

**Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee 2 – Transportation Policy / Mobility
Management and Water Services held on Thursday 1st September, 2022**

Present: Cllr. Matt Doran (Chairman).

Cllr. Tomás Breathnach, Cllr. Pat Dunphy, Cllr. Fidelis Doherty, Cllr. Deirdre Cullen, Cllr. Peter Cleere, Cllr. Patrick O'Neill, Gerard Ferris, Eileen Ryan, Jim Mulhall, Barry Lynch.

In Attendance: Mr. Tim Butler, Director of Services; Mr. Seamus Kavanagh, Senior Engineer; Mr. Ken Boland, A/Senior Engineer; Mr. Paraic Butler, Executive Engineer, Lorraine McGuire, Staff Officer

Apologies: Ger Mooney, Gary Graham

1. Minutes of previous meeting and Matters Arising

- Cllr. Fidelis Doherty stated that she had forwarded apologies for the June, 2022 SPC2 meeting. Minutes to be amended accordingly.
- Seamus Kavanagh noted that Carrigeen had been omitted in error from the list of settlements for waste water collections as queried by Cllr. Pat Dunphy – this has now been amended
- Cllr. Pat Dunphy enquired re the Portnascully/Pill schemes. Seamus Kavanagh confirmed the Council are looking at management options (online option) re the N24 scheme which will deal with the local issue on the N24. He noted that we will have to contact the relevant agency with regard to what if any works can be done up and down stream of the N24.

The minutes of SPC2 meeting held on 2nd June, were adopted.
Proposed by Cllr. Pat Dunphy and seconded by Gerard Ferris.

2. Update on Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project Eastern Region

Ken Boland presented an update in relation to the Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project as follows:

- Contracts have been signed with Killaree Lighting Services (KLS) – ASD JV on 17th August, 2022.

- Arup have been appointed as Consultants for the construction and handover stages of the project.
- It is hoped to commence with initial site surveys in Kilkenny in October, 2022 and then in Carlow in November, 2022.
- In Kilkenny the work will be completed by Municipal District (MD) as follows: (i) Callan/Thomastown; (ii) Castlecomer; (iii) Kilkenny; (iv) Piltown. Works will be completed in each MD before moving on to the next one.
- The scope of the project involves surveying approx. 125,000 lanterns over a duration of 30 months to survey, design, manufacture, install and test between 800 – 1,000 lanterns per week.
- It is hoped to complete the upgrade in Kilkenny by mid-February, 2023.

Eileen Ryan commented on the poor quality of lighting in some areas of the town where lighting needs to be brightened and can cast shadows on the footpaths. Ken Boland confirmed that while the new lighting may be duller in colour than the current lights, they will be more focused onto footpaths and will eliminate shadowing. He also stated that the lights at pedestrian crossings will be different in order to add to road safety.

Cllr. Pat Dunphy stated that the lighting at the bridge in Piltown and Fiddown is inadequate and therefore welcomed the news that the lighting would be completed by next February.

Tim Butler emphasised the value of the new lighting with regard to Road Safety as it won't cast shadows and this is also of assistance to the Gardai in dealing with Anti-social behaviour.

He also noted the value of the new public lighting in reducing our energy costs. He acknowledged the work of Ken Boland, Maeve Good and Gary Maher to date in relation to this project.

3. Rainbow Crossings and Sunflower Parking Spaces

Tim Butler presented in relation to the **Sunflower Parking Spaces**.

The sunflower is a globally recognised symbol for hidden or invisible disabilities e.g. autism, chronic pain, mental health conditions, sensory loss etc.

A notice of Motion was made by Cllr, Denis Hynes in April, 2022 with regard to the provision of autism friendly car parking spaces and a further motion in May, 2022 by Cllrs. Maria Dollard, Mary Hilda Cavanagh & Denis Hynes in relation to the provision of special car parking spaces for persons with hidden disabilities. Such spaces would be clearly marked with a sunflower and lining.

It was agreed to bring these Notices to the SPC to get agreement to develop these spaces. It is proposed to trial these car parking spaces in the main car parks in the

city and monitor and review after 6 months. Similar to age-friendly parking these spaces would be self-regulated.

Cllr. Matt Doran enquired if it was considered that all users should apply for a badge or how can the use of these spaces be policed?

Tim Butler confirmed that it is not enforceable but down to the goodwill of the public. It will be introduced on a trial basis so that if it's being abused we can revert. Also, if too many spaces are specific it could damage business.

Cllr. Deirdre Cullen enquired if the pilot is specific to the city only or if it could be extended to the scheduled towns. She said there should be at least one space in each of the towns as the age-friendly parking is working very well.

Cllr. Tomás Breathnach said it could be kept under review in the city for 3 months and then piloted in a scheduled town after that rather than waiting for 6 months.

Tim Butler agreed that this could be done and everyone was in agreement that this would happen.

With regard to the **Rainbow Crossings**, which are done in recognition of Pride, some local authorities did paint their pedestrian crossings in the Pride colours. Tim Butler confirmed that we have checked with the Department and it is permitted but that from a road safety point of view, it may be unclear at crossings. He stated that the Council does fly the Pride Flag at City and County Hall during Pride month as a show of support.

Cllr. Deirdre Cullen stated that she had been approached by a member of the LGBTQ+ community to see if the Council would consider doing the rainbow crossings in Kilkenny. She also stated that members of the LGBTQ+ community had contacted her with regard to having permanent flags in place. She asked Tim to examine these items and revert.

4. Irish Water Leakage Reduction Programme

Paraic Butler, Executive Engineer gave a presentation in relation to the Irish Water Leakage Reduction Programme.

There are 4 main streams used to tackle water leakage

1. Pressure Management Programme

Two new Pressure Reducing Valves (PRVs) were installed in Kilkenny City and commissioned in January 2021. These work by reducing pressures on an automatic basis to reduce network pressures and in turn prevent leaks and reduce burst frequencies.

2. Watermain Rehab Programme

This programme targets parts of the network at high risk of leakage. A large amount of work has been completed in the Thomastown & Knocktopher

areas to date with further works in Thomastown and Kilkenny City to be completed by Q4 2022.

3. Find and Fix Programme

This is a planned programme to find and repair leakage on the network – reduced leakage in several zones across the county.

4. First Fix Programme

A new contractor commence First Fix works in Q3, 2021 on customer-side leaks. Kilkenny County Council find, quantify and report such leaks to Irish Water and the Regional Contractor for action.

Cllr. Matt Doran acknowledged the good progress to date.

Cllr. Patrick O'Neill stated that due to leaks in the Bennettsbridge area there were a number of night time shut offs but that very short notice was given to consumers. He stated that a notice period of 24 hours should be given, bearing in mind particularly businesses and people with disabilities.

Cllr. Deirdre Cullen agreed with Cllr. O'Neill and said that short notice periods are unacceptable and while posted on social media, they may still not get to the public before the period of shut off.

She enquired if areas which are constantly being affected due to works being carried out could be prioritised for remedial works. In areas where water services are at capacity is there any priority re leakages?

Paraic acknowledged the queries of Cllrs. O'Neill & Cullen and stated that it is always the Council's intention to get the information out to the public 24 hours before any outage but it's not always achievable due to the urgent nature of work on occasions but he will pass these concerns to Irish Water.

Cllr. Pat Dunphy stated that there are areas in Mooncoin and Piltown which are constantly affected by leaks and therefore cannot conserve water. He enquired if there are PRVs that could be installed in these areas.

Paraic Butler stated that PRVs are not the answer in all situations as a number of factors need to be considered. He said Irish Water have approved the installation of 2 no. valves at the reservoir to control water flow in that scheme. This will eliminate the need to turn the water on and off and thus reduce the incidence of burst pipes & leakages.

In relation to the selection of areas for rehab the County is divided into 4 districts and each district will have 3-4 areas listed for mains replacement.

Cllr. Tomás Breathnach enquired if the 15% leakage reduction rate achieved in Kilkenny City is achievable each year.

Paraic stated that the target is set by IW on an annual basis and is in accordance with the Council's SLI with IW. He said that we would be unlikely to see a 15% reduction annually and it will take 2-3 years to see the full benefit of the PRVs.

Cllr. Fidelis Doherty queried if the leakage reduction budget of €4.2m will be eliminate all leaks. But Paraic stated that it would be extremely ambitious to aim for zero leakage given the age of the network infrastructure but the aim to reduce leakage as much as possible.

Eileen Ryan enquired in relation to leakage figures for Group Water Schemes given that there are further increases in ESB costs ahead. Paraic did not have this information to hand but will check and revert.

5. Irish Water Transformation

Tim Butler gave an update in relation to the Irish Water Transformation. In 2014 Irish Water (IW) took over the water function from local authorities. It is intended that by 2026 it will have transferred completely to Irish Water and that staff in this area would also transfer.

An agreement was announced in late July 2022 that:

- (i) Irish Water will always remain in public ownership
- (ii) Irish Water will assume full responsibility for the service by 2026. They will identify which of the current staff want to stay with Irish Water after 2026 – staff can opt to transfer to IW or remain with the local authority.

There will be further discussions with staff, unions, local authorities and Irish Water.

6. Broadband Rollout

Tim Butler gave a presentation re the proposed build dates for all of Kilkenny. NBI will have an interactive map available to all members in the coming weeks, to check progress in a specific area.

Cllr. Matt Doran queried in relation to the S.254 notices if the 63 poles listed for Callan-Thomastown were for the total Callan Area. Tim confirmed that 63 is the no. of additional poles required to connect the last few people in that area.

Cllr. Patrick O'Neill acknowledged the good work being done in Area Offices to progress the rollout and people now have dates for their connections. He noted the importance of the Area Offices in progressing the works and the support of elected members in keeping the process on target.

Cllr. Fidelis Doherty enquired in relation to community projects such as in Carrick-on-Suir where the timeline is for 2024. She enquired do NBI have a separate community area.

Cllr. Pat Dunphy also commented that a lot of villages are not under NBI. He noted that a lot of work has been done in Piltown but places like Mooncoin seem to be left without. The further the location from the village, the poorer the signal.

Tim stated that we had requested that a representative from Eir would attend this SPC meeting but they had not responded. He will write to them formally to request this.

Also, the Council want to meet with a representative from NBI – they will be scheduled to attend the Council meeting in February, 2023.

Tim also acknowledged the work of the Area Engineers and Planning Department in relation to the S.254 notices

7. AOB

Cllr. Matt Doran reminded the meeting that this SPC is trying to formulate new policy. He asked that new policies be considered and that members could check in with Tim Butler in relation to any policy ideas.

Cllr. Pat Dunphy stated that a policy should be in place in relation to areas where major road works are planned that other works aren't held up because of them. He cited Grannagh as an example of an area where there are safety issues but because of proposed works on the N24 these are not being addressed.

He also asked for an update in relation to the N24 scheme and requested that it be scheduled for the next SPC meeting.

Cllr. Tomas Breathnach agreed with Cllr. Dunphy but stated that his understanding is that a proposal for works can be formulated for the TII. He requested clarification on this.

Seamus Kavanagh informed the meeting that he had met with Arup at the end of August in relation to the N24 scheme. One option is the management option which is to keep the existing road with interventions. Arup are going to look at active travel options for the Grannagh/ Aglish area as part of the final corridor option which is due in Q3 of 2023.

Cllr. Deirdre Cullen said that she was notified that Kilkenny County Council did not apply for a grant in relation to Safe Passage Signage. She enquired if there is a plan in place for the rollout of this signage.

Cllr. Fidelis Doherty noted that all secondary roads are regularly being used by cyclists.

Seamus Kavanagh informed the meeting that we are looking at signage for areas where there is most cycling. Placing of signs will start on the Carlow/Kilkenny road and then roll out to other routes around the county.

Eileen Ryan raised the issue of safety in respect of eScooters and the speeds they can travel at and electric cars because they are so silent.

Tim Butler confirmed that we are awaiting regulations on the use of eScooters and a Bill is currently going through the process to put restrictions on these.

With regard to the electric cars, there is a lot of detail in the RSAs plan with regard to putting devices on cars. We could put correspondence to the RSA to check if there are any proposals in this regard but it is something that will be dealt with at national rather than local level.

Cllr. Breathnach stated that with regard to electric vehicles the emphasis is on audible rather than noisy.

The next meeting will take place on 1st December, 2022.

Tim informed the meeting that the facility will be in place by then for hybrid meetings whereby we can have an in-person meeting but anyone unable to attend in person could do so online.

Jim Mulhall stated the value of meeting in person as a committee and all agreed.

It was decided to avail of the hybrid meeting facility for the December meeting.

This concluded the meeting.