



Minutes of meeting of Full Council held at 3:00 p.m.

Monday 26 May 2025 in the Council Chamber

Áras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas, Co Kildare

Members Present: Councillors K. Duffy (Cathaoirleach), P. Balfe, V. Behan, A. Breen, A. Breslin, F. Brett, B. Clear, N. Connolly, S. Doyle, G. Dunne, T. Durkan, W. Durkan, A. Feeney, D. Fitzpatrick, R. Heather, N. Heavey, N. Killeen, M. Leigh, T. McDonnell, P. Melrose, P. Mulroe, P. O'Dwyer, T. O'Dwyer, C. O'Rourke, C. Pender, D. Phelan, E. Sammon, D. Trost, and B. Wyse.

Online: Councillors P. Brooks, B. Caldwell, B. Dooley, I. Keatley, B. O'Loughlin, L. Panaite Fahey, R. Power, P. Ward.

Apologies: Councillors C. Kelly, P. McEvoy, S. Moore.

Also Present: Ms. S. Kavanagh (Chief Executive), Ms. A. Aspell. Mr. A. Dunney, Ms. E. Hanlon, Mr. E. Ryan, Ms M. Higgins (Directors of Services), Ms. C. Barrett, Mr. D. Creighton (A/Directors of Services), Ms. L. Hanratty (Meetings Administrator), Mr. A. Shanahan (Meetings Secretary), and other officials.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed everyone to the May monthly meeting of the Council and asked the Meeting Administrator to read out a notice regarding the live streaming of the meeting to the Council's YouTube channel.



00/0525

Bereavements

The Cathaoirleach advised the meeting that he had been informed of the following bereavements:

Michael (Mike) Carroll, former Community Warden Supervisor for Naas Town Council.

Kevin Wynne, Husband of Annette Dowling, Information Technology.

Kathleen Daly, Mother of Damian Daly, Planning.

Patrick (Paddy) Butler, Father of Carol Butler, Finance.

Tom Malone, Grandfather of Councillor Rob Power.

The Cathaoirleach requested that a minute's silence be observed. A minute's silence was observed.

01/0525

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.

02/0525

Minutes and Progress Report

The council considered the draft minutes of the monthly meeting held on 28 April 2025 and the special meeting held on 31 March 2025 and the progress report.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Connolly, seconded by Councillor Caldwell, and agreed by the members present that the draft minutes of the monthly meeting held on 28 April 2025 and the special meeting held on 31 March 2025 be adopted. The progress report was noted.

03/0525

Chief Executive's Monthly Management Report

The members noted the Chief Executive's monthly management report.



04/0525

Disposal of Lands

The members considered the disposal of lands pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended (Statutory notice of 14 May 2025 circulated previously and attached).

- Disposal of 0.014 acres of land at 5 Patrician Ave, Naas, Co. Kildare.
- Disposal of 0.066 acres of land at 146 Allenvue Heights, Newbridge Co. Kildare.

Councillor Dunne expressed his gratitude to the Council for resolving long standing issues at Patrician Avenue, by means of the disposal.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Feeney seconded by Councillor T. O' Dwyer, and agreed by the members present that the disposal of 0.014 acres of land at 5 Patrician Ave, Naas, Co. Kildare and 0.066 acres of land at 146 Allenvue Heights, Newbridge Co. Kildare be approved.

05/0525

**Draft 2024 Annual Report, including the Annual Service Delivery Plan 2024
Progress Report and the Corporate Plan Progress Report for 2024**

Mr. Eoghan Ryan, Director of Services, Corporate, People and Cultural Services, noted that a draft report was circulated prior to the meeting. Mr. Ryan briefed the meeting on the report. The members considered the Draft Annual Report.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Fitzpatrick, seconded by Councillor Trost and agreed by the members present that the 2024 Annual Report be approved.

06/0525

Kildare Municipal Art Collection, Purchasing and Donations Policy

Mr. Eoghan Ryan, Director of Services, Corporate, People and Cultural Services, noted that a draft policy was circulated prior to the meeting. Mr. Ryan briefed the meeting on the report. The members considered the draft Policy.



Councillor Pender asked if a greater presence of public art could be considered in the future. He noted that the Arts and Library Services are active in reaching out to groups but suggested that the policy supports the display of art in spaces of marginalised communities and in rural areas.

Mr Ryan noted that support is specifically given to emerging artists, and that multiple funding sources are required to deliver the display of public art which can be challenging.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Sammon, seconded by Councillor Doyle, and agreed by the members present that the Kildare Municipal Art Collection, Purchasing and Donations Policy be approved.

07/0525

Cathaoirleach's Business

The Cathaoirleach advised members that he had attended several events recently, including:

- Launch of Biodiversity Week, 9th Irish Military Seminar at the Riverbank, Kildare Inclusivity Festival and the Kildare Volunteer Awards in Newbridge.

He also spoke of his admiration for the volunteers represented at the Kildare Volunteer Awards and thanked Councillor P. O'Dwyer for attending the Kildare Inclusivity Festival at the Curragh Racecourse. Kildare Inclusivity Festival was praised by the members.

08/0525

Correspondence

The Meetings Administrator confirmed that six items of correspondence had been circulated to the members along with the progress report. These included an acknowledgement from the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage following motions from April's meeting, an acknowledgement from the OPW following a motion from Councillor C O'Rourke, an invite to Food and Drinks Trail, a reply from the Minister of Housing regarding Councillors Doyle March motion, and two correspondences seeking nomination as a Presidential candidate.



Following an enquiry from Councillor Killeen, the Cathaoirleach advised members that it was intended to brief members regarding the processes around candidate nominations for the Presidential Elections, at the next Council meeting as this was due to come before June CPG meeting for discussion.

The correspondence and report were noted.

09/0525

Conferences and Training

The Meetings Administrator referred to the conference and training report which was circulated to the members and recommended by the Corporate Policy Group.

- Councillor Clear sought retrospective approval for attendance at Technological University of Dublin for Planning and Design for Active Travel course for six weeks in the amount of €255 which represented 50% of the course fees.
- Councillors Phelan and Mulroe sought approval for attendance at AILG Induction Training for newly co-opted Councillors on 29 May 2025 at a cost of €90 each.
- Councillor Phelan sought approval for attendance at free online training AILG Housing Agency -Local Authorities and Approved Housing Bodies course on 23 May 2025.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Brett, seconded by Councillor Fitzpatrick, and agreed by the members present that the conference and training report be approved.

10/0525

Unauthorised Developments Meetings

The following motion in the names of Councillors Fintan Brett, Paul Ward, Brendan Wyse, Tim Durkan, Daragh Fitzpatrick, William Durkan and Kevin Duffy was considered by the members:

That the council commits to bi-monthly in person meetings to address and work through Unauthorised Developments with members.



The motion was proposed by Councillor Brett, seconded by Councillor Fitzpatrick.

A report from Mr A Dunney, Director of Services, Planning, Enterprise, Economic Development and Emergency Services stated that the Executive notes the request from the elected members for a commitment to a bi-monthly in person meeting to address and work through unauthorised developments in the County.

In this regard the growing concerns of the members relating to a significant increase in alleged unauthorised developments throughout the County are shared by the Executive who have initiated a number of processes and procedural improvements with the aim of addressing these concerns, including the development of new IT systems, triaging enforcement cases as received and careful allocation of complaints by matching the complexity and severity of the case in question with the experience and expertise of enforcement team. Indeed, we have also recently supplemented the Planning Enforcement Team in Kildare County Council which now totals 9 full-time staff.

For context, the Planning Enforcement Section carries out its enforcement functions in accordance with the provisions of Part VIII of The Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. Such provisions are an Executive function of the Local Authority with Schedule 15 section 151 setting out details in regard to the functions to be carried out by a Managers Order including 'a decision to take legal proceedings. The timeframes involved in the enforcement process are set out as follows:

ACTION	TIMESCALE
Written complaint received by the planning authority	Start
Warning letter issues	Within 6 weeks
Response from alleged unauthorised developer	Within a further 4 weeks
Reply issued to complainant by planning authority	Within a further two weeks



Planning authority decides whether further action is required	Within 12 weeks where possible (Not rigid in the eyes of the Court)
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In addition to the above, the members will be aware that Alleged Offenders are provided with 6 months to remedy the unauthorised situation after which recourse to the courts is sought as soon as practicably possible.

Notwithstanding the above referenced improvements, an additional objective of the Planning Enforcement Team is to establish a multi-disciplinary approach, with relevant state agencies, where a shared and collective aim will be to address specific cases of alleged unauthorised development and serial offenders. Such an approach is in the early stages of development with initial engagements providing a positive basis for dealing with specific cases currently in the system.

Following on from the above, recent process improvements and measures are also being currently assessed for their potential to inform and supplement the level of information provided to the members through the monthly CE Reports. Such information and statistics may include details in regard to New Consultations/Cases, the number of cases closed, enforcement notices served, warning letters served, and cases referred to solicitors for review and legal proceedings.

Noting the above and the significant workload of the Planning Team, the members will recall the Planning Functions Briefing for full council that was held in early 2025 which outlined the processes and procedures involved in all aspects of the planning function including enforcement process as well as a number of case examples and timelines.

This initial briefing was a resounding success and as such, and in light of this motion, the Planning Department are agreeable to engage with the members through a further briefing. It should be noted however that while specifics relating to alleged unauthorised development files cannot be discussed, updates in regard to the status of active cases from a broad perspective can be provided.



Councillor Brett thanked the Director for the detailed report. He noted that if funding for legal expertise was a barrier to progressing cases, that the members were willing to commit funding, and addressing shortfalls to deal with the processing of serial offenders regarding unauthorised development, should be prioritised.

During discussion, the members raised the following points:

- The report was positive and a space to regularly discuss the issues and evaluate the impact of the actions in the report was very welcome.
- The credibility of the planning process was at stake if this is not addressed.
- The housing crisis was a major factor in increased unauthorised developments.
- There is reluctance from complainants to progress their complaints.
- An inter-agency approach was needed, including, for example, the Revenue Commissioner, An Garda Síochána and the Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB).
- Members would like to see data and metrics to track progress in this area.
- The duration/timeframe of cases is hugely frustrating for constituents.
- Frustration of constituents due to alleged offenders applying for planning permission, to delay or avoid legal proceedings.
- Triaging should be done on the impact of serial offenders to the public and local communities.
- The activity of staff on the ground is acknowledged, however the Executive have proven unable to address the issue. Progress from the actions proposed must be seen as soon as possible.
- Would the creation of an in-house legal team be of benefit?

Director Alan Dunney responded to the members. He shared their frustration but noted the scale of development in the County, with over 1,800 planning applications, 5 Local Area Plans, a County Development Plan Review and in excess of 1 enforcement case created per day, was putting a strain on resources. He disagreed that the Executive were not capable in this area, and that the team involved are under pressure. While triaging is done, he noted that every case had to be inspected, reports compiled and then actioned.



He stated that he would consider how data and metrics can be provided to update members, without breaching GDPR or compromising any proceedings planned or underway. He would continue to pursue inter-agency cooperation to address significant cases.

He stated that he was satisfied with the quality of legal representation the Council uses but the delays were with the legal system, not the service used.

He stated that he would commit to one briefing, possibly within the next month.

Councillor Brett thanked the Director, stating he was looking forward to seeing results soon.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Brett, seconded by Councillor Fitzpatrick, and agreed by the members present that the report be noted.

11/0525

GDPR in relation to listing Unauthorised Developments

The following motion in the names of Councillors Evie Sammon, Donna Phelan, Carmel Kelly, Robert Power and Veralouise Behan was considered by the members:

That the council clarifies the concern surrounding GDPR in relation to listing Unauthorised Developments on the planning portal as was done in previous years.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Sammon and seconded by Councillor Phelan.

A report from Mr A Dunney, Director of Services, Planning, Enterprise, Economic Development and Emergency Services stated that it should also be noted by the members that when an Unauthorised Development complaint is received it is an allegation of unauthorised development that needs to (1) be examined, (2) have proceedings taken under the planning code and where necessary be (3) referred to the courts to be proven and adjudicated on and during this process the alleged offender is entitled to privacy under data protection and GDPR legislation like any alleged offender.



In this context, Kildare County Council did previously publish details of enforcement points and information on the planning portal. However, there are now strict controls on the use of information on that register following on from a number of legal complaints which were received with respect to this information being made available publicly.

These complaints related to, amongst other things, preventing the sale of properties where UD complaints had been received, and an Unauthorised Development Case was opened but later proven to be vexatious / frivolous or covered by exemptions under the planning acts or even ruled out by the Courts. This occurred because the points and information related to UD files prevented some vendors from being able to sell their properties.

Following on from the above complaints, the Council's Legal Team have advised that the General Data Protection Regulation trumps many other pieces of legislation including the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) in that it offers many more protections to the individual involved in any planning process and that as such information on alleged unauthorised developments should not be made publicly available. It is noted in this regard that a development remains alleged until proven otherwise, which as detailed above sometimes requires recourse to the courts. Finally, and to provide some more information for the elected members, the following definitions, rights and obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 are of relevance:

‘Personal data’: means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (‘data subject’); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person;

‘Personal data breach’: means a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data transmitted, stored or otherwise processed.



Rights of individuals: The GDPR grants individuals significant rights regarding their personal data, including the right of access, right to restriction and rectification when inaccurate data is processed, erasure (right to be forgotten), data portability, and the right to object to processing.

Obligations of organizations: The GDPR outlines specific obligations for organizations, such as obtaining consent, accuracy of data, storage limitations and implementing adequate security and confidentiality measures.

Councillor Sammon thanked the Director for the report acknowledging the protections provided under GDPR, the councils legal obligations, and requirements for transparency under Planning legislation, emphasising the need to strike a balance between the privacy of alleged offenders and the right of the public and elected members to be informed. She stated she would welcome clarity on this at the briefing agreed under the previous motion, noting that transparency was fundamental to public trust. During discussion, the members raised the following points:

- The Planning Department should explore the use of anonymous data with generalised locations or heat maps to strike a balance in providing information on this matter.
- It was acknowledged, that where an offence is “alleged”, privacy is relevant, but it was impacting public trust. A standardised approach should be developed among all local authorities.
- That the pre-legislative process in the Oireachtas should have been used to address these issues in law. Could clarity be sought from the DHLGH on whether it contradicted the Planning and Development Act.

Director Alan Dunney responded stating that the Council had to operate within the law but would explore ways to provide more detailed and regular data to the members to ensure they are informed about overall performance, and to supplement the data already provided in the Monthly CE Report.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Sammon, seconded by Councillor Phelan, and agreed by the members present that the report be noted.



12/0525

Meeting with Housing Department

The following motion in the name of Councillors Tracey O Dwyer, Bernard Caldwell, Peggy O Dwyer, David Trost, Brian Dooley, Lumi Panaite Fahey and Paul Brooks was considered by the members:

That the councils' Housing Department confirms and provides a date to hold an in person meeting with the members to review how the Housing Maintenance and Vacant Properties priority lists are managed and the timeline and challenges to bringing vacant properties back to use.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Tracey O Dwyer and seconded by Councillor Caldwell.

A report from Ms A Aspell, Director of Services, Housing and Regeneration stated that the turnaround of Kildare County Council's social housing stock, together with vacancy rates, is an item on the work programme for the Housing and Regeneration Strategic Policy Committee for 2025. In discussion with the Chair of the Housing and Regeneration SPC it has been agreed that this matter will be considered by the SPC at their next meeting on 11 September. Further to the discussion with the SPC, there would be benefit in making a presentation to the elected members on the work of the Housing Maintenance Team in the context of considering the Budget for 2026. Subject to the agreement of the elected members a briefing can be scheduled at that time.

Councillor T. O'Dwyer thanked the Director for the report but stated that the visibility of vacant properties in many parts of the County, for long periods of time, was a source of concern and frustration, especially for persons on the housing list for long periods. She also stated that long delays brought properties further into disrepair, brought anti-social behaviour, and cost more in public money to rectify compared to speedy action if taken.

During discussion, the members raised the following points:



- There was an expectation among members that meeting should be scheduled earlier than September.
- Average re-lets costs of €48,000 was high and could a breakdown be given.
- Turnaround times of vacant and re-let properties needs to improve. Could a triage system improve turnaround times.
- A request for the Minister to attend Full Council to discuss Kildare's funding allocation for housing maintenance and the changes to the Tenant in-situ Scheme.
- Clarity requested on the disparities between each MD, on turnaround times, funding allocation and number of vacant properties.
- Can apprenticeship schemes be considered to address minor works.
- Are all refurbishment works necessary, could the works be simplified or phased, is the extent of works contributing to delays.
- Members views should be heard before the next SPC meeting.

Director Annette Aspell responded, noting the average vacancy rate in this Council is 2.5%, equating, at any time, to around 120 properties, out of a stock of almost 6,000. She advised time intensive works, such as fire-damage, were included in re-let times, distorting performance, that a new Housing Maintenance Framework was in place and should, in the coming months, speed up the engagement of contractors.

It was noted that the annual spend is €22million, and that it was expected to be short by approximately €2m. She advised a briefing in September was best, as it was in advance of the budget-making process.

In relation to costs, and building standards, she advised that heating, plumbing and electrical repair are always a minimum requirement, and typically the upgrade of boilers, ventilation, alarms, windows, door, and drainage is included.

In relation to variations between MD's, she advised that works were prioritised based on the property, not the location, and that operationally the County was divided North/South and not by MD, for efficiency reasons. She re-iterated that a meeting in



September is based on the reasons outlined in the report and to allow for staff changes in this work area to take effect.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Tracey O Dwyer, seconded by Councillor Caldwell and agreed by the members present that the report be noted.

13/0525

Data from Traffic Speed Surveys and Driver Feedback Signs

The following motion in the name of Councillors Nuala Killeen, Paula Mulroe and Claire O Rourke was considered by the members:

That the council publishes all data from Traffic Speed Surveys and Driver Feedback Signs conducted over the past 12 months in Kildare County Council, details if it has led to the implementation of traffic calming measures, confirms whether this data has been shared with An Garda Síochána highlighting high volumes of traffic, any excess speeding, and any locations and times that are of concern on our roads. That this information facilitates an annual review of published data that could inform the Community Safety Partnerships so that improvements can be identified and problem areas can be highlighted.

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

A report from Ms. C. Barrett, A/Director of Services, Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces stated that Kildare County Council are in the process of compiling our Traffic Count Data which will be provided to the Department of Transport and Roads Management Office on a centralised basis to assist in understanding the volume of traffic, the composition of traffic and when peak flows occur at specific locations. The collection and centralisation of this information will allow, over time, the tracking of changes to traffic in the local authority area and determine future road improvements and road safety measures. The Council uses traffic count data to design road improvement and surface dressing projects, in particular in the prioritisation and delivery of the municipal district schedule of works. Periodically, traffic speeds are measured to facilitate the traffic management design process, subject to resources



being identified. The traffic counters record a limited amount of data i.e. the average annual daily traffic (AADT), the average speed and the percentage of heavy goods vehicles (HGV). While data is used at a local level in informing local authority decisions, the data is not suitable for the purpose requested. Furthermore, data is collected from a limited number of locations which, in most cases, will not necessarily correlate with locations where speeding is an issue. Data is not collected from driver feedback signage, but this will be reviewed in the context of the centralisation of traffic count data.

Councillor Killeen stated that the availability of data on speed and traffic counts is strategically important to inform 5–10-year planning, to support An Garda Síochána, the Council and plan for investment to tackle known problem locations. During discussion, the members raised the following points:

- Accessing and using data, moves the organisation to data-led planning for safety and infrastructure.
- Is the collected data GIS mapped.
- If the Council and An Garda Síochána were both publishing, sharing and analysing the data, it would lead to better informed solutions and support the new Community Safety Partnerships.

Director Celina Barrett responded noting that in most cases the data is captured for specific purposes and at specific times, typically “average annual daily traffic surveys”, to inform road build up specifications and that data collections points are not mapped. She also noted that feedback signs were not GIS mapped.

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

14/0525

Letter to NTA re Review of Bus Services in County

The following motion in the name of Councillors Chris Pender and Pat Balfe was considered by the members:



That the council writes to the National Transport Authority (NTA) and other relevant organisations requesting that all bus services operating in County Kildare be reviewed and realigned where necessary to better support residents who rely on public transport for onward travel, school, education, and work. This review should include: (1) adjusting local bus timetables to align more effectively with train departure and arrival times across key stations to ensure practical and reliable connections; (2) reviewing morning and evening services to match school start and finish times as well as standard working hours, particularly in areas with limited transport alternatives; and (3) identifying and addressing gaps in service frequency, especially during off-peak periods, to make public transport a more consistent and viable daily option for communities across the county.

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

A report from Ms. C. Barrett, A/Director of Services, Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces advised the members that this is a matter for the members to agree. The scope of the motion falls with the remit of the National Transport Authority and is not a matter for Kildare County Council.

Councillor Pender noted that disconnected services, “no shows” and breakdowns, especially across certain South Kildare towns, failed public transport users. While welcoming Local Link he noted that there were gaps between interventions by TFI/NTA and that it was vital the Council and members push these organisations for joined up services and multi-modal hubs.

During discussion, the members raised the following points:

- Lack of coordination in train and bus timetables are driving people away from public transport, impacting employment opportunities and compounding social inequality, where persons cannot afford to be car-owners.
- These issues compound rural isolation for older persons especially.
- That even in urban Districts like Celbridge-Leixlip, under Bus-Connects it was reported that only 9 outgoing transport services (out of 179) were deemed “viable” (defined as less than a 15minute wait for the next link in the journey).



Councillor Doyle requested that the letter includes for a request to hold unreliable contracted bus service providers accountable especially in the award of contracts for this service. This was supported by Councill Pender and seconded by Councillor Balfe.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Pender, seconded by Councillor Balfe, and agreed by the members present that a letter, including Councillor Doyle's request issue to the National Transport Authority.

15/0525

Naming Of New Residential Estates Policy

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

That the council amends the naming of new residential estates policy, last reviewed in 2018, to require approval of local municipal district committees in confirming names to be used, recognising the value of local knowledge and avoidance of repetition in achieving function.

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

A report from Mr A Dunney, Director of Services, Planning, Enterprise, Economic Development and Emergency Services informed the members that the Naming of New Residential Developments Policy Document 2018 provides guidance to developers in regard the naming of new residential developments. Such policy is aligned with the provisions of the County Development Plan seeking to conserve, preserve and enhance Kildare's Heritage.

The policy document sets out that the name of residential and other developments shall reflect local heritage by incorporating local place-names or names of geographical, historical, or cultural significance to the site location.

In order to ensure the above and to avoid confusion and duplication, the naming of developments requires the prior agreement of the Planning Authority which is dealt



with by way of planning condition through the Development Management process and through planning compliance submissions that are assessed by Kildare County Council's Estate Naming Committee.

Operationally, the Estate Naming Committee meet twice a month to consider compliance proposals for the naming of estates and is made up of both experienced planning administrative and technical staff, including the Senior Executive Planner assigned to the MD in question. The Kildare County Council Irish Officer and Library staff are also involved in the process and consulted on proposals for the naming of new developments.

With respect to the naming of estates requiring approval of the local Municipal District Committee, it is noted that Schedule 14A Parts 1-3 of the Local Government Reform Act 2001 (as amended) set out the list of reserved functions for elected members. The act states that 'Every function of a local authority which is not a reserved function is, for the purposes of this Act, is an executive function of such local authority'.

As such, the Naming of Estates is an Executive Function of the Local Authority and remains part of the Development Management process.

Councillor Doyle advised that she wasn't proposing that the members control this process, but that they, like the Council, had an interest in ensuring the local heritage of areas was meaningfully and reflected in the naming of developments to keep alive the history and heritage of an area.

Director Alan Dunney stated he was happy to receive submissions by the members to the Committee for naming estates, but that existing staff ensure local heritage is considered and that the naming of a development was as important a part of planning compliance as design and related matters.

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

16/0525



Review of Emergency Response

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

That, following the extensive damage caused by Storm Eowyn in parts of County Kildare, the council confirms it has undertaken a review of its emergency response to identify what improvements could be made, what additional resources - both in terms of funding and personnel - have been identified as necessary to effectively respond to future severe weather events and confirms if there is a proposal to formally integrate Uisce Éireann and ESB Networks into the Council's emergency planning framework.

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

A report from Mr A Dunney, Director of Services, Planning, Enterprise, Economic Development and Emergency Services stated that as the members will be aware, Kildare County Council's Major Emergency Management Committee meets on a quarterly basis to review the organisations readiness to respond to various emergency scenarios. These meetings are augmented by training exercises to ensure that all systems and procedures are robust and tested in advance of any emergency scenario that might occur.

With respect to Storm Eowyn, the members will also be aware that national coordination structures were engaged in the week leading up to the storm, during the event and for several days thereafter to ensure coordination of the emergency services at that level. Regional and local structures were also engaged in parallel to ensure Kildare County Council's response was delivered in an effective and appropriate manner.

Furthermore, and as would be normal after any event, a an extensive and detailed debrief of Kildare County Council's response to Storm Eowyn has been undertaken by the Severe Weather Assessment Team (SWAT). While noting that KCC advisories and alerts to the public before, during and after the storm worked well, this



exercise focused on areas for further improvement in the Council's response to instances of severe weather, including:

- Mitigation steps KCC can take in the future in relation to power outages in Áras Chill Dara including, resilience of the Council's phone networks, formalisation of arrangements to receive calls from the public through the Out of Hours service, including alerting the Municipal District Offices where appropriate.
- Potential use of power banks by the Crisis Management Team and increasing the use of back up generation at Council offices
- Identifying the 10 most critical infrastructure sites in county Kildare in relation to water and wastewater and liaising with Uisce Éireann who are assessing options to improve resilience at the identified sites in conjunction with the ESB.
- The establishment of a network of potential Community Hubs and work is currently ongoing to identify and contact community and sports organisations with suitable buildings which could be used as Community Support Centres in future. Indeed, in future storms, where necessary, a sub-group off the Local Coordination Group will be the focal point for any Community Support Centres to feed information into KCC and National Guidance on Community Support Centres is due to be issued shortly by the National Directorate of Fire and Emergency Management which will be used to progress this work.

With respect to the integration of Uisce Éireann and ESB Networks into the Council's emergency planning framework, it is important to note that a national review of the Major Emergency Response Framework is ongoing and due to be completed within the next 12 months. All local authority Major Emergency Response Frameworks will be guided by the outcome of this national review; however, Kildare County Council are leading a regional inter-agency major emergency exercise and seminar relating to storms and flooding that will be held in Q3 of 2025. Uisce Éireann and ESB Networks will both be present and involved in this exercise and seminar.

In addition to the above, Kildare County Council emergency response staff continue to collaborate with their counterparts in other local authorities to ensure coordination at a regional level and also sharing of best practice and continued learning across the Local Government sector.



Councillor Clear thanked the Director for the report and welcomed the recent resolution of power issues at Uisce Éireann sites and requested that the views and concerns of elected members, arising from the post-Storm Eowyn experience be highlighted in the upcoming regional event later in 2025.

During discussion, the members raised the following points:

- Evidence of inter-agency collaboration and preparation was welcomed.
- Members attention was drawn to very recent helpful resources from the AILG regarding briefings from officials from Kerry and Sligo County Councils, available to AILG members.

Director Alan Dunney stated that readiness was central to what the sector does, and that after each major event, including severe weather there was a review. He noted that there is a review ongoing regarding the National Emergency Framework and that there were quarterly meetings with other agencies, including An Garda Síochána and the HSE, regarding major emergency planning.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Clear, seconded by Councillor P. O'Dwyer and agreed by members present that the report be noted.

17/0525

Ballydermot Bog Group

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

That the council commissions an independent report on the environmental, heritage and tourism/community amenity value of the Kildare portion of the Ballydermot Bog Group. The environmental assessment should include the biodiversity potential and carbon sequestration of these peatlands to be rehabilitated for present and future generations following decades of peat extraction by Bord na Mona and proposed wind farm project developments on these boglands.



The motion was proposed by Councillor O'Loughlin and seconded by Councillor Pender.

A report from Mr A Dunney, Director of Services, Planning, Enterprise, Economic Development and Emergency Services stated that the Ballydermot Bog lands are under the ownership of Bord na Móna. The members are advised that any engagement regarding the preparation of a report on the environmental, heritage and tourism/community amenity value and/or any rehabilitation plans or proposed wind farm developments at this location is a matter for the landowner and not Kildare County Council. The referral of this matter to Bord na Móna is a matter for the Elected Members.

Councillor O'Loughlin stated that this Bog was the largest raised bog in Western Europe and partial wetting, as well as the inclusion of infrastructure for Wind Farms was not an adequate climate-related response. He noted that the Just Transition Fund had proven unsuccessful in Kildare and also stated that any reports related to future uses should come from independent sources, not developers and owners.

During discussion, the members raised the following points:

- Disagreement was expressed that this matter is exclusively a matter for Bord na Móna as the County Development Plan applies to all lands in the County and the Council would be failing to protect the objectives in the County Development Plan if independent evaluations for this area are not sought.

Director Alan Dunney referred to the Just Transition Plan for the County which proposed a range of proposed uses, advised that the Landscape Character Assessment would also inform proposals, and that there were other oversight measures, in that the planning process that facilitate public observation submissions and that there are requirements for an Environmental Impact Assessment. He advised it was not appropriate for the Council to write to Bord na Móna on this matter, and this was a matter for the members.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor O'Loughlin, seconded by Councillor Pender, and agreed by members present, that the report be noted.



18/0525

Community Group Campaign

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

That the council runs a campaign to promote, stimulate and encourage citizens to support, participate, and volunteer in community groups, projects, and programmes.

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

A report from Ms M Higgins, Director of Services, Climate, Community, Environment and Water stated that Kildare County Council works on an ongoing basis with local communities and encourages volunteerism and engagement in community activities around the county. This occurs directly through many aspects of Kildare County Council work, including Kildare Sports Partnership, Community Development, Age Friendly, Healthy Ireland, Slaintecare Healthy Communities and Brigid Spirit of Kildare.

In particular, Kildare County Council works collaboratively with Kildare Volunteer Centre and Kildare Public Participation Network as key vehicles to engage with local citizens. Kildare Volunteer Centre has a clear role to promote the value of volunteering and increase the range and quality of volunteering in Kildare. It is through the Volunteer Centre that Kildare County Council supports promotion of volunteering across the county. Kildare Volunteer Centre recorded 9,800 interactions with volunteers in 2024, reflecting the high level of support, communication, and engagement facilitated throughout the year. In total, 760 volunteers were referred to not-for-profit organisations across the county, demonstrating the Centre's pivotal role in strengthening the connection between volunteers and the wider community.

In 2025, the work continues to promote, expand and develop volunteering in Kildare particularly in May, throughout national volunteer week, which is a weeklong celebration of volunteering around the county.



Councillor Heavey noted that Covid, modern life, the cost of living and statutory requirements had adversely impacted levels of volunteering, especially among younger persons. The result of this was a much older demographic of volunteers, and a potentially unsustainable future for many community groups. In looking at this, he was not seeking funding for groups directly but awareness and leadership building, highlighting the positive difference that volunteering and community groups make to local life. He asked that this be possibly referred to the relevant SPC for action.

During discussion, the members raised the following points:

- A local radio and local newspaper campaign to encourage participation would be very positive.

Director Marian Higgins responded noting the key role played by the Kildare Volunteer Bureau. She advised that they gave volunteers the skillset to participate, as do many initiatives supported through SICAP and LEADER. She advised that to give effect to the motion, she would invite the Kildare Volunteer Bureau to present to members at SPC level, and to set out what they do, and what can be done to increase volunteering in Kildare.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Heavey, seconded by Councillor Doyle, and agreed by members present, that the report be noted.

19/0525

Land For Greyhound Gallops in the County

The following motion in the name of Councillor McDonnell was considered by the members:

That the council identifies council owned available land for community, recreation and amenity uses, in particular greyhound gallops in the county.

The motion was proposed by Councillor McDonnell and seconded by Councillor Dunne.



A report from Mr. E. Ryan, Director of Services, Corporate, People and Cultural Services stated that there are no surplus lands owned by Kildare County Council that are available for community, recreation and amenity use or for greyhound gallops. Any lands intended for this use are already allocated or and in the process of being developed for amenity use. The provision of facilities for greyhounds is akin to providing facilities for horse racing, horse sports or indeed field sports, which we have no history of providing in the County. The provision of greyhound gallops is a matter for greyhound owners and Greyhound Racing Ireland (GRI).

Councillor McDonnell stated that the current use of the Curragh by greyhound owners ran the risk of incidents. Given the scale of the Curragh, he stated that a letter should issue to the Minister for Defence, to seek an enclosed area for this activity.

During discussion, the members raised the following points:

- Disatisfaction was expressed towards the motion due to public reporting about alleged animal cruelty in the greyhound racing industry.

Director Eoghan Ryan stated that there was not a role for the Council in this matter and that, as set out in the report, the pursuit of the facilities in question were a matter for the member to write to the Minister, should he wish.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor McDonnell, seconded by Councillor Dunne, and agreed by members present that the report be noted.

The meeting concluded.