

MINUTES

Transportation, Safety and Emergency Services

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

05 November 2020

Attendees:

Councillor Joseph Neville
Councillor Anne Connolly
Councillor Angela Feeney
Councillor Colm Kenny
Councillor Nuala Killeen
Councillor Mark Stafford
Councillor Paul Ward
Brian Purcell
Gerry Dornan

Also Present

Celina Barrett, A/ Director of Services
Stephen Cummins, A/Senior Engineer
Niall O’Riordan A/Chief Fire Officer
Declan Keogh, Roads Safety, Cycling and Sustainable Transport Officer
Pamela Pender, A/Senior Executive Officer
Marie Kelly, Assistant Staff Officer.

Apologies:

Cormac Browne

Introduction

Cathaoirleach Joseph Neville welcomed all the members of the SPC to the meeting and welcomed Celina Barrett who would be acting in the role of Director of Services, Transportation, Safety and Emergency Services following the retirement of Tadhg McDonnell from Kildare County Council.

Item 1 – Minutes- 01 October 2020

On the proposal of Councillor Angela Feeney and seconded by Councillor Paul Ward the minutes of 01 October 2020 were approved and taken as read.

Item 2 – Declarations of Interest

No Comment.

Item 3 – Briefing from A/Director of Services

The A/Director of Services, Celina Barrett thanked the Cathaoirleach for the warm welcome to the Transportation SPC. On foot of this, she expressed her sincere gratitude to Tadhg McDonnell for his great knowledge and experience of Local Government that he shared within the organisation. She informed the members that she is looking forward to working with them on their work programme 2020/2021 in order to carry out their role as members of the SPC.

The members were also informed that Niall O’Riordan was appointed A/Chief Fire Officer.

The A/Director of Services gave the members a briefing in respect to various road projects around the county. Firstly, she advised the committee that she was very aware of the importance of protecting the statutory powers of the Municipal District members before sharing any information to the members of the Transportation SPC.

Celina reiterated the structure of the Transportation, Safety and Emergency Services Directorate.

- Operations and Maintenance
- Roads Design
- NTA Project and Traffic

The members of the committee were advised that they must be aware of the changes in the modal shift by commuters, climate change and on the new

programme for government which would bring about a change in emphasis on how funding and projects are prioritised for Transport.

Members were advised that a meeting was held between National Transport Authority (NTA) and Kildare County Council on the proposal for the Dart expansion on the Maynooth line which was greatly engaged. NTA have identified a list of schemes which will provide or enhance existing cycling facilities as part of the Greater Dublin Area which includes Kildare.

Celina gave the members an update in respect to the current Capital Programme projects in progress around the county.

- Athy Distributor Road
- Maynooth Eastern Ring Road (LIHAF)
- Kildangan Railway Bridge Footpath Scheme

An undertaking was given to circulate the list of the Capital Programmes in place to Committee members prior to the February meeting in 2021.

Committee members were informed of the pilot scheme on the M4 from Maynooth towards South Dublin County Council boundary is envisaged to proceed by the end of January 2021, providing a hard shoulder Bus Corridor.

In relation to the Maynooth Eastern Ring Road, the roads department are proceeding to a significant important stage of this project, preparing documents for CPO. The CPO is a crucial phase in all projects.

Councillor Feeney highlighted the area of funding from the NTA. In response, Celina advised the members that no formal notification on the funding allocation from the NTA had been received to date. Priority will be the delivery of projects that have gone through the Part 8 process such as Kilcullen Road and Kill to Naas Cycleway to name but a few.

Item 4 – Presentation from A/Chief Fire Officer

Niall O’Riordan, A/Chief Fire Officer was welcomed to the meeting. He informed the committee members of the key structure of Kildare Fire Service:

- Chief Fire Officer
- Operations
- Fire Safety
- Special Projects and Emergency Management

The Fire Service Operation Section Headquarters is in Newbridge Fire Station where Fire Service Management, Fire Service Senior Officers, Administration staff, Brigade Mechanic and main training facilities are located.

The Civil Defence Officer is also located in the Newbridge Fire Station.

The members were advised of the Fire Service Operations Sections:

- Newbridge Fire Station
- Naas Fire Station
- Athy Fire Station
- Maynooth Fire Station
- Monasterevin Fire Station
- Leixlip Fire Station

Operations:

- Training is carried out on a continuous basis for all staff.
- During Covid-19 Level 5 restrictions in March 2020 little activity was noted in the early morning with more calls after work during the times of 4-10pm.
- The ‘Next Nearest Station’ Principle has been applied since 2013 where the nearest station will come to your attendance, working alongside a supporting station in neighbouring counties -Laois, Wicklow, Carlow, Meath Offaly and Dublin.
- Projects are ongoing in the Fire Service to provide energy upgrades in all 6 stations including. Currently at pre-tender stage it includes:
 - Insulation
 - Lighting

- Heating Systems
- Solar power usage

In 2020, the Fire Service Operations Section purchased a new 100% electric van that travels the county to each station while promoting the use of electric vehicles.

A new fire station for Maynooth has been recently confirmed for Maynooth with the Council purchasing a site in early 2020. An application has been submitted to the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage to be included on a Capital Programme for funding to proceed to design and construction stage.

Fire Safety Section areas of responsibility:

- Risk based inspection regime
- Fire safety complaint investigations
- Licensing
- Outdoor & indoor events
- Community Fire Safety
- Fire Safety Certificates
- Planning referrals
- Housing referrals etc

Fire Safety Section – Risk based inspection regime

- Residential Institutional (Nursing Homes) every 4 years
- Hotels every 4 years
- Full day care pre-schools every 4 years
- Fire safety complaints on any building (except domestic) etc.
- 2019, 76 inspections carried out on 72 premises compared to 30 to date for 2020
- The inspection levels for all premises has been reduced this year with the Nursing Homes and Childcare facilities in the county being the most affected.

The fire service is notified of the following licensing applications:

- Publican licence applications
- Dance Licences (set maximum occupancies)
- Club licences
- Licence transfers
- Bingo and lottery licence etc

Fire Safety Section – Outdoor and Indoor Events

- Assessment of attendance numbers, exit facilities etc.
- Fireworks applications
- Event Planning meetings with Statutory Agencies and event promoters etc.
- Social media events promoting safety in the home with students returning to college and Halloween events.
- Fire Station open days
- Group visits to Fire Stations
- Targets Home Fire Safety Checks etc

Fire Safety Certificates are required for the construction of a new building, alteration or extension of existing building or where a building changes its use. A domestic home does not require these certificates. Since July 2020, all applications are made online and certificates are issued online. There have been 170 applications on average per year for the period of 2015-2019. The number of applications has increased by 25% in 2020 compared to 2019.

Planning and Housing referrals are also a very big area to the Fire Services. In 2019, there was over 500 reports on Planning permissions to the Planning Department. The Fire safety section must also attend pre-planning meetings if required and inspect premises referred from Kildare County Council, Housing Department.

Kildare County Council, Fire Service Major Emergency Plan has been is under review.

Fire Service Special Projects and Emergency Management Section

- Ensure that the Local Authority meet the Statutory requirements and National Standards set out in terms of planning and preparedness for large emergency incidents in Co. Kildare.
- Supporting the work of the operational Fire Service to assist them in preparing for potentially complex emergency situations
- Co-ordinate and plan the preparedness for large scale and inter-agency operations including major emergencies.
- Work with high risk premises in Kildare to plan for fire/incidents, preparing operators and fire crews. There are over 200 such plans in Kildare held on file.
- Creating an External Emergency Plan for Intel and Irish Industrial Explosive sites via a multi-agency approach i.e. one plan for 3 response agencies – Local Authority, An Garda Siochana and HSE.
- Working alongside Crisis Management Team during Covid-19 pandemic

Building Control Section.

- Site monitoring /inspections to ensure compliance with building regulations.
- Processing and validation of 7-day notices
- Processing and validation of Certificates of Compliance on completion.
- Maintenance of the statutory building control register.
- Preparation of snag lists and site resolution plans
- Liaison with other interested parties (Irish Water, MD Committees)
- Management of Bonds etc.

Councillor Neville complimented all those concerned with the work carried out in the Fires Services. The committee members wished to have their sincere gratitude reiterated to all members within the fire services for the work carried out and commitment to their role.

Item 5- Work Programme 2020/2021

The Cathaoirleach, Joseph Neville highlight the importance of the SPC work programme for 2020/2021. A lengthy discussion did take place on the proposed work programme based on the scale of importance. It was agreed by all members of the committee that their role was to influence policy and 'make a difference'.

Stephen Cummins, A/Senior Engineer gave the members a brief background to Segregated Cycleways, Greenways and Blueway's. He informed the members of the committee that the NTA have policies on greenways, cycleways to name but a few. Kildare County Council intends to link the greenway, blueways and cycleways to the local towns' amenities, heritage and tourist facilities increasing economic opportunities.

He highlighted that some roads in the county are too narrow to accommodate Sergerated Cycleways.

Celina Barrett agreed to circulate existing relevant policies prior to the next meeting. She also requested that the roads department "Policy on the Naming of Roundabouts" would be a useful tool to update for further works. She expressed her interest in developing accessible Public Realm streetscapes to be captured in further projects, which was welcomed by Cllr Killeen.

Gerry Dornan emphasised the necessity of Kildare having a Strategic Transport/Cycling Policy. He also stated his concerns on the work completed on the Straffan Road, Moyglare Road and Kilcullen Road which he considered sub-standard and gave the following examples of Kildare County County's underperformance in terms of claiming and spending funding.

- According to the National Transport Authority's (NTA's) Annual Report on STMG (Grants), in 2019 Kildare County Council was one of the worst, if not the worst, performing of the 11 local authorities which make up the Greater Dublin Area and Regional Cities.
- In the spring of 2020, the NTA allocated Kildare County Council €2.2 Million of which over €1 Million was for work on the Royal Canal from Maynooth to the Dublin Boundary and on Mill Street, Maynooth. Neither project commenced on

site in 2020 so it appears that approximately 50% of the allocation has been underspent.

- In 2020 under the July Stimulus, the government allocated Kildare County Council €1.8 Million. Kildare only applied for half of what comparable counties such as Meath, Fingal and Wicklow received.
- Out of over 30 Irish local authorities, Kildare was among the group which spent the least proportion of its July Stimulus funding on cycling.
- In urban areas, a number of the proposed July Stimulus measures will actually worsen conditions for cyclists and pedestrians.

Cathaoirleach Joseph Neville reiterated to the committee members that their role was to influence policy as opposed to operational issues. He highlighted that the members must work with the same goals and focus on what the Transportation SPC can achieve.

The following Proposed Work Programme for 2020/2021

1. Fish Eye -Policy on the use of 'Fish Eye Mirrors on public roads.
2. Electric Vehicles – Policy on Electric Vehicles in relation to free parking
3. Roundabouts- Review Policy regarding the Naming of Roundabouts.
4. Parking -Simplify parking by adopting colour code instead of street names in Kildare parking app.
5. Rural Public Lighting- Rural Public Lighting Scheme. Examination of the issue of rural lighting in terms of installation and lifecycle costs and in the context of the current requirement on Kildare County Council to reduce its energy costs in line with the EU Energy efficiency Directive (2012/27/EU).
6. Access & Disability – Access and Disability Progress – Development of Accessible Public Realm Streetscapes.
7. Permeability – Permeability between Housing Estates and Public Roadways- this issue to be jointly examined by Planning and Roads Department.
8. Fire Officer – Report on activities and developments from the Chief Fire Officer.
9. Cycling – Biannual Report from the Cycling Forum.
10. Traffic calming- Policy on the installing of Traffic Calming Measures for the county.

11. Transport links -Policy and Planning on effective transport links across towns in Kildare.
12. Rail Network- Policy on Integrating rail planning into County Developments Planning including appropriate park and ride.
13. Bus Services – Policy on increasing capacity and identify express bus routes of support commuters through working with the NTA, Bus Eireann and Dublin Bus.
14. Public Parking- That the council review the policies around public parking in the context of urban renewal, cycling and pedestrian amenity with associated benefits to health and wellbeing, changing economic models and the transition towards carbon-neutral societies.
15. Cycle and walking signage- That in a bid to increase driver awareness of walkers and cyclists, that the council would invest in and roll out cycle and walking friendly signage, solar powered speed signs with particular emphasis around the schools.
16. Salt Bunkers – That the council install salt bunkers outside rural schools, community and parish centres, railway and canal bridges and secondary crossroad junction.
17. School Safety – That a “Stop for the Lollipop Campaign”, the primary schools serviced by school wardens be sent a campaign pack consisting of a poster, key rings and #stopforthelollipop campaign sheet to help spread the school crossing safety message throughout the wider community.
18. Cycle Infrastructure -Policy on segregated cycleways.
19. Greenways & Blueway's -Focus on Royal and Grand Canal Greenways and Barrow Blueway to a high-quality standard plan amenity to make them into thriving connections and tourist destinations.
20. Road Network and Congestion- Focus on road developments that allow us to reclaim our town centres, develop town centre, communities, vibrant main street and reduce congestion and pollution in our towns.
21. Permeability- Policy on connecting our communities for good pedestrian and cycling access and connectivity right through our towns.

The above Proposed Work Programme 2020/2021 has been issued for referral and agreement from the Corporate Policy Group (CPG).

Item 6 –Meeting Calendar for 2021

The following proposed dates for 2021 were agreed by the members but are subject to change as the proposed dates are scheduled into the draft meeting calendar which will be presented to the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) and to the Full Council for approval.

- Thursday 4th February 2021 @ 2.00pm
- Thursday 6th May 2021 @ 2.00pm
- Thursday 2nd September 2020 @ 2.00pm
- Thursday 4th November 2021 @ 2.00pm

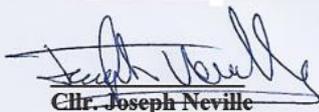
Item 7– Any other Business

It was proposed that a presentation would be given by Stephen Cummins A/Senior Engineer and Declan Keogh, Roads Safety, Cycling and Sustainable Transport Officer at the first Transportation SPC meeting of 2021.

Declan Keogh updated the members on a forthcoming event, as part of World Remembrance Day scheduled for 15 November 2020 which will replace the Remembrance Mass for traffic victims. He outlined that this event is to encourage businesses to 'Light up for Road Safety' their premises and homes between 7-8 on that date for victims. Join in and "Shine a light for Road Safety". The members of the committee agreed with this proposal.

Declan confirmed that a Cycle Forum meeting is scheduled for the middle of November 2020 -date to be confirmed.

The next meeting will be held on 04th February 2021.



Clr. Joseph Neville