**Assumed Attendance (to be confirmed)**

Members: Cllr P. Ward, Cllr A Connolly, Cllr A Feeney, Cllr C Kenny, Cllr M Stafford, Cllr Nuala Killeen, Cllr J Neville, B. Purcell (Kildare Chamber) & GD (PPN)

Officials: Evelyn Wright (DoS), Pamela Pender, Donal Hodgins, John McGowan and others.

**Presentation on Cork Mobility Forum**

The main item on the SPC agenda was the presentation on the Cork Mobility Forum by Dr. Darren McAdam-O’Connell. It was an interesting presentation, part of which is available on YouTube. However, he made a number of statements which I would challenge.

If people need a car once a week, most people will use it all of the time.

In the Netherlands, car ownership is higher than in the UK but car use is much lower because they offer a network of high quality cycling infrastructure coupled with a policy of restricting car use in urban centres which attracts people out of cars. “Build it and they will come” applies to cycling infrastructure as well as roads.

Everyone drives in Spain and Germany but in Ireland Nobody Drives.

He claimed that people from Spain/Germany say that everyone drives in their home country but in Ireland nobody drives. I have no doubt that some people may say that but I doubt if that view is widespread. In comparisons of the level of cycling in European countries, Ireland has one of the lowest levels.

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In Munster Germany, which is close to the Dutch border, cycling is very strong although not as strong as their neighbours. In Spain, cycling is not strong nationally but in cities like Seville, Cadiz and Barcelona, local politicians champion active travel as an alternative to the car. In Pontevedra, the city centre has been car-free for almost 20 years. The results are clean air, zero traffic fatalities, silence and, of interest to politicians everywhere, the mayor has been re-elected 4 times.

Children Do What Adults Do

Some young children and teenagers are very independent of their parents and deliberately choose the complete opposite view from their parents to differentiate themselves - think of fashion, music and TV programmes.

It is true to a degree in that children do not necessarily do what their peers do. In one all girls primary school, a teacher informed me that often lower and senior infants cycle (or scoot) to school in order to keep up with a walking parent but older girls walk because bikes/scooters are for “infants”.

I strongly support Green Schools and the work that they do but if there is no cycle infrastructure, for example St. Mary’s College, Sallins Road Naas the level of cycling will be zero or virtually zero.

Permeability

Dr. McAdam-O’Connell stressed the importance of permeability especially for active travel – cycling and walking. In the early day of the Covid lockdown, the UK government highlighted that permeability was one of the cheapest and most effective ways to encourage active travel. In their Covid emergency measures, permeability was ignored by the Irish government and by Kildare County Council.

Modal Split

Dr. McAdam-O’Connell did mention that 70% of people cycle in the centre of Cork but was vague on the change in mode of travel which is critical if we are to decarbonise transport in Ireland. There is no easy way to accurate measure modal split – all have advantages and disadvantages but the alternative to measuring modal split directly is to measure indicators of modal split.

Traffic Counters

Kildare County Council has spent more than €100,000 on equipment – some of which measures the speed /number of motorised vehicles and others which measure people walking and cycling. Despite this, Kildare County Council has no policy on analysing and publicising the results.

Kildare Cycle Forum

The Cork Mobility Forum is a forum for transport stakeholders rather than elected councillors. The few elected members that do attend are there wearing more than one hat.

The Kildare Cycle Forum was effectively abolished after its meeting in February 2021 with the claim that it would be incorporated into the Sustainability Forum. A Cycle Forum is a different animal. It is a forum for cyclists to discuss the challenge of cycling with local councillors but this was never tried in Kildare.