

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

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2023 @ 2.30pm in the Wurzburg Room, County Buildings**

**Present:** Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald, Cathaoirleach  
Cllr. Derek Mitchell  
Cllr. Joe Behan  
Cllr. Irene Winters  
Cllr. Vincent Blake  
Margaret Coughlan, Trade Union ICTU  
Éanna Gallagher, Environment/Conservation

**Staff:** Leonora Earls, DOS  
Michael Flynn, SE  
John Bowes, SE  
Aidan Dempsey, CFO  
Mark O'Neill AO  
Vivienne Killeen, SO

**Apologies:** Tomás Peare, Development Construction  
Donal Murray, Business Commercial

**Non Attendance:** Pat Dunne, Agriculture Farming – resigned position

**Item 1: To note the minutes of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023**

Proposed by Joe Behan and seconded by Vincent Blake.

**Item 2: NTA Schemes Update**

Presentation made by Michael Flynn (attached)

Arklow North and South Active travel projects, works still ongoing and resurfacing of roads to finish jobs to be undertaken.

Safe route to Schools Schemes- Michael Flynn to provide a list of all 24 Schools who are listed as having made an application for funding under the Safe Routes to Schools Programme.

Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald asked if work at the two approved Schools in Arklow, SS. Michaels and Peters, Junior School and St. John's Senior School, would take place in the summer when the Schools were closed.

Cllr. Derek Mitchell agreed that the three Schools in Greystones, Gaelscoil na gCloch Liath, Greystones Educate Together and Templecarrig School would all benefit from the programme.

Dart and Coastal south project:

Cllr Derek Mitchell said that the Train service needed to be increased to 3 trains per hour, and would need 8 carriages at rush hour.

Greystones is part of the Metropolitan Area of the Greater Dublin Area and as such obliged to take high density development and low parking in new housing developments. At end 2022 it is over its 2028 Target Population. Train line down to Arklow is in the Greater Dublin Area and more use is required of the rail line, and there will be no space for the Rosslare line.

Cllr Mitchell also asked if the Council could put in writing about the excessive duration of Bus Services, to the NTA & Dublin Port Consultation about the new Port Bridge. This has meant that many commuters have now transferred to the car from the bus, the opposite of what is said we are trying to achieve.

Cllr Joe Behan seconded Cllr. Mitchell's proposal for a letter to be submitted.

Leonora Earls proposed we could submit a letter to Dublin Port from the SPC

Cllr Behan also asked Michael Flynn if it was possible for Irish Rail to make a presentation to the members of Wicklow County Council or to Bray Municipal District on the closing of level crossings. The implications of redirecting traffic through Seapoint road would be massive.

Michael Flynn said the 4.7 metre height for traffic can only be achieved at Seapoint Road and vehicle and pedestrian access may be retained at Quinnsborough Road. Irish rail and the consultants Arup could be requested to speak to the elected Members.

The Consultants are presently engaged and at the emerging preferred option stage with Public consultations to be held in the spring and summer of 2023.

Cllr Irene Winters asked how long would it take for the works to be completed and Michael Flynn responded that it was unknown yet.

Éanna Gallagher asked if there would be an issue with delivery of Services, and Michael Flynn informed the meeting that all crossings would be closed up to Dublin, but this was not the preferred option.

Cllr Derek Mitchell asked of the possibility of a pedestrian and cycle lane under the bridge in Bray, and Michael Flynn said he would look at Active Travel options.

### **3: TII Funded Projects**

John Bowes gave an update (see attached presentation).

Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald asked about the delays on the Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway.

Leonora Earls informed the meeting that we were looking at the preferred options and Agronomists have been appointed. Letters have been circulated to landowners to engage with the Agronomists. Michael Flynn said he would request details of the Agronomists to be circulated to members of the SPC and any further updates on progress.

Cllr Joe Behan asked for it to be put on the Agenda for the next SPC meeting about the Blessington Greenway. It was not acceptable that the Consultants had decided on the plans and the Elected Member need to be directly involved.

Also to discuss the proposals of traffic lights on bridges on the route and the decision to reduce traffic to one lane.

John Bowes said that the project is managed under the Directorate of CCSD and not TWES, and we were not in a position to answer questions.

Éanna Gallagher asked if plans were on the WCC website for the Kilmacanogue to the Southern Cross Greenway, John Bowes confirmed that design and environmental assessments were ongoing following consultation with residents in 2022 but were not yet available on the website.

Cllr Joe Behan said there was no progress on noise mitigation since the last meeting and asked John Bowes if funding was going to be made available. John Bowes said we are looking at various options and each property would need to be looked at individually. No details on this yet or timeframes. Timber fencing options could take a few months to complete if preferred option.

#### **N11/M11 Junction 4 to 14**

Cllr Joe Behan informed the meeting that the decision of the Minister for Transport Eamonn Ryan to discontinue the project was not good enough, and the funding already received was wasted, and the Bus Priority Scheme will have no impact. He also stated that the Councillors need to make their views known.

Cllrs Derek Mitchell, Pat Fitzgerald, Irene Winters agreed with Cllr Behan and that Commuters having to leave their home early in order to get to work places in Dublin was not acceptable.

Margaret Coughlan asked if the N11/M11 Project could be revisited with the Minister, and the situation had now become very serious.

Leonora Earls said that WCC have constantly raised the issue with the TD's at every opportunity and cannot progress the scheme without TII Funding.

It was suggested in sending a delegation to the TII to discuss further and Leonora Earls to contact the TII in requesting a meeting with the SPC.

Michael Flynn said that we would need the engagement of the Public to support the project and maybe to ask the public to send in submissions.

#### **4. Other Road Projects and operations Update**

Cllr Vincent Blake said there have been no repairs being carried out to Public Lighting in his area.

Leonora Earls advised that Public lighting is a challenge at present, and Enerveo the public lighting contractor are working on getting repairs done in the County. Pat Fitzgerald said there was a big improvement on repairs in the Arklow Area.

Cllr Vincent Blake asked about the Arklow to Shillelagh project. Leonora Earls said that progress is being made and Agronomists have been appointed to carry out consultancy works.

Cllr Blake also asked if rural transport could be discussed at the next meeting.

## **5. Fire Services Policy Update**

Aidan Dempsey gave an update (presentation attached).

Update given on new Fire stations in Baltinglass and Dunlavin.

Meetings have been held with firefighters in both stations and some minor modifications have been agreed on the layout of the new stations and car parking.

Part 8 planning application to be submitted when final reports for site surveys, ground investigation and environmental reports are received.

Aidan Dempsey informed the meeting that Zoetis, animal healthcare company in Rathdrum has seen an increase in production and on site storage may pass thresholds under the Chemical Act (COMAH Regulations. (Control of major accident hazard), and will be designated an “upper tier” site, which will require the preparation of an external emergency plan.

Cllr Irene Winters asked why do we have to wait for Zoetis to pass the threshold to prepare an external emergency plan, and could it not be actioned now. Aidan Dempsey informed the meeting that we would be notified by the H.S.A. when this would need to be done.

### **Rockbrae House, Bray.**

It was discussed about a recent incident on the 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2023 when Rockbrae House in Bray went on fire and fire crews from Bray, Greystones attended as well as other emergency services.

It was discussed that the building is unsafe and Aidan Dempsey confirmed that that he has referred the matter to the Housing section and Bray Municipal District office, and his concerns that the building should either be demolished or protected.

Cllr Joe Behan said that he had noted before the concerns with the building and it should be addressed immediately. Leonora Earls said that she will follow up with the Housing section.

National talks with Unions were still ongoing regarding Firefighters dispute.

## **6. Water Services Policy Update**

Cllr Joe Behan asked about the staffing situation with Irish water, and the Union were looking to ballot strike action. He asked how many employees were opting to remain working with Wicklow County Council.

John Bowes confirmed that Unions were seeking clarification and this was a matter for the LGMA, there are issues over terms and conditions but this was a national issue and not a local issue. There are 70 staff members in Water Services and they have the opportunity to submit a transfer request to remain working with Wicklow County Council, but this as a HR issue and could not give further information. This process had not commenced yet.

Leonora Earls confirmed that this was a national issue, but have set up an internal committee to liaise with staff.

Éanna Gallagher asked what was the Transitional timeframe, and would there be any issues with the changeover. Margaret Coughlan stated that it was a huge step for staff to transition to other roles and those terms and conditions need to be followed through.

## **8. AOB**

Joe Behan discussed with the meeting the need to plan for footpath renewal and to restore footpaths in old urban areas of towns. It was agreed that Directors of Services would look at this issue and come back with a plan, as there was money coming in in levies.

Leonora Earls said that this was with the Directors and Brian Gleeson, Finance Officer on the best way to plan and fund a footpath renewal project.

Cllr Pat Fitzgerald, Derek Mitchell also agreed that footpaths in estates needed to be addressed.

Cllr Winters asked if IPB (Irish Public Bodies) were not providing funding for footpath repairs. Michael Flynn said that funding from IPB was a "once off funding" only and this had now ceased.

Cllr Vincent Blake asked about Staff not being replaced on outdoor crews if staff were out on long term sick leave, and works could not go ahead in some areas due to reduced staff numbers. Michael Flynn said he would talk to the District Engineers, there were temporary General Operative panels in place but this was a matter for HR.

**9. Next meeting**

Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> September at 2:30pm in the Würzburg room, County Buildings.

SIGNED: Pat Fitzgerald  
CATHAOIRLEACH

DATED: 17/4/2023