystem we live in and depend upon.

Kildare is leading out on research and the practice of working more harmoniously with nature in a decarbonising society. We warmly acknowledge the support of all associated, included councillors' allocation of LPT, to facilitate alternative maintenance operations on the ground.

Councillor Liston informed the meeting that the use of Glyphostates contributed to the loss of biodiversity. The funding for reduction in use needed to continue and now was the time to scope it out and remove the requirement for it to be funded out of LPT. She asked if the 60 Ha of grass that was on a reduced cutting regime could be expanded. She also asked if the 2 years of baseline data already collected was open data.

Ms Higgins advised that they would welcome any funding. She would need to check if the 60Ha could be expanded and if the data was open, though the partner agencies would have to first be consulted. She would circulate the report once received.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Liston seconded by Councillor Hamilton and agreed by members that the report be noted.



24/0324

Suspension of Standing Orders

On the Proposal of Councillor Doyle seconded by Councillor A Connolly that standing orders be suspended to 6.15pm.

25/0324

125 Year Anniversary of First Elections

The following motion in the name of Councillor Carmel Kelly was considered by the members.

That this Council mark the 125-year anniversary of the first elections which took place in early April of 1899 electing County Councillors by planting a tree at Áras Chill Dara.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Kelly and seconded by Councillor Moore.

A report from Mr E Ryan, Director of Services, Corporate, People and Cultural Services stated that with members agreement this can be organised.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Kelly seconded by Councillor Moore and agreed by members that to mark the 125 year anniversary of the first elections which took place in early April of 1899 electing County Councillors by planting a tree at Áras Chill Dara.

26/0324

Publish Revised Guidelines for Rural Housing

The following motion in the name of Councillor Noel Connolly was considered by the members.

That Kildare County Council write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage asking him to publish the revised guidelines for rural housing without delay.

The motion was proposed by Councillor N Connolly and seconded by Councillor Caldwell



Kildare County Council

A report from Mr G Conlon, A/Director of Services, Planning, Enterprise, Economic Development and Emergency Services stated that this is a matter for the Elected Members to agree.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor N Connolly seconded by Councillor Caldwell and agreed by members that Kildare County Council would write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage asking him to publish the revised guidelines for rural housing without delay.

The meeting concluded.