

KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL
Minutes of meeting of Full Council held at 3:00 p.m.
Monday 28 November 2022 in
Áras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas, Co Kildare.

Members Present: Councillor F Brett (Cathaoirleach), Councillors VL Behan, A Breen, A Breslin, B Caldwell, B Clear, M Coleman, A Connolly, N Connolly, Í Cussen, S Doyle, K Duffy, 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, S Moore, J Neville, T O'Dwyer, C Pender, R Power, E Sammon, M Stafford, P Ward and B Weld.

On Line: Councillors B Dooley, F McLoughlin Healy, N. Ó Cearúil and P. O'Dwyer.

Apologies: Councillor B Wyse

Also Present: Ms S. Kavanagh Chief Executive, Ms A Aspell, Ms E Wright, Mr J Boland, Mr E Ryan (Directors of Service), Ms M Higgins (A/Director of Service), Ms B Sweeney (A/Head of Finance), Ms P Pender(A/Senior Executive Officer) Ms L Russell Arts Officer), Ms C O'Grady (Meetings Administrator), Mr J Hannigan(Meetings Secretary) and other officials.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed everyone to the November meeting of Full Council and sought the members continued co-operation in adhering to protocols on speaking times to continue the efficient use of the time available.

01/1122

Bereavements

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

Michael Bermingham, former Internal Auditor,

Philip O'Brien, brother of Patricia Berry, Community Section

Christopher Kilduff father of Nicky Kilduff Technical Support IT

Leo Murphy former Senior Engineer Road Maintenance

Vicky Phelan Campaigner

A minute's silence was observed.

02/1122

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.

03/1122

Minutes and Progress Report

The council considered the draft minutes of the monthly meeting held on 24 October 2022, the draft minutes of the special meeting held on the 12 & 13 September 2022 including the amendments report circulated together with the progress report.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor McEvoy and agreed by 29 members voting in favour and one against, that the minutes of the monthly meeting on 24 October 2022 and the special meeting held on 12 and 13 September 2022 with amendments be adopted. The progress report was noted.

04/1122

Chief Executive's Monthly Management Report

The members noted the Chief Executives monthly management report.

05/1122

Annual Financial Statements 2021

Ms Sweeney confirmed that the reports on the audit of the Annual Financial Statements 2021 circulated to the members previously and which include the Audit Committee Report in accordance with Section 121 Local Government Act 2001, as amended, the Unmodified Audit Opinion and the Local Government Audit Service Statutory Audit Report, were listed for noting on today's agenda.

The reports were noted by the members.

06/1122

Section 141 Reports from Other Bodies

The members considered reports from members appointed to Other Bodies, pursuant to Section 141 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended. The following reports were received at the November meeting:

- Athy Community Enterprise CLG
- County Kildare Leader Partnership
- County Kildare Community Network CLG
- Regional Health Forum Dublin Mid-Leinster

The Cathaoirleach asked that the members direct any questions they had on these reports to the members appointed to the relevant bodies.

07/1122

In Perpetual Motion

The members considered the report on 'In Perpetual Motion: An Arts Strategy for Kildare County Council 2023-2027'.

Ms Russell gave a presentation to the members and welcomed Elaine Donohue and Paula Donnelly to the meeting

She outlined the work of the previous 5 years and the projects undertaken. She talked about challenges posed by Covid and how these were dealt with. She outlined the public consultations that took place and explained that Kildare received the 4th highest allocation which reflected the number of artists living in the county.

She advised that they had identified the following 5 Key Strategic Priorities for 2023 to 2027.

Art for People and Place,
Support for Artists,
Re-imagined Space for Art,
Sustaining Arts through Strategic Partnerships,
An Enhanced Arts Service for County Kildare.

The members thanked Ms Russell for her presentation and made the following points

- They thanked Ms Russell and her team for their work
- They acknowledged there were projects where the team worked out of hours
- They commented on the success of Made of Athy and Music Generation,
- They asked about creative Arts and using other Art forms
- They enquired if music generation could have a negative impact on private music teaching
- They enquired about the links and opportunities created by Public Realm projects
- They enquired about Framework agreements and could these be shared
- Was there a distinction made between professional and amateur artists.

Councillor Moore stated that there should be a major monthly festival in the county.

Ms Russell thanked the members for their comments and support using LPT funds and addressed the question raised.

She agreed to share the framework agreements. She informed the meeting that while they were conscious of any impact on private music teaching and were monitoring this, the experience to date has been to the contrary with more interest in music lessons.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor McEvoy seconded by Councillor Feeney and with the agreement of the members present that that the 'In Perpetual Motion: An Arts Strategy for Kildare County Council 2023-2027' be adopted.

08/1122

Nominations to Strategic Policy Committees

A report had been circulated to the members giving details of the nominees to fill external members vacancies on SPC's.

Nominations were received from the Construction Industry Federation (CIF) for the construction/development external positions on the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC, Housing SPC and Transportation and Public Safety SPC. A nomination was received from the PPN for the interim filling of a vacancy for the environment seat on the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC.

David Caffery, Director of Planning with Glenveagh Properties PLC was nominated to be the construction/development representative on the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC.

Wesley Rothwell , Chief Executive Officer Glenveagh Properties PLC was nominated to be the construction/development representative on the Housing SPC.

Darren Devane, Construction Director for BAM was nominated to be the construction/development representative on the Transportation and Public Safety SPC.

Bob Quinn, Financial Planner was nominated on an interim basis by the PPN to fill the Environmental seat on the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC.

The Cathaoirleach reminded members that debate on items before the council should take place in the council chamber and reports were given in advance to facilitate members preparation. He said that it was unfortunate that this debate had started in newspapers in advance of the meeting and that members had received phone calls on Friday from the press.

Councillor N Connolly opposed the nomination from the CIF informing the members that these nominees were from two large companies who would sit on the Housing

and Planning and Economic Development SPC's. They were both involved in major developments within the county. He felt it was inappropriate.

The Cathaoirleach informed the meeting that SPC's were not decision making committees and he would be supporting the nomination.

Councillor Doyle informed the meeting that this had been discussed at CPG and the role of the nominees was to help councils make informed decisions by contributing to the SPC based on their knowledge and experience within their area. At all times members of SPC's should act in good faith.

A discussion took place in which members made the following points

They were concerned about potential conflicts of interest.

Diversity on any committee is key, there were 2 nominations from the one company.

The role of the nominees was not decision making.

The nominees were there to provide advice and knowledge based on their experience and are one voice in a larger group.

We have been waiting for a long time to fill these positions.

Policy was drafted by the various SPC's but was sent to the council through CPG for the members to consider and approve if they agreed.

How do other local authorities deal with nominations to SPC's from nominated pillars. It was a pity that nominations from other groups for example architects had not been received

We should look for diversity and gender balance from CIF

The nominees are there as individuals representing CIF not a particular company.

Conflicts of interest and pecuniary and beneficial interest declarations under section 177 apply to SPC members including external members.

There were enough safeguards in place to deal with conflicts of interest.

Ms Aspell informed the meeting that the SPC's role was to assist the council. On occasions it was difficult to find external people who are willing to sit on SPC's.

Councillor Power informed the meeting that the nomination from PPN should be treated separately from the other nominations. This was an interim measure, the person nominated was nominated by the secretariat and did not come from one of

the nominating pillars within PPN. He proposed that they wait for a nomination until after the PPN elections.

Councillor McLoughlin Healy queried the process for dealing with the nominations and if it was on an individual basis.

The Cathaoirleach confirmed he was taking the nominations for the development/construction seats as a group and separate from the nomination for the PPN seat.

A vote was taken to consider the 3 CIF nominations.

With 18 members voting in favour, 15 voting against and 4 abstaining the nominations were approved.

Councillor Power, Chair of the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC proposed that the council wait for the PPN elections in the new year to fill the vacancy on the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC.

This was agreed by all members except Councillor McLoughlinHealy.

Resolved with 18 Councillors voting in favour, 15 voting against and 4 abstaining that the appointment of the CIF nominations to the Planning and Economic Development SPC and Housing SPC were approved.

The nomination from Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC was deferred. This was agreed by all members except Councillor McLoughlinHealy

09/1122

Draft Meetings Calendar for 2023

The Meetings Administrator referred to the draft calendar and report circulated previously which outlined the proposed dates of meetings for 2023 and proposed changes to dates as per Standing Orders and agreed protocols. This was to take account of Public Holidays and statutory budget timeframes. A provisional date had been included for the Annual Budget meeting. She noted that confirmation was still awaited on a number of meeting dates, which would be communicated to the members once confirmed. Councillor Power enquired about the possibility of evening meetings. The meeting times were set out in the calendar.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Doyle seconded by Councillor McEvoy and with the agreement of the members present, the Draft Meetings Calendar for 2023 was approved.

10/1122

Kildare County Council Parking Policy Framework 2022

The members considered the Kildare County Council Parking Policy Framework 2022. Ms. Wright informed the meeting that the purpose of the Parking Policy Framework document was firstly to bring consistency across the municipal districts. It had last been agreed in 2016 but now with the advent of Public Realm and Active Transport teams it was time to streamline the Parking Policy Framework and review Parking By Laws across the Municipal Districts. It was proposed to go back to 15 minutes observation time to increase turnover of spaces.

The members raised the following points

- A consistent approach to pay parking was required across the county. Would reducing the observation time, increase turnover on spaces?
- The issue of loading bays needed to be addressed, also motorcycle parking and disabled parking spaces.
- There were people with hidden disability, this needed to be dealt with
- 30 minutes observation was a reasonable time and should not be changed.
- Age friendly parking was needed.
- There should be no pay parking on main streets
- There was poor pay parking signage on parking meters and in off street car parks, this needed to be addressed
- Each district should apply its own rules.
- Rules for Electric Cars using charging points needed to be agreed
- Members should be aware of their Climate Action responsibilities and the need to unwind from carbon dependence.
- There was a need to include more bicycle parking.

Ms Wright explained that the framework is about having consistency

Each municipal district will have their own bylaws which will be specific to that municipal district. Electric charging points were to be provided in off street car parks. Clamping was not an option. Those who apply the regulations have to be given clear instructions on what is allowed and the regulations needed to be considered.

Resolved that the report be noted.

11/1122

Gnó an Cathaoirleach/Cathaoirleachs Business

The Cathaoirleach confirmed he had attended a number of events over the last month as follows

The opening of the local markets initiative in Newbridge Town Hall organised by Local Enterprise Office

The Maynooth Sports Disability Day Awards

The Community awards night in the Osprey.

The 20th Defence forces Gala Concert in the Curragh Camp

The Stable Staff awards in the Keadeen hotel in Newbridge.

The Kildare Chamber of Commerce business awards.

Councillor Neville had attended the Local Government Awards night in the Plaza Hotel in Dublin. Kildare County Council won the inaugural Communications award.

He congratulated Ballymore Eustace on being awarded €172,000 under the Embracing Outdoors Initiative

12/1122

Comhfhreagras/Correspondence

The Meetings Administrator confirmed ten items of correspondence had been circulated to the members along with the progress report. These included a reply from AILG to a motion referral and 9 motion referrals from other local authorities.

The correspondence was noted.

13/1022

Conferences and Training

The Meetings Administrator informed the meeting that there were no training or conferences requests for consideration.

14/1022

Local Community and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee

The members received a report from Councillor C. Kelly, Chair of the Local Community and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee.

Councillor Kelly outlined the membership of the committee and the key policy areas they were currently concentrating on.

- Kildare Age Friendly Strategy to be launched in 2023
- Kildare Sports Partnership Strategic Plan
- Kildare Arts Strategy Arts before the members at today's meeting
- Kildare Culture and Creativity Strategy / Creative Ireland Strategy
- Libraries: National and Local Public Policy
- Brigid 1500

Councillor Kelly informed the meeting that there should be a library in every town in the county

On Brigid 1500 she advised that there was a Steering Committee comprising of 25 members representing key organisations. Members have significant expertise in various fields including spirituality, academia, tourism, business, community initiatives, arts and heritage and marketing and communications.

A coordinator has been appointed and is working with the project team to create a programme of events over the next 2 years and beyond

A community and artists grant scheme has been launched to encourage community participation and connection with the celebrations

Initiatives and events currently being worked on include illuminations, festivals, share services, concerts and a schools programme.

The report was noted.

15/1122

Energy Efficiency in Recently Built LA Houses

The following motion in the name of Councillors Anne Connolly, Robert Power, Michael Coleman, Paul Ward, Brian Dooley and Daragh Fitzpatrick was considered by the members.

That the council conduct a sample survey of recently built LA houses, to determine how efficiently they are functioning from an energy consumption perspective having regard to custom and practice of typical tenancies. That we also assess recently retrofitted units to determine how effective investment has been and seek to identify any improvements that might be made in approach going forward.

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

A report from Ms A Aspell, Director Service, Housing and Corporate Services stated that as part of the National Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programmes, the council is collaborating with University of Galway on their HAVEN project that sets out to investigate the health impacts and related benefits of energy renovation. This collaboration involves the active recruitment of home occupants who would be willing to partake in this study, both before and after completion of the retrofitting works.

The study aims to address two elements relating to the impacts of the retrofitting programme. These are impacts on health and on indoor air quality and residents can participate in one or both elements by allowing the project to measure air quality before and after the works and by completing a health questionnaire, again before and after the works.

As part of our ongoing engagement with this project, the Council is working to connect 26 different households with the NUIG research team. Once the results of this study are known it will be possible to report on its findings to the Elected Members.

In addition to the HAVEN Project, some tenants have raised concerns in relation to the performance of the new Air to Water heating systems. In this regard, a study was undertaken on one of the estates which has been subject to the retrofit works. This involved a survey of 14 houses and residents with the following results:

- 29% - Delighted
- 14% - Happy
- 43% - Happy except for potential increase in electricity bill
- 14% - Not Happy.

Furthermore, and in relation to the assessment of Local Authority homes; all recently constructed housing is subject to Part L Regulations (NZEB) and as such will have significant energy efficiency performance. Subject to agreement on this motion, it may be possible to assess the efficiency of these units by way of engaging with a sample of tenants noting access to electricity bills will be required in order to assess energy consumption levels as requested.

Councillor Doyle informed the meeting she was happy with the report and that it was important to gather the information as it would help with buy in for the future when retrofitting properties. She inquired if the council were to upgrade to B level would this reduce the cost.

Ms. Aspell informed the meeting that it was important for the tenants to engage. The upgrades required the council to get to energy efficiency Level B

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Power, seconded by Councillor Doyle and agreed by all that the report be noted

16/1122

Access Space for Wheelchair Ramps Parking in On-Street Disability Bays

The following motion in the name of Councillors Peggy O'Dwyer and Íde Cussen was considered by the members.

That the council endeavour to provide access space that facilitates the use of wheelchair access ramps for multi person vehicles parking in the on-street disability bays within Kildare County Council's remit where possible.

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

A report from Ms E Wright, Director of Service, Roads Transportation and Public Safety stated that the installation of access space to facilitate on-street disability bays can be considered as part of the Parking Bye-Laws review in consultation with the Members.

Councillor Peggy O'Dwyer informed the meeting that access was restricted for multi person vehicles with wheelchair access. While the spaces are big enough they may not be wide enough. Councillor Cussen agreed that the need for these should be considered as part of the parking bye laws for each municipal district.

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

17/1122

Walking Strategy for Kildare

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

That the council adopt and implement a walking strategy for Kildare.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Leigh and seconded by Councillor Feeney. A report from Ms M Higgins, A/Director of Service, Economic Development and Community and Culture stated that Kildare Sports Partnership developed a Walking Strategy in 2014 and since then have included walking in all Sports Partnership strategy objectives and actions, including the most recent version, 2022-23. Also, a Local Sports Plan will have to be developed by Kildare County Council in the coming months, as directed by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and media, and this will be an ideal opportunity to include walking as part of this strategy to include infrastructure, participation, training, leadership and information.

A report from Ms E Wright, Director of Service, Roads Transportation and Public Safety stated that the Transport Strategies under development in a number of towns include proposals for the development of integrated walking and cycling networks to facilitate recreational and commuter walking routes and include the creating of new crossing points and footpaths. The Strategies also include proposals to improve permeability and links between towns and villages.

Councillor Leigh welcomed the report and informed the members that the development of looped and linear walking paths needed to be progressed to encourage outdoor and rural walking. The tools were in place to achieve this. What was required was a Walking Officer to beef it up. Councillor Feeney informed the meeting that they had raised the issue as she believed there was a huge opportunity for the north of the county if walking routes could be developed. Roads were being clogged up by cars and what was required is that people could walk safely from Maynooth to Celbridge. It would be beneficial to tourism promotion. There was a lot happening and strategies need to be pulled together. The council actively encourages walking and there was a requirement for an SPC subgroup to develop this.

The members raised the following points

Any walking strategy needed safe routes for those using them.

Walking routes were covered by policy TM A5 in the County Development Plan.

Ms Higgins informed the meeting that the purpose of a walking strategy was to create awareness of the walking routes in County Kildare. Walking was a self sustaining activity. Kildare Sports Partnership had worked with Slí na Slainte and Irish Heart foundation to develop and promote walking routes.

The Brigid 1500 event would provide additional opportunities to promote walking in Kildare

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Leigh, seconded by Councillor Feeney and agreed by the members present that the report be noted

18/1122

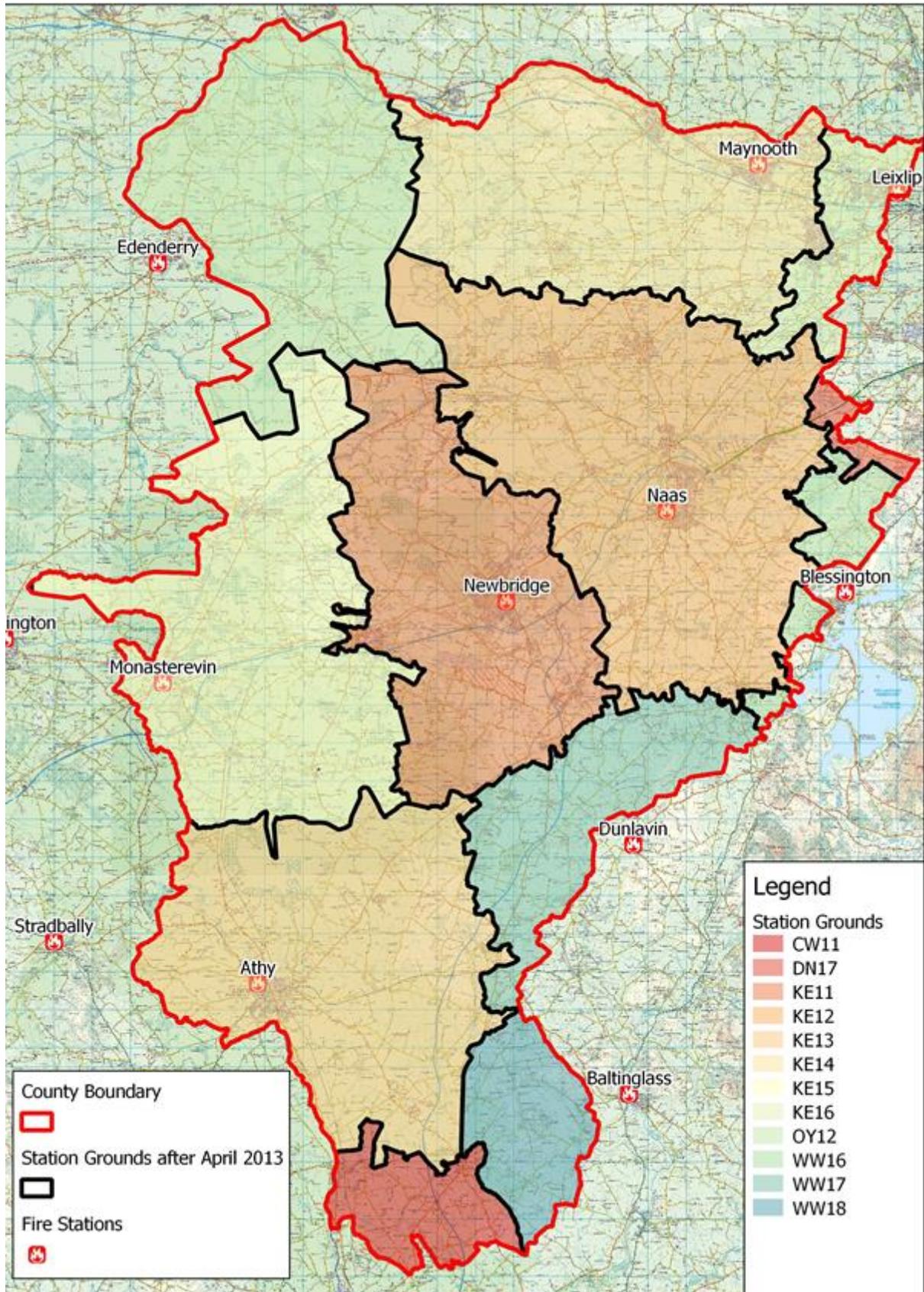
Full Time Fire Services

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

That the council consider the requirements necessary to transition from a retained fire service to a full time fire service in some or all of its fire stations.

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

A report from Ms Celina Barrett Chief Fire Officer stated that Kildare County Council, the Fire Authority, currently operates fire services from six fire stations located in Newbridge, Naas, Athy, Maynooth, Monasterevin and Leixlip. Since April 2013 the principle of the “nearest fire station” applies in Kildare. This means that the nearest fire station, irrespective of the county boundary, responds to incidents in Kildare. The map below shows Kildare fire stations and the fire stations from other authorities that respond, by agreement, into Kildare:



The crews in all these stations operate the Retained Model. This means that firefighters live and work in their community and only respond to the fire station on the activation of their alerter.

Legislation and National Guidance

The primary legislation that governs fire service provision in Ireland is the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003. Section 10 of the Acts sets out the Functions of a Fire Authority viz: -

10.—(1) A fire authority shall have the functions assigned to it by or under this Act.

(2) A fire authority shall—

(a) make provision for the prompt and efficient extinguishing of fires in buildings and other places of all kinds in its functional area and for the protection and rescue of persons and property from injury by fire, and

(b) establish and maintain a fire brigade, provide premises and make such other provision as it considers necessary or desirable for such purpose, and

(c) make adequate provision for the reception of and response to calls for the assistance of the fire brigade.

(3) A fire authority shall, in the exercise of its functions under subsection (2), have regard (in addition to all other relevant considerations) to the nature of the fire hazards and the probable incidence and extent of fires in its functional area, the character of the area and the value of the property liable to be damaged by fires.

The National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM) published “Keeping Communities Safe- A Framework for Fire Safety in Ireland” in February 2013. This document includes core standards and guidance for fire authorities and is the most current national policy document. Chapter 7 of this document addresses “Fire Service Response”.

Keeping Communities Safe required each fire authority to undertake an Area Risk Categorisation (ARC) process for each fire station area. This risk grading process considered criteria including population of main urban area, population density, total

population, annual service demand, annual dwelling fire rate, other building fire rates and special risks. The output of the process was a risk rating for each fireground ranging from very high (A), high (B), medium (c), low (D) to very low (E).

Kildare Fire Service undertook this process in 2014 and the assessment resulted in the following risk ratings: -

| Station Area | Risk Grading Categorisation |
|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Newbridge | C2 (Medium) |
| Naas | C1 (Medium) |
| Athy | D1 (Low) |
| Maynooth | D1 (Low) |
| Monasterevin | D2 (Low) |
| Leixlip | C2 (Medium) |

Table 1. Area Risk Categorisation by Station

This risk rating process has been repeated by the fire service in recent months using the most up to date data. The risk ratings have remained relatively unchanged in the new ARC process. Kildare Fire Service will bring the revised ARC to the Roads, Transportation and Public Safety SPC after the Central Statistic Office (CSO) issues the Small Area Population figures, which are expected in April 2023.

The requirements for fire service response are defined by the ARC. For Medium (C) and Low Risk (D) categories the risk categorised response capability is as follows:

| Risk Category | Standard Fire Appliance (Class B) Response Capability | Travel Times | Associated Crew Levels |
|---------------|---|--------------|------------------------|
| Medium | 1 | In 10 mins | 5 |
| | 2 | In 20 mins | 9 |
| | 3 | In 30 mins | 13 |
| Low | 1 | In 20 mins | 5 |
| | 2 | In 40 mins | 9 |

Table 2. Risk Categorised Response Capability

These targets are based on a 75% confidence level i.e. it is expected that the targets would be achieved on average three out of four mobilisations.

Kildare Fire Services achieves these nationally set targets.

Keeping Communities Safe also sets standards for specialist appliances.

| Risk Category | Special Appliances Response Capability | Travel times |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Medium | 1 Aerial 1 ET 1 ICU 1 Water Tanker (if appropriate) | In 30 mins In 45 mins In 75 mins In 75 mins |
| Low | 1 Aerial 1 ET 1 ICU 1 Water Tanker (if appropriate) | In 60 mins In 60 mins In 90 mins In 90 mins |

Table 3. Guidance on Specialist Appliances

Kildare Fire Services achieves these nationally set targets.

Staffing

| Station | Establishment | Current Compliment |
|----------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Newbridge | 12 | 11 (Plus 1 F/T Station Officer) |
| Naas | 12 | 12 (Plus 1 F/T Station Officer) |
| Athy | 10 | 10 |
| Maynooth | 10 | 9 |
| Monasterevin | 10 | 9 |
| Leixlip | 10 | 10 |

Table 4. Staffing

The minimum crewing number for a fire appliance to respond safely to an incident is 5. This number of 5 staff must include an Incident Commander.

Currently all six stations in Kildare are one pump stations. Each station also has an additional specialist appliance including Emergency Tenders, Water Tankers and Hydraulic Platforms. The decision as to which vehicles respond to an incident is taken by the Incident Commander based on the information received from the Mobilisation and Communication Centre (ERCC in Dublin).

Fulltime Option Implications

In a fulltime fire service arrangement, crews are on station for a shift and are off duty when they are away from the station. To operate a one pump arrangement with a fulltime model would require a staff of approximately 30 staff (5 crew across five shifts with a contingency for leave).

The most eligible staff for these positions would be the crews currently in the fire service. Assuming that our staff were successful for these positions it would mean a concentration of experience in the fulltime station and a need to recruit across all the other stations.

Cost

The cost of the provision of the Fire Service in Kildare in 2020, according to the AFS, was **€6,632,485**. A significant proportion of this budget is on fire fees (payment to firefighters). Based on the increased numbers of staff in a fulltime arrangement this would have implications for the staff costs, equipment costs, training costs etc.

A conservative estimate of additional cost per fulltime station would in the region of €2.5-3 million. That would see the Fire Service budget rise to approximately €9 million for one fulltime station and five retained stations or €20 million for six fulltime stations.

Our station buildings are not currently configured for this model and there would need to be capital investment in all stations to bring them to the standard required for fulltime occupation. This investment is omitted from the estimates above.

Conclusion

Kildare County Council currently meets all its statutory requirements via the current fire service model.

The Area Risk Categorization does not support the migration to a fulltime model.

The Fire Service continues to monitor and project forward population trends, risk profiles and incident loads for the six station fire grounds. While the view of the Fire Service is that a fulltime station is not currently warranted this may change as populations grow and the number and nature of developments in the county increase.

Councillor N Connolly informed the meeting that strike notice had been served on the council. Retained firefighters provided a very valuable service at considerable sacrifice. At the moment there are 8 vacancies in the service. The current service was not fit for purpose. Staff were forced to work extra shifts because of the shortage of staff. He was aware of more retained firefighters who were considering leaving the service. He suggested as a first step that Naas and Newbridge Fire stations be amalgamated to provide a full time service.

Members raised the following points

They supported the motion.

This had been discussed at the Transport SPC. Staff were voting with their feet. Some of the towns in the county require a full time service. This would be best for citizens.

Ms Barrett thanked the members for their contribution. She advised that the management agrees that the Fire Service needed revision. A new model may need to be developed. A report was due to go to the Minister before the end of 2022. The service continued to meet its targets. As table 1 showed, moving to a full time model could incur additional annual costs of €2.5 million. The risk category does not currently warrant this. The retained model meets needs at present.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor N Connolly, seconded by Councillor Clear and agreed by the members present that the report be noted and they will await the response from the Minister.

19/1122

Roads with Primary Schools in Winter Gritting Programme

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

That the council provide a list of all roads where primary schools are situated outlining which roads are gritted as part of the winter gritting program and which roads are not.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Behan and seconded by Councillor Caldwell.

A report from Ms E Wright, Director of Service, Roads Transportation and Public Safety stated that there are 102 primary schools in Co. Kildare (source: Department of Education and Skills) and a list of the schools and corresponding addresses is attached

Roads Department treats 688Km of National Secondary, Regional and Local Roads out of a total of 2,539 km of roadway (motorways and National Primary roads which are salted by Transport Infrastructure Ireland). The winter salting routes are prioritised based on roads of primary importance, commuter routes with high traffic volumes and public transport routes. The 688km are divided across ten separate routes and the salting trucks on all routes are operating at capacity at present (salting route map attached). Primary schools that are not located on national or regional roads are not included on the 10 existing salting routes. In the event of severe weather conditions, the Municipal District engineers may give priority to other roads and junctions outside of the 10 defined salting routes.

The Department of Transport's 2022/2023 'Be Winter Ready' Campaign launched on 10 November 2022. Advice and information is provided on how to prepare for winter, where to source information, and what personal actions the general public can take in order to become more resilient in their winter readiness. The Road Safety Authority provides information and advice on road safety during severe weather.

Councillor Behan informed the meeting that the report only answered part of her motion. It did not identify what schools were on National and Primary roads. It did inform her that the gritting service was at capacity. School routes generated a lot of traffic. She assumed that schools would be on a priority list. Families are commuters too especially to rural primary schools.

The members raised the following points

Could the report be reissued showing the schools that are on the regional salting routes?

Could salt bunkers be provided for schools that were not on routes that were gritted?

Ms Pender informed the meeting that she would reissue the report showing schools that were on National and Primary Roads. She noted that the 10 salting routes are at capacity. There is no capacity to expand.

She also advised that salt bunkers were not appropriate as there were insurance issues.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Behan, seconded by Councillor Caldwell and agreed by the members present, the report was noted and that a report be issued to the members indicating which schools were on national and primary routes

20/1122

All Residential Planning Applications to have Regard to Jakes Law

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

That all residential planning applications have regard to Jakes Law to support and condition implementation of same through the planning process in order that the Law can be put in place immediately on delivery of development.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Doyle and seconded by Councillor Kelly

A report from Ms E Wright, Director of Service, Roads Transportation and Public Safety stated that a typical planning condition that is currently being recommended by the Roads Department for signage in new housing estates is set out below:

“Details of 30 km/h Slow Zones signage and their respective locations in the residential development in accordance with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport’s traffic signs advice note TSAN-2016-02 to be submitted by the Applicant for the written approval of the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.”

Councillor Doyle welcomed the report

Councillor Doyle informed the members that while this was helpful it does not solve the issue.

Members raised the following points

- How enforceable is the condition of planning?
- Without Bye Laws the condition is unenforceable
- Unless there is a law for speed limits Bye Laws cannot be introduced until an estate is taken in charge

Mr. E Ryan advised the members that the approach is to design the road for the appropriate speed.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Doyle, seconded by Councillor Kelly that the report be noted

21/1122

Restoration of Historic Monuments and Buildings Sub-Committee

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

That the Chief Executive, working with the director of Planning, relevant Architects and Heritage Officer, immediately restore the Historic Monuments and Buildings sub-Committee to an active role in advising Kildare County Council on the existence, restorations and protections of historic monuments, buildings and sites in County Kildare and that it be given a further role in advising or recommending the acceptance of proffered names for new Residential Developments throughout the county.

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

A report from Mr E Ryan Director of Services, Planning and Strategic Development stated that Kildare County Council has prepared a work plan prioritising sites/structures within its control or ownership where appraisals, works or consent to carry out work is intended in the short to medium term. A list of proposed Committee members was agreed by Council and a meeting of the Committee will be scheduled for Q1 2023 to agree a specific work plan for 2023. It should be noted that HMAc

does not currently and will not going forward take on responsibility for the naming of estates.

Councillor Moore informed the meeting that the committee had been allowed to disappear. They operated as an advisory group. They had local knowledge about their area. It was a pity that this was not recognised as this sent out a message about local history. He highlighted names of estates that had been recently approved for use. He asked the members to support the reinstatement of this committee.

The members supported councillor Moore

Councillor Doyle suggested that Municipal district committees should have a role to play when naming estates as there was a turn over of staff in this area.

Councillor McEvoy advised that this committee was listed on the council web site. Clane Maynooth Municipal district had set aside LPT funding to have conservation works carried out on historical monuments in the municipal district. This committee needed to be activated to progress these works.

Mr Ryan informed the meeting work goes on with the Heritage Officer and that the committee would be reconstituted as early as possible in 2023. Councillor Moore asked that this happen in January 2023.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Weld that the report be noted

22/1122

Review of Strategic Policy Committees

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

That members consider, in accordance with Section 27 of Standing Orders, the appointment of a Committee for the purpose of preparing a detailed submission to the review of Strategic Policy Committees to be conducted by the Department of

Housing, Local Government and Heritage in advance of 2024 to consider the inclusion of young people as members.

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

A report from Ms A Aspell, Director Service, Housing and Corporate Services stated that the establishment of a committee is a matter for the members. Standing order 27 states the following

“The Council may appoint a special committee for a specific purpose. When appointing such a committee, it shall at the same time determine the number and names of Members to constitute such committee and shall also fix the quorum which shall not be less than three. The term of office of a special committee shall be for such period as the Council may determine when appointing the committee.

In the election of committees, candidates shall be proposed and seconded and if the number so proposed and seconded does not exceed the number of vacancies, those proposed and seconded shall be declared elected. Should the number of those proposed and seconded exceed the number of vacancies the provisions of paragraph 18 of Schedule 10 of the Act, (and the requirements of any other relevant enactment) will apply to appointments to committees.

Every special committee at its first meeting shall appoint a cathaoirleach from its Members and, where practical, fix the day and the hour of future meetings.”

Section 51 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended provides for the establishment of committees and the threshold that must be attained for a resolution to pass as follows

“51.—(1) If a local authority considers it appropriate, it may by resolution establish

(a) one or more than one committee to consider matters connected with the functions of the authority referred to it by the authority and to assist and advise the authority on those matters, and

b) It is necessary for the passing of a resolution under *paragraph (a)* that at least one-half of the total number of members of the local authority concerned vote in favour of the resolution.”

Councillor Farrelly thanked the council for the report. He wanted to have this committee set up for a specific period of time and to meet over 3 to 4 months to consider the challenges faced and prepare a submission.

Councillor McLoughlin Healy asked that Councillor Farrelly consider expanding the focus of the committee.

Councillor Farrelly did not agree as he was concerned that if this happened that the focus would become diluted.

Councillor McEvoy as Chair of Protocol and Procedures Committee said that if this committee was formed to focus on youth participation, the Protocol and Procedures committee could focus on other areas in preparing a submission.

The Meetings Administrator informed the members that at least 20 councillors would have to support the resolution. All of the members present which was in excess of 20 members, supported the resolution to set up the committee.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor Farrelly seconded by Councillor Killeen and agreed by in excess of 20 members that the report be noted and that the committee be set up.

23/1122

Reintroduction of Rural Density Toolkit Software

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

That Kildare County Council reinstall the rural density toolkit software on the online planning enquiry system making it available as before to potential applicants for rural housing.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Durkan and seconded by Councillor Weld.

A report from Mr E Ryan Director of Services, Planning and Strategic Development stated that work to install a measurement device (the rural density toolkit software) on the council Online Planning Enquiry System is underway and will be available as soon as practicable on completion of the County Development Plan review process.

Mr E Ryan informed the meeting that the software should be reinstalled by the end of November

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

24/1122

Approved Housing Bodies

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

That the council provide a full list of Approved Housing Bodies operating within the county (providing social and affordable homes in the county); and confirms the position of each AHB as to whether they allow their tenants keep pets; and any rules around the type of pets they can keep.

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

A report from Ms A Aspell, Director Service, Housing and Corporate Services stated that Approved Housing Bodies (AHB) determine their own rules regarding the keeping of pets, such rules will be laid down in the tenancy agreement signed between the AHB and the tenant. The rules vary across the AHBs operating in Kildare and discussions with Councillor Pender have taken place with respect to this motion.

Subject to the agreement of the elected members, the Housing Department will ascertain this information from the Approved Housing Bodies that are most active in the county and circulate same.

Following is a list of Approved Housing Bodies operating in Kildare

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Cill Dara Housing Association | Kilcock Housing Association |
| Cill Urnai Housing Association | Monasterevin Housing Association |
| Circle Voluntary | Rathangan Housing Association |
| Clanmil Housing | St. Vincent de Paul |
| Cluid Housing | Abbeyview Housing Association |
| Co-operative Housing Ireland | Camphill |
| Dublin Simon Community | Cuan Mhuire |
| Focus Ireland | Dara Voluntary |
| iCare | Gheel Autism |
| KARE | Homless Care |
| Oaklee | HAIL Housing |
| Peter McVerry Trust | Kildare North Sheltered Housing |
| Respond | Muiriosa |
| St John of God | Nas na Riogh Housing Association |
| STEER Housing | Newbridge Sheltered Housing /St. Vincent de Paul |
| Tuath Housing Association | Peter Mc Verry Trust |
| Crochta na Greine Housing Association | PACE Housing Association |
| Droichead Nua Housing Association | Rathangan Sheltered Housing |
| Goodwill Housing Association | Teach Tearmain |
| Hillside Housing Association | Youth for Peace |

Councillor Pender accepted the report

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

25/1122

Road Safety Promotion Programme

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

That the council's road safety promotion programme of events returns to a suitable new normal level of attendance at schools, open days, shows and festivals in co-ordination with the Road Safety Authority (RSA) & Gardai and that provision of adequate quantities of road safety personal protective equipment (PPE) including reflective armbands, Hi-Vis vests / bags, L.E.D. lights & information leaflets for schoolchildren and the general public is provided for in a sustainable manner.

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

A report from Ms E Wright, Director of Service, Roads Transportation and Public Safety stated that the Road Safety Officer includes promotional events in the Road Safety Work Programme for the year in conjunction with the Road Safety Authority, An Garda Síochána and An Taisce Green Schools. The level of activity is dependent on resources available. The Road Safety Authority provide equipment such as leaflets, booklets, posters, high visibility materials - vests, belts, drawstring bags, rucksack covers and armbands. This equipment can also be sourced directly from the RSA by interested Schools by connecting to their website.

<https://www.rsaorders.ie/>

Councillor Kenny informed the members that he was happy with the report. He wanted more PPE supplied to encourage road users to be seen. He suggested a presence at the County Show and more open days

Councillor Cussen supported the motion and suggested a pilot could be carried out at Municipal District Level. South Dublin County Council give out free lights to road users.

Councillor Galvin informed the meeting that it was the personal responsibility of road users to provide their own PPE. She believed that more traffic wardens were needed to help create conditions where road safety could flourish

Ms Pender informed Councillor Cussen that she would discuss her request to organise a pilot scheme with the road safety officer. They were currently involved in Safe Roads to Schools and Sustainable Cycling

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

26/1122

Speed Limit Review Process

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

That the council clearly lays out the next steps in the speed limit review process, and how it will apply the motion agreed in the June 2021 plenary to separate all elements related to implementing the 30km speed limits in housing developments in support of 'Jake's law' to allow the implementation of these proposals without further delay.

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

A report from Ms E Wright, Director of Service, Roads Transportation and Public Safety stated that Kildare County Council completed the Kildare Speed Limit Review 2022 and it was placed on the agenda at the full sitting of Kildare County Council on the 25th of July 2022 as the adoption of Speed Limit Bye-laws is a reserved function of the elected members. The Kildare Speed Limit Review 2022 included a comprehensive collection of areas, including housing estates taken in charge, schools, residential areas, motorway slip lanes and other parts of the road network, that had suggested changes to their speed limits. The elected members of Kildare County Council voted not to adopt the Kildare Speed Limit Review 2022.

Following this decision, the Executive appealed the Kildare Speed Limit Review 2022 to the Regional Appeals Board for consideration. The Executive has requested a response and is awaiting a reply. We will recommence the Speed Limit Review Process on receipt of feedback on the Appeal and the Members will be kept informed.

Councillor Hamilton informed the meeting that he didn't believe they had a satisfactory answer. The report did not answer the question asked. It does not offer a solution. The members had agreed to separate out all elements of the speed limit review, this had not happened. The members had rejected the speed limit review. The council had referred the decision to the appeal committee and they now awaited the outcome. Why had this potential life saving change to the speed limit review not been implemented.?

Ms Kavanagh informed the members that when the council receive the feedback on the appeal work will restart on the speed limits. She realised that it had been difficult for members to accept an increase in speed limits in the draft Speed Limit Review document in line with the technical advice. They couldn't adopt the whole plan. They wanted Jakes law. A decision would have to be made once the outcome of the appeal is known. The councillors had democratically rejected the higher speed limits proposed. She did not see a quick way of dealing with this. The council awaited the reply from the Appeals Board.

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

On the proposal of Councillor Doyle seconded by Councillor Feeney and agreed by all Standing Orders were suspended for 10 Minutes to allow the meeting continue past 6pm.

27/1122

UN Emissions Gap Report 2022

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

Following the latest UN Emissions Gap Report 2022, that the council promote the recent OECD report on "Redesigning Ireland's Transport for Net Zero - Towards Systems that work for People and the Planet" while highlighting to the meeting how the main recommendations will inform councillor and staff training, and climate-proofing of activities across the council's service departments.

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

A report from Mr J Boland, Director of Service, Environment, Water Services and Climate Action stated that this OECD report highlights the urgency and pace of change needed in light of the 1.5-degree target set out under the Paris Agreement. Indeed, County Kildare was one of 4 locations studied to inform the OECD report with inputs from Local Link, Sustainable Transport Team as well as the Climate Action Office.

In addition, the recommendations and findings of this report also fed into a recent (6-10-22) national initiative [led by EM CARO] entitled: *Local Authority Reimagining Transport – Early Interventions Report*.

This initiative sets out a pathway for the local government sector to transition its fleet away from fossil fuels to include a series of ‘early interventions’ as follows:

- Leadership and governance [building the conditions for success]
- Fleet management and accounting [monitoring/reviewing fuel use and efficiency]
- Fleet management training
- Eco driver training
- Moving towards zero emissions vehicles
- Delivering capabilities of alternative fuels

In a wider context, the CARO national training plan which is at an advanced stage of being rolled out to all staff and elected members seeks to enhance skills and confidence levels in enhancing the leadership role of local authorities at local level in terms of encouragement of more sustainable transport modes/patterns as part of the broader citizenry. This includes inter alia, the understanding and interpretation of government policy, funding opportunities, empowering change, championing leadership, delivering action, raising awareness etc.

The proposed candidate Decarbonising Zone for Maynooth is also worth mentioning in terms of a testbed for sustainable transport (and other) such initiatives at local level.

A report from Ms E Wright, Director of Service, Roads Transportation and Public Safety stated that further to the publication of the UN and OECD reports, as part of its

net-zero goal, Ireland has committed to halve transport-related carbon emissions by 2030 compared to 2018 (excluding international aviation and maritime). Car dependency hinders the possibility of efficiently managing public space to foster quality access via more sustainable and healthy transport modes. It also limits the effectiveness of improved technologies such as more fuel efficient and electric vehicles as increased car use offsets vehicle efficiency gains. Furthermore, if vehicle fleets continue to grow this will hinder achieving high shares of fuel efficient and electric vehicles on the road.

There are 4 key recommendations in the OECD Report:

1. Redefine the goal of the transport system as sustainable accessibility - challenging ingrained mindsets and setting sustainable accessibility as a goal for land-use/housing planning.

The Kildare Area Based Transport Assessments (ABTAs) will provide short, medium and long terms options for the improvement of both towns in terms of public transport, car parking, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, road infrastructure and e-mobility. The focus will be on encouraging a modal shift in people's behaviour to encourage the use of cycling, walking and sustainable transport modes and reducing car dependency.

2. Prioritise the up-scale of transformative policies - while no single policy can transform a complex system, policies with a high transformative potential can help Ireland redesign the structure of its transport system so that sustainable transport modes are the first choice for the bulk of trips

The NTA funded Active Travel Programme of projects 2022/2023 supports this recommendation. Preliminary work to develop the Decarbonising Zone (DZ) Plan in Maynooth and the Climate Action Plan at county level is in train.

3. Redefine the electrification strategy to support the transition towards a sustainable transport system. Embed the electrification strategy in the goal of sustainable accessibility and reduced car travel, and make sure the strategy prioritises walking, cycling, micro-mobility and high occupancy and shared travel where larger vehicles are the only option

Plans are in progress to pilot the first Community Electric Vehicle Charging Hub in Maynooth, with financial support from Zero Emissions Vehicles Ireland (ZEVI).

4. Embrace a systemic approach to policy decision-making across government departments.

KCC is working interdepartmentally to mainstream and align policies in favour of climate actions.

The Roads Department is also cognisant of Ireland's statutory reporting obligation under Directive 2014/94/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure (AFID). We have taken our first steps towards using alternatively-fuelled vehicles through the purchase of electric vehicles for use as part of our fleet (Fire and Machinery Yard vehicles), and planning for the further change as part of our multi-annual fleet replacement programme. The CCMA Reimagining Transport Working Group have published an Early Interventions document, which is also guiding and informing KCC on potential intervention options and transition measures to decarbonise our fleet.

Other climate-proofing activities across the Roads Directorate includes the following initiatives:

- A phased upgrade of the traffic management infrastructure (LED upgrade) is underway for the current 227 junctions and pedestrian crossings, 120 CCTV cameras, and 185 other installations which includes zebra crossings, driver feedback signs, and periodic speed limit signage.
- All replacement vehicles in the Machinery Yard used for roads operations (>3.5 tonnes) will include built-in Driver Performance monitoring and drivers will participate in Eco-Driver training to maximise fuel use and replacement

commercial vans (<3.5 tonnes) will be electric, where feasible. Fuel cards have been issued to drivers which will yield fuel efficiency.

- The new Roads Depot in Athy, currently under construction, has been provided with photovoltaic panels, a heat pump and EV chargers installed.
- The new Machinery Yard and Regional Salt, which has moved to construction phase, has been designed with sustainability and a number of energy saving measures are included.

A report from Ms A Aspell, Director Service, Housing and Corporate Services stated that in order to promote pedestrian and cycle activity and to reduce car dependence, active travel objectives are incorporated into housing schemes delivered on council owned land. Electric vehicle charging is incorporated into the design of new social housing schemes. In acquiring sites for social housing delivery proximity to public transport and local services are considered as part of the assessment criteria. The same considerations are applied to turn-key acquisitions and the appraisal of Approved Housing Body proposals.

Councillor McEvoy thanked the staff who contributed to the report. He informed the meeting that the UN had warned that we are not getting the message on climate mitigation measures. There has been severe flooding in Europe, heat waves across the world and population migration due to climate and war. We are ignoring the consequences of our actions. He was supported by Councillor Hamilton.

Mr Boland informed the meeting that training was ongoing, policies were being developed, Climate Action Plans were being prepared. There were significant challenges

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

28/1122

National and EU Procurement Guidelines, Regulations and Directives

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

The 2021 Audit Report states that ‘As a public organisation, the council (including its subsidiary and related companies) is required to comply, in all respects, with both the national and EU procurement guidelines, regulations and directives.’ That the council clarify in detail who requires the council and its subsidiaries to comply with the national and EU guidelines, through what mechanism and what happens if the council or its subsidiaries do not comply.

The motion was proposed by Councillor McLoughlin Healy and seconded by Councillor Clear.

A report from Ms F Millane, A/Head of Finance stated that The Public Service Reform Plan (2014-2016) was to reform procurement across the Public Service in order to deliver significant savings to the State, modernise and professionalise public procurement, align policy development with operations, improve the consistency of policy implementation and reduce risk for the State.

The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) was established in 2014 with responsibility for driving the implementation of the new model for public procurement. The OGP in 2019 published The National Public Procurement Policy Framework (NPPPF) whose purpose is to cover public procurement that is governed by EU and National Rules. This NPPPF framework is the overarching policy framework for all public procurement and can be found on <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/39a1b-the-national-public-procurement-policy-framework/>

In 2014 the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform issued Circular 10/14: “Initiatives to assist SMEs in Public Procurement” to assist SMEs participating in public procurement and ensure they fully engaged with the OGP.

Kildare County Council’s Procurement Officer has responsibility for advising departments in order to enable them to comply with the OGP framework. The Council has an inhouse procurement portal as a central repository for procurement advice, policies and training.

The Council has a Procurement Steering Group which meets to discuss cross-directorate issues and to support the Procurement Officer in their role.

If procurement has not been done correctly this may result in litigation challenging the procurement process. As the Members are aware, this has happened previously in Kildare with regard to the establishment of a multi-party framework agreement for planned building maintenance works. This resulted in the Council successfully defending itself in the Commercial High Court.

Issues of non-compliance may also be highlighted in the audit reports of Council and related companies. Kildare County Council has no role in the day-to-day processes of subsidiary and related companies.

As the member is aware, if there are specific concerns relating to procurement processes in Kildare they can be raised either with the relevant Director of Services or with the Local Government Auditor at the commencement of the annual audit.

Councillor McLoughlin Healy informed the meeting that her question had not been answered. There were no consequences if the council breached procurement guidelines. The threat of litigation is not a consequence unless the individual takes action. Ms Sweeney informed the meeting that there were consequences, that litigation could be taken and it can be highlighted in the external Auditors report. Councillor McLoughlin Healy stated that the external auditor requested that changes be made and that there had been no questions asked about the auditors report which was before the members.

Ms Sweeney informed the meeting that the council had taken on board what the auditor had recommended. The council work on these areas and continue to seek to improve.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor McLoughlin Healy seconded by Councillor Clear and agreed by the members that the report be noted

29/1122

Vacant Dwellings in Kildare

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

That Kildare County Council commence a project to identify the 4797 vacant dwellings in Kildare referenced in the recent census with an aim to determine what measures are required to return them to a home.

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

A report from Ms A Aspell, Director Service, Housing and Corporate Services stated that while Census 2022 recorded 4,797 (5.3%) vacant dwellings in Kildare, it should be noted the Central Statistics Office website also states "... that many of the dwellings recorded as vacant were for sale, were rental properties, had a deceased owner, or were being renovated. Many of these may well have been occupied again a few weeks after the Census was completed."

Kildare has one of the lowest residential property vacancy rates nationally. Our Vacant Homes Officer actively monitors reports of vacant homes in the county, carrying out site visits as necessary. Additional staffing resources have been assigned to the Vacant Homes Team and a programme of Compulsory Purchase Orders has commenced. This will be the first step in returning suitable vacant properties back into use as efficiently as possible. The Vacant Homes Team also administer schemes such as the recently launched Croi Conaithe Scheme in order to assist owners of vacant properties to bring their properties to a habitable condition. Councillor Clear indicated that had spoken to an enumerator who had worked on the collection of census data. They had identified vacant premises during the collection of data. If the council could identify these properties then it gave a starting point. Homelessness was a huge problem and we needed to be able to measure to see if we were improving the return of vacant properties to use.

The members made the following points

Each Municipal District gets a vacant house report monthly

Members were well placed to provide information on vacant properties'

The issue needed to be tackled.

Resources were required

Ms Aspell informed the members that the teams were now in place and that 6 Compulsory Purchase Orders had been commenced for vacant premises. Other CPO's would be coming on stream in the coming months.

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

30/1122

Homeless HAP Processing System

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

That the council address the backlog in HAP processing and commit to prioritising homeless HAP applications by immediately recommencing the homeless HAP processing system to assist in alleviating part of the homelessness crisis in Kildare; where the current processing of all HAP applications (incl homeless HAP) is taking 12 weeks and where homelessness is at levels never seen before, with homeless HAP the only system that was in place as a mechanism to provide any kind of homelessness prevention in the County.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Killeen and seconded by Councillor Farrelly. A report from Ms A Aspell, Director Service, Housing and Corporate Services stated that the Housing Department acknowledges that there is a backlog of HAP applications. Currently we have 56 valid applications on hand, the majority of which are less than 8 weeks old. The HAP process is being reviewed and staff in the section are completing 2-weeks overtime in order to clear the backlog. Homeless HAP applications will continue to be prioritised. HAP landlords are paid monthly, and this can impact on payment timelines. Delays are also caused by incomplete applications and failure by landlords to submit the landlord section of the application.

Regarding homeless prevention the council engaged in an acquisition programme in 2022 which prioritised tenancies at risk of homelessness by purchasing properties where a valid notice to quit was issued. We continue to apply the priority clauses of

the Allocation Scheme for Social Housing 2016 which provides priority status to households at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Councillor Killeen thanked the council for the report and asked that the council treat homeless HAP applications as separate from the day to day HAP.

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

The meeting concluded.