

**Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee 2 – Transportation Policy / Mobility
Management and Water Services held on Thursday 22nd June, 2023**

Present: Cllr. Matt Doran (Chairman).

Cllr. Tomás Breathnach, Cllr. Pat Dunphy, Cllr. Fidelis Doherty, Ger Mooney, Barry Lynch, Eileen Ryan

In Attendance: Mr. Tim Butler, Director of Services; Mr. Seamus Kavanagh, Senior Engineer; Emir Slattery, Senior Executive Engineer; Lorraine McGuire, Staff Officer, Jackie Meally & Barry Doyle, Ring-a-Link, Kilkenny, Paul O’Rahilly, Kilkenny Access Group & Rob Tobin, NCBI.

Apologies: Cllr, Deirdre Cullen.

1. Minutes of previous meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of SPC2 meeting held on 11th May, 2023 were adopted. Proposed by Barry Lynch and seconded by Cllr. Fidelis Doherty.

2. Flood Schemes

Emir Slattery presented an update on the Flood Relief Schemes in Kilkenny. A pilot scheme in relation to Freshford and Piltown was announced by the OPW in May, 2023. The next meeting with the OPW will be held at the end of June, 2023 with the agenda to agree governance around the delivery of the schemes.

The Graiguenamanagh Flood Relief Scheme is at Stage 1 – Development & Design. Site investigations to be completed by the end of the summer and the findings will inform the design of the scheme.

The Ballyhale Flood Relief Scheme is currently at Stage 2 – Planning. CPO was lodged with An Bord Pleanála on 9th May, 2023 and the closing date for submissions on this is 27th June, 2023. Emir advised that all landowners had been contacted.

Contributions from Cllr. Matt Doran in relation to the temporary and permanent acquisitions and from Cllr. Fidelis Doherty as to how lands downstream of Ballyhale would be affected.

Cllr. Pat Dunphy enquired as to when Piltown scheme might start. Tim Butler pointed out that it is a slow process but all necessary reports will be completed in advance of appointing a consultant to avoid delays.

3. Irish Water Small Towns & Villages Growth Programme

Tim Butler addressed the meeting in relation to the Small Towns & Villages Growth Programme (STVGP). The aim of the programme is to provide growth capacity in public water services treatment infrastructure in smaller settlements. Uisce Éireann's Revenue Control 3 (RC3) is primarily intended to provide capacity in wastewater treatment plants. Kilkenny have a priority list of 15 sites. The basis of assessment for each of the schemes is by reference to environmental compliance issues; social housing need in the area and projected population growth.

Cllr. Fidelis Doherty & Cllr. Pat Dunphy enquired in relation to areas like Carrigeen & Glenmore. Tim advised that Glenmore ranked lower as it doesn't show population growth and that areas such as Carrigeen not currently on Uisce Éireann's list will need to have their needs met locally - National Policy will be required to deal with such areas.

4. Braille Trail

Rob Tobin presented to the meeting on behalf of Kilkenny Access Group, NCBI Services & NCBI Possibility Lab.

He gave an insight into who they are and who they represent, together with details of their recent engagements with Kilkenny County Council and in particular the Universal Access in the Abbey Quarter & Kilkenny City (St. Kieran St. & Market Yard scheme). He outlined precedents in such areas as Linear Parks, sensory wayfinding & placemaking and braille trails & assistive technologies citing case studies from Marburg and Warsaw.

He further outlined future opportunities to improve access in Kilkenny in 3 specific areas:

- a) Extension of Abbey Quarter master plan boundaries, giving scope for accessibility
- b) Ensuring universal access in all phases of the Abbey Quarter development
- c) Permeation from Abbey Quarter to the wider city

There are guidelines in relation to universal access under European Standard EN17210 - The standard is intended to describe basic, common minimum functional requirements and recommendations for an accessible environment.

Contributions were made in relation to this from Cllrs. Matt Doran, Cllr Fidelis Doherty & Cllr. Tomás Breathnach in full support of increasing access across Kilkenny. Paul O'Rahilly said that increased accessibility will enhance his life and

the lives of people with visual challenges and we can take lessons from countries who have achieved this.

Barry Lynch asked that as an SPC, a policy on this should be introduced. All agreed with this and will invite Ronan Ryan to speak at September SPC meeting to give some direction on making a policy on this and keep a focus on accessibility on the Council's agenda.

5. Update on NRRE and City Links

Seamus Kavanagh presented an update on the Ring Road Extension and the benefits of the scheme in reducing the volume of traffic into the city area thus reducing emissions in the city area and also increasing the potential for implementing SUMP projects in the city. The new road will also be an active travel route with access to the Bleach Road for the biodiversity park and the swimming amenity area.

Seamus advised that new project appraisal documents have been published and that the next step in this process is to proceed to Preliminary Business Case (PBC). He said that it will take 7-10 years to deliver on this project.

Questions were posed by Eileen Ryan & Cllr. Pat Dunphy in relation to access to the city centre and parking options. Seamus advised that existing car-parks in town will still be available for use but it is hoped in the future to provide a Park 'n Ride / Park 'n Stride facility on the outskirts of town.

Tim Butler stated that we need to change the traditional mindset of driving into the city centre and that in introducing these changes in the city, we will amalgamate the need to facilitate people with climate action and active travel objectives.

6. Rural Links Update - Rural Transport

Barry Doyle & Jackie Meally from Ring-a-Link Kilkenny presented to the meeting in relation to the transport options they are providing across Kilkenny. They offer Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) whereby passengers can be picked up and dropped off at their chosen locations. This is usually provided where there are infrequent bus services, such as rural areas.

They spoke about KITE Project - Kilkenny Integrated Transport Evolution - a partnership of Ring-a-Link, JJ Kavanagh & Sons, Kilkenny LEADER Partnership (KLP) & Kilkenny County Council.

They advised that older services that have been in place will remain but that due to a change in demographic, the number of users in rural areas is reducing.

Cllr. Matt Doran enquired about getting a school run but Jackie advised that they don't have the funding for this and it is provided only by Bus Eireann.

It is proposed to run a pilot with smart DRT but this is further into the future due to costs.

Barry Lynch enquired as to a move to electric vehicles as part of climate action and sustainability. The infrastructure would need to be in place re charging etc.

Cllr. Fidelis Doherty & Cllr. Pat Dunphy enquired about rural pickups. Jackie confirmed that buses go directly to individual houses in rural areas as requested – their computer system builds the route logically for the area.

7. AOB

The next meeting was proposed and agreed to be held on Thursday 7th September, 2023 at 4.00 p.m. and the final meeting of 2023 to take place on Thursday 30th November, 2023

This concluded the meeting.