

Minutes of the May Meeting of the Municipal District of Callan-Thomastown

Date: Wednesday 7th May, 2025 at 3.00p.m.

Venue: Remote access via MS Teams.

Chair: Cllr Deirdre Cullen.
Present Cllr Brian Cleere, Cllr M Doyle, Cllr Joe Lyons, Cllr Joe Sheridan.
In attendance: Fiona Deegan, Director of Services; Jan McIntyre, Senior Executive Architect; Bernadette Moloney, Biodiversity Officer; Declan Murphy, Area Engineer; Carmel Brett, Staff Officer.
Apologies: Cllr Stephanie Doheny, A.M. Shortall.

1) Confirmation of Minutes

(b) Minutes of the Municipal District meeting of 2nd April, 2025.

The minutes of the Municipal District meeting held 2nd April, 2025 were adopted, proposed by Cllr J Lyons and seconded by Cllr B Cleere.

2) Consideration of Reports and Recommendations

(a) Presentation: Housing Update (Jan McIntyre)

Ms Jan McIntyre, Senior Executive Architect, gave the members a presentation on Housing Capital delivery in the Callan-Thomastown Municipal District, commencing with an outline of housing demand in the district which showed that demand in Callan was highest, followed by Thomastown, with 1 and 2 bed units comprising 84% of total overall need.

Jan listed current and upcoming projects, and detailed the current position and timelines for refurbishment and new build developments in Thomastown, Callan, Kells and Dunbell.

The members thanked Jan for her update and raised the following items:

- Future plans for undertaking refurbishment projects will encompass avenues to aid residents to “rightsize” from their current living accommodation;
- Units facilitating living accommodation for carers of the resident welcomed;
- “Over the shop” residences encouraged and considered necessary for the regeneration of towns and villages;
- Alternative available options to engage in the housing process outside of using online choice based letting system;
- Concern expressed regarding viability of plans for commercial activity on the ground floors of renovated vacant urban properties – artists workshops are being considered for ground floor use in properties known as Powers and Lynchs on Bridge Street Callan, subject to available funding;
- Potential for parking facilities to the rear of derelict buildings to the West of Bridge Street
- Query as to why Callan isn’t listed as a Heritage Town with the Heritage Council will be referred to the Heritage Officer;

- It is envisaged the timeline for start on site of housing units at the old Co-Op site, Green Street, Callan will be late 2026 to early 2027 as it is a large project at an early stage and the existing building is a protected structure;
- Disappointment expressed that non-investment in water and wastewater services leading to a lack of services in smaller rural settlements has resulted in stifled housing development outside of the urban centres of Callan, Thomastown and Rosbercon. It was confirmed the Housing Section are working within existing constraints to progress the Housing Capital Programme, and Ms Fiona Deegan said that a second written query was sent to Uisce Éireann;

(b) Biodiversity Action Plan Update (Bernadette Moloney)

Ms Bernadette Moloney, Biodiversity Officer, gave a comprehensive presentation to the elected members on Kilkennys Biodiversity Action Plan, initially outlining biodiversity roles within the Council, required reporting areas, the impacts on biodiversity and legislative obligations & context.

Bernadette explained the development process and associated timelines of the Action Plan, and outlined the makeup of the Biodiversity Working Group and the objectives of the Plan. The elected members were advised of the external funding streams from the National Parks & Wildlife Service and the Heritage Council.

Bernadette then listed the Monitoring, Conservation, Land Management and Community Projects financed by the Local Biodiversity Action Fund 2025 and each projects' corresponding action in the Kilkenny Biodiversity Action Plan.

Bernadette concluded her presentation by sharing Kilkenny's vision for Biodiversity and inviting questions from the elected members:

- In reply to a query regarding Ash dieback and trees overhanging power cables, Bernadette said that removal of roadside trees doesn't fall under the remit of the Biodiversity Action Plan;
- Testing of water at lifeguarded swimming areas falls under the remit of the Environment Section;
- It was clarified that Kilkenny County Council do not have the authority to enter private lands to control Japanese Knotweed;
- Regarding roadside hedge growth, Declan Murphy said that the Road Traffic Act allows the Council to trim at live junctions outside of the Hedgecutting season in the interest of road safety.

(c) Monthly Roads Update (Declan Murphy)

Mr D. Murphy, Area Engineer, updated the members on the following roads related matters, outlining projects completed and planned:

- Restoration Improvement works completed at Grange Upper, Kelseys Cross, Church Hill, Windgap and Knocktopher at Tirlán;
- Restoration Maintenance works will commence 19th May;
- Drainage works have commenced at the Rower, Haggard Road Kells and Hugginstown
- Safe route to schools' project in Graiguenamanagh is continuing, with junction tightening at R705/Fairview junction;
- ORIS works continuing on Stoneyford to Ennisnag footpath, it is hoped that works will be completed mid-May;
- Projects are designed and awaiting costings for Low-Cost Safety Scheme works at R697 Birchwood (Ahenny), R705 at Ballyogan and L1016 Sevenhouses crossroads.

Locations at R704 junction with L7502 and Ballyhall crossroads are currently being surveyed;

- Community Recognition Funded remedial works on the wall and traffic calming at Knocktopher now complete, awaiting seats delivery;
- Remedial works on Kells Bridge commences today for 2 days, repair works to footpath & kerb in Thomastown underway following damage caused by burst watermain.

The members thanked Mr. Murphy for his update and raised the following items:

- Query regarding the cause of recent flooding in Thomastown – Uisce Éireann indicated a problem with water pressure, Declan will enquire further;
- Update on bus stops for Market Street, Thomastown and Bennettsbridge – Declan will revert following a meeting with Bus Éireann;
- Request for possible upgrade of chevron signs on approach to the pub at Danesfort junction;
- Safety issues on approach road to Thomastown from Graiguenamanagh;
- An update on potential works to Ferrymountgarret Bridge will be given by RDS Consultants at the June Municipal District meeting;
- Timeline for completion of works at Ballyhall crossroads is likely to be last summer;
- Schedule for works to the Kings River – Declan will check with engineers in Flood Relief and revert;
- Timeline for upgrade works to Callan by-pass will be checked with Road Design Section;
- Request for provision of a lit pedestrian underpass on Callan bypass will be referred to the Road Design section for comment;
- Potential for provision of a swimming pool area at the Kings River in Callan – update will be provided at the June Municipal District meeting;
- Requests for renewed line markings can be made to Declan Murphy for inclusion on pending list of works, Bamford Cross markings will be looked at while doing overlay works;

3) **Business prescribed by Statute, Standing Orders or Resolutions of the Municipal District members for transaction of such meeting.**

There were no items for discussion

4) **Other business set forth in the Notice convening the meeting**

There were no items for discussion

5) **Notices of Motion**

There were no items for discussion

6) **Correspondence**

There were no items for discussion

7) **Any other Business**

This concluded the business of the meeting

Chairperson:



