

KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL
Minutes of meeting of Full Council held at 3:00 p.m.
Monday 27 June 2022 in
Áras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas, Co Kildare.

Members Present: Councillor F Brett (Cathaoirleach), Councillors
A Breen, A Breslin, B Caldwell, M Coleman, A Connolly, N
Connolly, Í Cussen, B Dooley, T Durkan, A Farrelly, A Feeney,
D Fitzpatrick, C Galvin, P Hamilton, N Heavey, I Keatley, C
Kelly, C Kenny, N Killeen, M Leigh, V Liston, P McEvoy, F
McLoughlin Healy, S Moore, J Neville, N Ó’Cearúil, P O’Dwyer,
T O’Dwyer, C Pender, E Sammon, P Ward, B Weld and B
Wyse.

Apologies: Councillors VL Behan, B Clear, S Doyle, K Duffy, R. Power and
M Stafford.

Also Present: Ms S Kavanagh Interim Chief Executive, Ms A Aspell, Mr E
Ryan, Ms E Wright (Directors of Service), Ms M Higgins, Mr K
Kavanagh (A/Directors of Service), Ms F Millane (A/Head of
Finance), Ms C O’Grady (Meetings Administrator), Ms K Keane
(Meetings Secretary) and other officials.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed everyone to the June meeting of Full Council, his first meeting as Cathaoirleach and stated it was wonderful to be back meeting in the Council Chamber in Áras Chill Dara. He stated he was going to follow the same meeting procedures as the previous Cathaoirleach and sought the members continued co-operation in adhering to protocols on speaking times to continue the efficient use of the time available.

01/0622

Declaration of Interests

The Cathaoirleach sought any declarations of interests from the members, as required under Section 177 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended. There were no interests declared.

02/0622 Suspension of Standing Orders

In accordance with Standing Order 28, Councillor McLoughlin Healy proposed a motion to suspend Standing Orders in order to consider a proposed amendment to the draft minutes of the May meeting of Council. The proposed amendment had not been received within the timelines as set out in Standing Order 11.

The Cathaoirleach sought a seconder to Councillor McLoughlin Healy's motion to suspend Standing Orders.

As there was no seconder to Councillor McLoughlin Healy's motion to suspend Standing Orders, the motion fell.

03/0622

Minutes and Progress Report

The council considered the draft minutes of the monthly meeting held on 30 May 2022 together with the progress report. The Meetings Administrator confirmed a number of amendments to the minutes of the Special Meeting held on the 24 February had been received and were being checked and sought the members agreement to defer the adoption of these minutes to the July meeting of council. The members agreed.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Breen, seconded by Councillor McEvoy and agreed by the members present, the minutes of the monthly meeting on 30 May 2022 were adopted. The progress report was noted.

04/0622

Chief Executive's Monthly Management Report

The members noted the Chief Executives monthly management report.

05/0622

Section 183 Notice for Disposal of Lands

The members considered the disposal of 0.175 hectares of land at Burtown Big, Athy pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended.

The Cathaoirleach confirmed the members had received the statutory notice setting out the details of the proposed disposal.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Fitzpatrick, seconded by Councillor Leigh and with the agreement of the members present that pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended, and the statutory notice issued on 7 June 2022, the council's consent to the Disposal of 0.175 hectares of land at Burtown Big, Athy, Co Kildare was given.

06/0622

Quarterly Budgetary Reports

The members considered the quarterly budgetary reports for the 3 months ended 31 March 2022.

The reports were noted.

07/0622

Draft Kildare Digital Strategy 2022-2025

The members considered the Draft Kildare Digital Strategy 2022-2025 – “*Kildare Konnected*”. Ms P Pender made a presentation to the members outlining the digital context of the strategy along with details of the relevant policy's that had informed it. She set out the key analysis and findings in the context of Kildare and outlined the framework of the Strategy up to 2025.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Ms Pender for the presentation and thanked all those that had been involved in preparing it.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Hamilton, seconded by Councillor Feeney and agreed by members present, the Kildare Digital Strategy 2022-2025 – “*Kildare Konnected*” was approved.

08/0622

Kildare Speed Limit Review 2022 Draft Bye-laws Revision B

The Cathaoirleach proposed moving to defer the consideration of this item following some complex queries that had arisen and the fact that these queries could not be decoupled from the review. Councillor Hamilton sought clarification on the complex issues raised and the decoupling referenced, noting he had a motion last June looking to extract the Jakes Law element of the review to ensure this element did not get delayed.

Ms Wright confirmed the current bye-laws dated back to 2011 and the council had been mandated by the Department of Transport in 2015 to review them. She noted that the Bye-Laws had been advertised twice and a very extensive consultation with all key stakeholders had taken place. She confirmed she had consulted with the Department that morning who had confirmed it was not possible to decouple the housing estates element from the overall Bye-laws.

The Chief Executive confirmed that this matter of dealing with the housing estates separately was not allowed for in legislation and sought the members agreement to defer the item to the July meeting in the hope that a compromised solution could be found in the intervening weeks. She emphasised that it would have to be a compromised solution and the executive would work with the members in achieving same.

Following a lengthy debate, the members agreed to defer the consideration of this item to the July meeting of council. Ms Wright confirmed a presentation would be issued to the members in advance of that meeting and emphasised the importance of not jeopardising the work that had already gone into the review. She noted funding that had been allocated for Jakes Law signage in the 540 estates throughout the county was also dependent on the Byelaws being approved along with the schedule of works agreed to install this signage and implement the identified safety improvement works for 14 junctions.

Councillor Farrelly proposed that given the importance and the complexities involved, a Special meeting of council be held to deal with this item only. Councillor Heavey seconded this proposal

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Farrelly, seconded by Councillor Heavey and agreed by the members, the Kildare Speed Limit Review 2022 Draft Bye-laws Revision B was deferred to a special meeting of the council to take place at 2pm on Monday 25 July, in advance of the monthly meeting

09/0622

Gnó an Cathaoirleach/Cathaoirleachs Business

The Cathaoirleach thanked the members for their good wishes following his appointment to the role of Cathaoirleach, and stated he was looking forward to representing the county and working with the members and the executive to this end.

10/0622

Comhfhreagras/Correspondence

The Meetings Administrator confirmed six items of correspondence had been circulated to the members with the Progress Report. These included five motion referrals received from other local authorities and one item of correspondence from Senator Boyhan regarding Cost Rental Housing.

The correspondence was noted.

11/0622

Conferences and Training

The members considered the conference and training report that was circulated in advance of the meeting. The Meetings Administrator confirmed the cost to attend the McGill Summer School conference was €22.60 per day. The Cathaoirleach and Councillor Weld asked to attend the McGill Summer School conference as outlined.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Moore and agreed by the members, the attendance of Councillor Brett and Councillor Weld at the McGill Summer School conference from the 21- to 24 July on 'The destruction of Ukraine and its people and its impact' at the Highlands Hotel, Glenties at a cost of €22.60 per day, was approved.

12/0622

Environment and Water Services Strategic Policy Committee

The Cathaoirleach confirmed the presentation from the Chair of the Environment and Water Services SPC was deferred to the July meeting of council.

13/0622

Car Sharing by Commuters

The following motion in the names of Councillors Fintan Brett, Joe Neville, Evie Sammon, Kevin Duffy and Mark Stafford was considered by the members.

That the council identify suitable free parking areas in or adjacent to towns & villages in Kildare and advertise them to encourage car sharing by commuters during the current fuel price crisis.

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

A report from Ms E Wright, Director of Services, Roads Transportation and Public Safety stated that the NTA as part of their Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2042, released as a supporting document the “Park and Ride Strategy: Greater Dublin Area” report prepared by their Strategic Park and Ride Development Office. The Roads and Planning Departments are engaging with the NTA in progressing the development of outline proposals and plans will be brought to the Council when sites and outline plans are further advanced.

Local communities are best placed to consider and identify appropriate locations or areas in their vicinity that might be suitable for consideration for car-pooling. Community carpooling with work colleagues, classmates or people who live within neighbourhoods and in close proximity can be an efficient mode of sustainable transport. Carpooling generally suits locations where public transport, walking and cycling options are limited. The Roads Department is available to provide advice where required.

Councillor Sammon stated she was happy to accept the report and asked that the council would promote engagement with the community on the process and provide

the necessary advice and guidance in this regard. The members supported the motion and raised the following points:

- The council had not engaged on previous sites that had been identified for this purpose
- Could some of the 90m non-development boundary strip adjacent to roads projects be used for this purpose
- EMRA was considering a submission which incorporated an extensive park and ride strategy, which included Sallins.

Ms Wright noted the members comments and confirmed that the NTA had established a Park & Ride office in 2021 and the members would be kept advised of all advancements in this matter.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Sammon, seconded by Councillor Neville, and agreed by the members, the report was noted.

14/0622

Emergency Response Plan

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

That the council establish a specific emergency response plan to deal with environmental emergency pollution events; to take into account working with multiple agencies, controlling the response to the event and communicating with the public and representatives where appropriate.

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

A report from Mr J Boland, Director of Services, Water Services, Environment and Climate Action stated that the Council has arrangements in place and staff have significant experience and training in such matters. Environmental emergency pollution events (eg. water, waste, air) can be complex and varied but the following high level overview should be instructive:

- Immediate (including out of hours) visit to site and, where warranted, engagement with relevant agencies (eg. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Inland Fisheries Ireland, EPA etc). In the case of waste licenced activity, our role might involve providing assistance to the EPA who are responsible for such.
- Regard to all relevant method statements and preparation of a site specific risk assessment in order to ensure the health and safety of staff.
- Regard to any national guidance (e.g IFI etc)
- Engagement with other departments of the Council where appropriate (e.g. Roads, Fire etc) and Gardaí where warranted.
- Inspection of all related infrastructure (e.g. pipes, sewers, gullies, manholes etc), taking samples where appropriate, and door to door calls to premises where necessary.
- Communication through our Press Office generally assuring the public that matters are being investigated but often difficult to be specific at the early stages. Also bear in mind that there can be subsequent legal proceedings
- Carrying out remedial action where relevant and feasible (and relating to Council activity), again in conjunction with relevant agencies where appropriate.
- Ensure subsequent monitoring.

Depending on the nature of the emergency, there was also a range of guidance available e.g.

Drink Water Incident Response Plan (DWIRP) - now with Irish Water

Waste Water Incident Response Plan (WINREP) - now with Irish Water

Again the issues involved can be very complex, resource intensive and take up a lot of time. There is no silver bullet that can capture every scenario but there is extensive guidance, procedures, processes, expertise and professionalism available locally. These matters are indeed encompassed in the Council s Corporate Risk Register (No 15) and a range of mitigations included therein. Indeed very significant resources have been deployed over the years in terms of training, desktop exercises, plans and protocols, interagency collaboration etc.

Finally, as the Council has recently established a Press Office, there is an opportunity to further strengthen communication aspects, including the use of social media.

Councillor Killeen noted the detailed report and sought clarity on the escalation gridline and the process around given stages in the process. She noted the report referenced strategies, guidance and actions however this was not in evidence in a recent case in Kildare. She confirmed that there had been no notifications to the public that investigations were ongoing and asked that procedures be revisited in this regard. Councillor Ó'Ceairuil paid tribute to the staff of the council who had worked long hours and over a weekend dealing with a recent case and queried if the matter could be referred to the Environment and Water Services SPC to prepare a report on how the council would deal with emergency responses in the future.

Mr Kavanagh stated he took on board the members comments and appreciated the comments complimenting staff. He confirmed that there was already a protocol in place to deal with such incidents. The Cathaoirleach proposed that in advance of referring the matter to an SPC, that the members be circulated with a copy of the protocol to deal with such incidents, and that they subsequently be allowed to make their observations to the Environment Section. Mr Kavanagh agreed to circulate the protocol and accept any observations as requested.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Killeen, seconded by Councillor Farrelly and agreed by the members, the report was noted.

15/0622

Potential Amendments to Planning Permission

The following motion in the names of Councillors Tracey O'Dwyer and Peggy O'Dwyer was considered by the members.

That Kildare County Council notify elected representatives in the event of potential amendments to, but not limited to, residential, commercial, industrial or any large scale planning permission that has the potential to impact a local community, group, amenity, streetscape, view, connectivity or landscape.

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

A report from Mr E Ryan, Director of Service, Planning, Strategic Development and Public Realm stated that in accordance with Article 27 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), a planning authority is required to make available for inspection on its website a list of the planning applications received by the authority each week. The Kildare County Council lists are available to view at <https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/Planning/PlanningWeeklyLists/> and are updated on a weekly basis. All documentation submitted in respect of applications is made available on the online planning system at <https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/OnlineServices/OnlineplanningEnquiries/>

There is no provision in legislation to make a separate assessment of a planning applications over and above the statutory assessments.

Councillor P O'Dwyer confirmed the motion was tabled as a result of a planning permission where proposals around the provision of footpaths and roads within the development, as set out in the application, had been changed during the compliance process. Mr Ryan confirmed the development being referred to had been a Strategic Housing Development and the likelihood of a similar scenario happening again was very low.

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

16/0622

Anti-Social Behaviour in Kildare

The following motion in the names of Councillors Ciara Galvin and Mark Leigh was considered by the members.

That the council commission a study into tackling anti-social behaviour in Kildare - looking at "what works" here and elsewhere - with the view to developing a holistic, evidence-based strategy for County Kildare on the topic.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Galvin and seconded by Councillor Breen.

A report from Ms A Aspell, Director of Service, Housing and Corporate Services stated that in accordance with Housing (Misc. Provisions) Act 2009 Kildare County Council is required to publish an Anti-social Behaviour Strategy; the most recent strategy was adopted in July 2017 and is due for review in 2023. The strategy defines anti-social behaviour and outlines the actions which will be taken to prevent and eliminate anti-social behaviour in council owned estates.

The topic of anti-social behaviour is included on the Housing SPC Work Programme for 2022. An anti-social behaviour forum was convened in 2020 to discuss the issue, the forum membership includes statutory and non-statutory organisations. The Housing Department is currently drafting an estate management strategy, it is intended that this will be complementary to the Anti-social Behaviour Strategy. A further meeting of the Forum will be convened in 2022 to discuss this new strategy, prior to presentation to the members of the council.

Kildare County Council promotes and encourages tenant participation and involvement in council owned estates to achieve good estate management. The council employs five Tenant Liaison Officers (TLO) and five Community Workers, a TLO and Community Worker is assigned to each MD, both work in partnership. Certain local authority estates will be identified for intensive work and intervention. The TLO engages with tenants to ensure compliance with the terms of the council's tenancy agreement and where required implements the provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Strategy.

The Community Workers assist in ensuring tenant participation in estate development/ enhancement with a view to minimizing anti- social behaviour in line with the Anti-Social Behaviour policy.

A report from Ms M Higgins, A/Director of Service, Economic Development and Community and Culture stated that Kildare County Council has funded a number of community programmes to tackle anti-social behaviour. These programmes work collaboratively with youth engagement initiatives, diverting young people who are at risk or are involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour. These projects provide suitable activities to facilitate personal development, promoting civic responsibility

and improve long term employability prospects. The aim of these programmes is to reduce impulsivity, improve empathy and improve pro-social behaviour.

From 2022 on, the JPC has arranged for each municipal district to allocate LPT to create a dedicated fund for youth diversion programmes. These programmes will be delivered on a countywide basis by dedicated agencies. The service providers will identify specific projects by application through the grants process. Once funding is approved and issued, a project completion report must be submitted on an annual basis for consideration by the JPC.

Additional to the above, An Garda Síochána community policing officers are available to link in with TLOs, community workers and members generally to support any initiatives being undertaken at a local level. Anti-social behaviour is discussed routinely at quarterly MD meetings with the Garda Síochána.

Councillor Galvin welcomed the work being done by the council in this area stating she would like to see a study commissioned on the effectiveness of the current strategy having regard to international best practise also. She felt more work needed to be done on identifying the root causes of such behaviour emphasising the role good communication had in this area also. The Cathaoirleach noted the members role with the JPC and the local JPC fora at Municipal District level. He referenced the recent initiative where each Municipal District had allocated €8.5K towards youth diversion programmes, and the council had put in place TLO support in managing how estates could be managed.

Ms Aspell confirmed the council was in the process of reviewing its Anti-social Behaviour Strategy. Ms Higgins confirmed the Community Department ran a number of programmes in this area and works closely with the JPC and the LECP in this regard. She also noted that the Community Development workers work closely with the Tenant Liaison Officers on building resilience and working towards the establishment of Residents Associations.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Galvin, seconded by Councillor Breen and agreed by the members present, the report was noted.

17/0622

Housing Stock Heated Using Solid Fuels

The following motion in the name of Councillors Angela Feeney and Aoife Breslin was considered by the members.

That the council inform the members on how many of its current housing stock are heated using solid fuels and of its plans to upgrade the heating systems in the coming years.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Feeney and seconded by Councillor Breslin.

A report from Ms A Aspell, Director of Service, Housing and Corporate Services stated that Kildare County council's housing stock consists of 4,980 units, not including units provided through long-term leasing schemes, of which the majority are heated by way of modern heating technologies such as heat pumps (due to the timing of their construction). Of the Council's owned 4,980 units, circa 500 are currently heated by heat pumps with the balance reliant on fossil fuels such as oil, gas or solid fuels.

Kildare County Council is however actively pursuing the National Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Programme (NEERP), which allows for a set budget, per annum, to carry out works based on a maximum cost per unit across the councils housing stock. To date, c.175 units have been retrofitted with an additional 69 units scheduled for the 2022 works programme. It has been our recent experience that the allowances available through the NEERP have not been sufficient on a unit-by-unit basis, however, Kildare County Council, as part of our own climate action commitments, have provided funding above the grant sum if and when required.

It is noted that the current *Programme for Government* commits to the retrofitting of approximately 500,000 residential units nationally to the year 2030 and that approx. 36,500 of these are expected to be local authority owned social houses. To this end the NEERP is a multi-annual programme with which the Council intends to fully engage with over the coming years, subject to the ongoing provision of sufficient funding.

It is also important to note that all new build social housing units provided by Kildare County Council will comply with the nZEB regulations and as such will be highly insulated and heated using heat pump technology.

Councillor Feeney thanked the Director for the report noting that 4,500 local authority houses were relying on fossil fuels and the allowances referenced in the report fall a long way short of what was needed. She enquired if the Department had issued any communication in this regard and whether the shortfall amount could be quantified. Councillor Breslin stated there was a 2 year waiting list on the warmer homes initiative and the council needed to communicate this fact to the Department.

Ms Aspell agreed with the members that it was a very challenging programme adding the council was bringing properties to a B2 standard. She confirmed it was costing €33k per unit and the budget was being monitored to establish how it would operate over the course of the year.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Feeney, seconded by Councillor Breslin and agreed by the members present, the report was noted.

18/0622

EPA Research Programme

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

That the council writes to Leitrim County Council requesting a partnership role in the EPA research programme that they have initiated in conjunction with Trinity College Dublin, to identify alternative options to deal with wastewater from individual treatment systems in a manner that is not prejudicial to public health or causing pollution of water bodies, with the aim of making the reclaimed peatland areas of the county available for one-off housing once more.

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

A report from Mr J Boland, Director of Services, Water Services, Environment and Climate Action stated that Kildare County Council is aware of the research project in Leitrim with the EPA and Trinity College. This project will be of interest to many counties in the country including Kildare as parts of the county are considered unsuitable for the development of conventional on-site domestic wastewater treatment systems under the terms of the current EPA Code of Practice Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (population equivalent ≤ 10) 2021. Kildare County Council, rather than in a partnership role, will keenly monitor progress with the project and will be interested in its outputs and recommendation.

Councillor Wyse thanked the Director for the report noting that the soil analysis in Leitrim was very similar to that of Kildare. He noted that parts of Kildare were made up of a large percentage of peatland areas and it was important that these did not become polluted. He stated that technical solutions needed to be maximised in order to overcome difficulties in enabling development on reclaimed peatlands.

Councillor Hamilton proposed an amendment to remove the last line of the motion. Councillor Kenny seconded the proposed amendment.

Councillor Wyse objected and confirmed this was the intended aim of his motion and to remove it would defeat the purpose of the motion and he did not wish to remove it on that basis. The amendment did not go to a vote.

Mr Kavanagh stated that the outcome of the Leitrim research programme would be of great interest to Kildare County Council and other authorities and confirmed the members would be kept apprised of the outcomes.

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

19/0622

County Development Plan

The Cathaoirleach noted Councillor Doyle was absent from the meeting and as no written communication had been received from Councillor Doyle to authorise another

member to move the motion, he stated it should be removed from the agenda and could be re-entered if requested.

20/0622

Inperson Pre-Planning Meetings

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

That the council's Planning Department reintroduces in person pre-planning meetings with planning applicants and their agents.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Weld and seconded by Councillor Keatley. A report from Mr E Ryan, Director of Service, Planning, Strategic Development and Public Realm stated since restrictions were introduced in respect of Covid-19 regulations in 2020, the vast majority of pre-planning Section 247 consultations have taken place online in addition to telephone and email communication. The Planning Department has completed 106 online pre-planning meetings from January to May 2022.

Online consultation has proven to be a very efficient means of facilitating meetings for both staff and applicants, particularly in respect of commercial developments where a significant number of people participate in a meeting. The Planning Department recognises that there may be occasion where applicants would prefer an in-person meeting, and to that end, will review the position in Quarter 3 2022, in the hope that the current wave of Covid will have stabilised.

Councillor Weld stated he was not accepting the report and was aware of numerous clients/agents/applicants who were very unhappy with the online process. He asked the council to stop using Covid as an excuse for changes in work practises and asked that the Planning department revert to in-person pre-planning meetings by the end of September.

Following discussion, the members raised the following points:

- Applicants were incurring significant costs in preparing multiple reports for pre-planning meetings

- There was a need for face-to-face meetings when dealing with preplanning meetings for one-off houses
- Could the matter be revisited with a view to reintroducing inperson meetings as requested.
- In person meetings were far more practical than online meetings.
- People have different ways of optimising communication, could the option be given for online or inperson meetings
- What was the rationale for not holding inperson meetings

Mr Ryan thanked the members for their comments noting Councillor Weld had raised this issue at CPG also. He confirmed that he had received no complaints with regard to online preplanning meetings, and in fact online meetings had enabled efficiencies from the council's perspective but that he took on board the suggestion around the ability to choose the preferred format. He confirmed he was happy to discuss it further with his team and would revert to the members.

The Chief Executive rejected the claim that the council was using Covid as an excuse in any of its operations stating the local authority had due regard to all public health advice to ensure the safety of all its employees, elected members and members of the public when using council services. She stated the issue was being conflated and in a lot of cases, online meetings were preferable for the applicant and/or their agent. She pointed out that the Business Continuity Group were also examining the implications of the requirement to introduce blended working and all these factors had to be taken into account when discussing consideration of this request. Ms Kavanagh concluded that the intention was to agree to the request, but regard would have to be had to Business Continuity requirements.

An amendment to the motion was proposed by Councillor Heavy and seconded by Councillor Ó Cearúil as follows: That the council's Planning Department *offers an option of inperson or online* pre-planning meetings with planning applicants and their agents

The amended motion was considered by the members and agreed.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Heavey seconded by Councillor Ó Cearúil and agreed by the members that the council's Planning Department offers an option of inperson or online pre-planning meetings with planning applicants and their agents

21/0622

Electric Vehicle Public Charging Point Scheme

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

That the council provides a status report on progress towards the local authority 1000 public charge point national target for 2024 outlined in the Electric Vehicle Public Charging Point Scheme, including the number installed under the plan to date.

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

A report from Ms E Wright, Director of Services, Roads Transportation and Public Safety stated that The Department of Transport published an EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025 and welcomed submissions up to 31 May 2022. Responses and submissions received as part of the consultation are being considered in the development of the final Strategy for publication. Kildare County Council awaits the final Strategy document which we anticipate will provide the required detail on the capital funding elements of the Strategy. It is expected that any funding proposal contained in the document will require match funding by this Council which may be a challenge.

A member of the Sustainable Transport Team is participating in the stakeholder workshop and recently attended the first session of the group. Some issues raised during the discussion include:

1. Apartments – locations for residents to charge their own car. Public onstreet/car parking charger rates per kW are more costly than a residential EV Charger.

2. It is anticipated that public chargers will not be on-street and will be placed at locations on the perimeter of towns/villages. This is to eliminate cars parking on a main street for up to 4 hours while they charge, reducing turnover in that space. A car parking space associated with EV Chargers is 20% larger than normal spaces.
3. It is recommended that a maximum of 10% of car parking should be allocated to EV Chargers and this aligns with NTA policy.
4. There is a need to encourage electric vehicle drivers to charge their EV vehicle at home overnight, drive to their destination and if a top up/recharge is required, at a public charger.
5. It is anticipated that circa 80% of chargers will be at home-based.

Kildare County Council is currently reviewing its County Parking Policy and is currently engaging with the SPC on the issue of EV chargers and locations.

Councillor Hamilton stated his motion was a way of bringing attention and highlighting the urgency on the works needed to achieve these targets given the fact there was a Climate emergency yet works had not yet commenced.

Ms Wright confirmed that there are currently 6 chargers in off-street car parks and 3 in Áras Chill Dara and that the council was working on a county wide policy/strategy. She did advise that it was important to note this strategy does not include Etrucks or Escooters and that funding was a key issue for the local authority and there was a lack of clarity on this.

Councillor Sammon referenced an announcement by the Minister for Transport in relation to installing electric chargers in street lamps in new housing estates and was this something the council was aware of.

Following discussion, the members raised the following points:

- Could the council consider using old phone booths as EV charging points.

- There was a need to encourage EV drivers to charge their vehicles at home.
- Location of EV chargers on the periphery of towns is questionable given the need of some users to be located within a town.
- How could the council tie in the issue of EV charging requirements into our tourism strategy.

Ms Wright confirmed the members that the issues being raised by them would emerge and be considered as part of the public consultation process also. She stated the phone booth usage had been trialed by DLR County Council but she had not yet seen a report on it. She reminded the members that this was a discussion being held nationally, the outcome of which would shape any future policies.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Hamilton, seconded by Councillor Liston and agreed by the members present, the report was noted.

22/0622

Public Inquiry into An Bord Pleanala

The following motion in the name of Councillor Fiona McLoughlin Healy was considered by the members.

That this council supports the calls for a public inquiry into An Bord Pleanala, to include an examination of decisions it has taken in relation to large scale developments in Kildare.

The motion was proposed by Councillor McLoughlin Healy and seconded by Councillor N Connolly.

A report from Mr E Ryan, Director of Service, Planning, Strategic Development and Public Realm stated that this is a matter for the members to agree.

Councillor McLoughlin Healy stated all members were aware of the controversy surrounding the board currently, noting the concerns around the move away from local knowledge in the SHD process were well flagged. In light of this, she sought the members support to call for a public enquiry into the matter, to include developments where refusals were recommended but were overturned by the Board.

Councillor Killeen stated the members should avoid discussing this matter at this time given it was the subject of an ongoing Dáil process via the Remy report. She also noted the Planning Regulator was looking into the matter and the Board were also coming before the Public Accounts Committee the following week. She proposed the matter be given further consideration in September once the report had been published. She also noted the elected members did not have the same legal privilege to speak on such matters in the council chamber, as TD's had in the Dáil chamber.

The Cathaoirleach asked Councillor McLoughlin Healy did she wish to put her motion forward to a vote or defer it until the report had been published. She confirmed she was happy to defer the matter until the referred to report was published.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor McLoughlin Healy, seconded by Councillor N Connolly and agreed by the members present, the report was noted, and the matter deferred until such time as the report into the issue was completed.

23/0622

Email Representations from Elected Representatives

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

That Comhairle Contae Chill Dara urgently establishes a task force to identify the root cause as to why it is taking up to 4 months for email representations from elected representatives to be replied to, particularly but not limited to housing representations. The task force shall provide a report to the members on the root cause or causes, to include a comprehensive plan to address the issue and to introduce KPI's to ensure performance consistently reaches an acceptable level of service.

The motion was proposed by Councillor N Connolly and seconded by Councillor Galvin.

A report from Ms A Aspell, Director of Service, Housing and Corporate Services stated that the management of representations from elected representatives is designed to work as follows in the Dynamics CRM system introduced in April 2021:

1. Members email their representation to membersrepscrm@kildarecoco.ie
2. This generates a CRM case automatically assigned to the Members Services Team with an SLA response time of 10 working days by default.
3. Daily, that Team assesses the cases, assigns them to the correct Department and generates an email acknowledgment to the elected representative, informing them of the case no. and the Department and Section dealing with the matter.
4. The system generates an email to all staff in the relevant Team in the Section to notify them of the arrival of a case.
5. A supervisor assesses the case and assign it to a member of staff to respond. At that point the supervisor, who has more local knowledge regarding the case, can determine whether to alter or leave unchanged the SLA response time to the other options of 3 (high priority) or 15 days (low priority).
6. On assignment an email is generated to that staff member with a link to the case and notifying of the response time.
7. The system generates an email reminder to everyone in the Team at 8 days, advising a reply will soon be overdue and when the 10 days have passed, again an overdue email is generated.
8. In addition, by default, at login a "My Work" Dashboard appears for each user of the CRM, from which both supervisors and staff can see cases marked amber as almost due, and red, as overdue. From here they can also see any new emails received on cases already assigned to them.

There are no delays evident in the processes of assigning cases by the Members Services Team.

For Kildare County Council as a whole, since the introduction of the new CRM system, the median response times for cases responded to within in the year has improved as set out below:

Year	Caseload closed to date	Median response (Working days)	% Improvement
2021	5011	8	
2022	2199 (to June 17 th)	5	37%

While this overall picture is positive, it is acknowledged that there can be isolated instances of underperformance. The data related to any such cases is being analysed and addressed at Departmental level. In this regard it is noted that reference is made to the Housing Department in the motion.

Year to date, the Housing Department accounts for 39% of all CRM queries received by the council. The total number of Housing CRM cases has increased significantly since 2019. In 2019 the Housing Department received 4,601 cases, ***In the first 5 months*** of 2022 the figure received was 4,243 cases.

The Housing Department was particularly affected by Covid-19 related absences in 2021 and again in January 2022. Due to the number of services being delivered by the Housing Department and the increase in council tenancies, sub sections within the department handle a large number of customer interactions per day. In addition to CRM cases, this Department manages approximately 8,000 maintenance requests per annum, and deal with approximately 700 weekly calls to telephone hunt groups.

Every effort is being made by staff working in Housing to deal with CRM cases in a timely fashion, however if the members have particular issues, please contact Siobhán Scully to discuss.

The members will recall the planned introduction of a further CRM Performance Dashboard for supervisors (to supplement the existing system in place) referenced last Autumn. Unfortunately, the development and testing of this was delayed at that time, as the Council was unable to recruit a data analyst to develop same.

Regrettably the council have been unable to fill this position despite numerous offers to candidates but despite depleted resources in this area has developed, tested, and piloted this new function and is rolling it out in July to senior management.

Members are reminded that the Council cannot report and track response times (as set out at 1-8 above) *where emails are sent directly to staff* and so members are encouraged to use the email address below: membersrepscrm@kildarecoco.ie

Members will be aware that an invitation to work with the Council on a test pilot of the Members Reps Portal has issued. Members should be aware that this system links to the CRM and the functions available enable an elected member to monitor and report on their cases in this live environment, whether submitted via the Portal or by email. This may be of assistance for members in identifying any problem area or priority case requiring urgent reply.

We welcome the participation of a members, to work with the Council on testing and potential enhancement of the test Members Portal over July and August.

Councillor Connolly thanked the Director for the report and noted that in the majority of cases, replies were received within satisfactory timelines. However, he went on to outline cases where there had been significant delays in responses being received, which in some cases were taking 3 to 4 months, and confusion caused by the number of acknowledgements issued. He noted there were ambitious targets set down for the operation of the CRM system, but that sadly the examples he had outlined were not isolated incidents. He concluded by stating that he was happy to participate in the pilot that had been referenced in the report.

A discussion followed among the members with the following points made:

- There had been significant delays in dealing with simple requests during the covid period ie. request to issue an application form
- Majority of reps are being replied to on time, but the ones experiencing the most delays are the reps in the most vulnerable of cases
- Quality of responses issuing through CRM are of concern, the process needs to be reviewed to include a qualitative analysis
- Could Internal Audit be asked to review the process, to include the quality element.

- Cases where members rep and documents related to a case are separated causing difficulty when dealing with housing reps.

Ms Aspell noted the comments stating that in the majority of cases, responses times and response quality are favourable and reiterated that if the members have a concern re delays in responding to reps in relation to a priority case, to speak with the SEO in Housing. She confirmed that 40% of all CRM cases relate to Housing, but that department does not have 40% of the councils' resources. She confirmed the outcome of the pilot being undertaken would feed into the review around the inefficiencies identified.

Councillor N Connolly thanked the Director stating he suspected the issues identified were related to a resourcing issue but that nonetheless, a review was needed as delays in responses such as those outlined were unacceptable.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor N Connolly, seconded by Councillor Galvin and agreed by the members present, the report was noted.

The meeting concluded.