

Minutes of Transportation, Water & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee Meeting

Monday 23rd May, 2022

Present: Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald, Cathaoirleach
Cllr. Derek Mitchell
Cllr. Joe Behan
Cllr. Irene Winters
Thomas Peare, Development Construction

Staff: Leonora Earls, DOS
Helena Dennehy, SEO
Michael Flynn, SE
John Bowes, SE
Deirdre Forde, Liaison Officer, N11/M11
Aidan Dempsey, CFO
Allyson Minion, AO
Vicky O Neill SO

Apologies: Cllr. Vincent Blake
Margaret Coughlan, Trade Union

Non Attendance: Pat Dunne, Agriculture Farming
Julia Glass, Environmental/Conservation

Item 1: To note the minutes of 21st January, 2022

Proposed by Pat Fitzgerald and seconded by Derek Mitchell.

Item 2: NTA Schemes Update

Michael Flynn, SE gave a presentation updating the members on Non Nation Roads Schemes, NTA funded schemes and other projects waiting funding.

Joe queried why the LED rollout in Wicklow had been pushed back to 2024. Michael advised that every broken bulb was being replaced with a LED version at the minute (over 7,000 have been replaced to date) and that the order in which the rollout was being conducted, headed by Kildare County Council and we are currently in discussions with them with regard to the pecking order.

Pat stated that having to wait until 2024 for the LED rollout was not acceptable.

In relation to the NTA Swan River Greenbelt project, Joe wanted it noted in the minutes that 7 out of 8 Cllrs voted against this project. He wanted it noted that the public do not want

this bridge and no more public money should be spent on it. He stated that senior officials has issued a letter stating that the vote was not valid and he felt that was an attempt to undermine a democratic vote and he is not happy about this.

Michael advised that everyone needed to sit down and discuss the matter further. The decision would be a matter for the full Council. The team were meeting with the consultants in the first week in June to discuss the issues. Michael advised that the main issues with the project (taken from the content of the submissions received) was concern for the swans and the diversion via Seapoint Road.

Joe stated that the idea of redirecting traffic down Seapoint Road was ridiculous and requested a timeframe for making a decision as to whether the project would proceed. Michael advised that there was no timescale at present that the next meeting with the consultants for the project was the 8th June, 2022 and they would be looking at the issues and possible remedies.

Pat requested that the results of that meeting be relayed to the Bray Cllrs.

Michael agreed that answers would be given after the consultation.

Derek also asked whether a pathway over the bridge for the proposed Delgany/Blacklion/Redford project being discussed. He advised that he did not believe anyone would cycle to Bray Head via this route he wondered why we are spending money on a cycle lane that no-one would use. Michael advised that in order to secure funding the hierarchy of transport was 1st – Cyclists, 2nd Bus and 3rd Car.

Item 3 TII Funded Projects

Deirdre Forde gave a presentation on TII funded projects.

Michael advised that they were currently teasing out practicalities in relation to Bus Connect. Joe stated that he was dissatisfied that the Bus Connects team were only talking to Council officials and were not involving Cllrs.

Derek advised that the postponement of the N11 junction 4-14 project should not just be an update, it is a huge public transport issue and that the matter needed to be brought to the Minister for Transport and the Council should be putting more pressure on the Minister.

Leonora Earls advised that she had secured a meeting with the Minister in June.

Derek stated that we needed to stress the volume of traffic increase.

Joe advised that a waste of 3-5million on this project is intolerable. He also requested an update on noise mitigation proposals and John Bowes advised that the noise report does state that if the speed limit is increased to 100mph, some properties will be above the acceptable noise threshold and will require noise mitigation measures.

4. Other Road Projects & Operations Update

Irene asked who will fund the 30% of elevated costs of current projects and will WCC be cancelling other projects to cover the costs? Michael advised that 70% of costs will be funded by the Department and the remaining 30% will have to be absorbed by the contractors. WCC have received no guidance as of yet with regard to this matter.

5. Fire Services Policy Update

Aidan Dempsey, CFO presented a Fire Services Update.

Joe asked what the manning level in Bray was currently and although he was aware that there was a nation survey on retained firefighters being conducted, he wanted to know whether we could conduct our own survey on retained fire fighters to identify the challenges facing firefighters within County Wicklow.

Pat requested an update on the Arklow service, specifically how many retained fire fighters had left and what stage was the recruitment process at.

Aidan advised that crew members for all areas were adequate. They currently have 13 new recruits across Co. Wicklow who are in training currently and that it will be 2023 before Bray is a two pump station.

6. Water Services Policy Update

Helena advised 92% of targets had been met. The SLA would be ending in 2026.

Pat voices concerns with how the IW clinics were working and that they were not fit for purpose. Helena advised that she had raised the matter previously with IW.

Thomas Peare stated that there was a major hold up with construction work due to the delay in IW reverting with regard to water connections and wanted a point of contact in WCC in order to speed up the matter. Helena advised that he could call her directly but all calls must be logged with IW for Service Level Agreements.

Joe advised that he had noticed a difference on the last clinic in that IW appeared more prepared and were more engaged.

7. Any other business

Derek asked what the height of a standard rail bridge should be and was advised that it was 4.89m.

Helena reminded members that the purpose of the SPC committee was to form new policies and to have a think about what input the committee might look at with regard to specific policies going forward.

Next meeting was set for the 26th September, 2022 at 2.30pm