

MINUTES OF TRANSPORTATION, SAFETY & EMERGENCY SERVICES SPC

Date: 22 June 2020 COUNCIL CHAMBER

Attendance

Clls Joe Neville, Peter Hamilton, Angela Feeney, Anne Connolly, Nuala Killeen, and Mark Stafford were present. Cllr. Paul Ward was absent. In addition to myself, Cormac Browne (Agriculture/Farming) and Brian Purcell (Business/Commercial) also attended.

1. Initial Items

After introductions, approving minutes, Standard Orders & Ethics were noted. Dates for future meetings were fixed for 1st October and 5th November. An additional date for the start of September was also considered but not finalised.

2. Briefing from the Tadgh McDonnell, Director of Services

The first serious item was the briefing from the Director of Services. Basically, he gave an overview of the Roads and Transportation Structure, internal organisation, interface with external bodies and the problems associated with getting thing done.

The main issues in relation to transport were identified as

In general, good motorway, local and regional network – However, more investment needed in pavement (my emphasis).

Good trainline but poor commuting capacity

Bus capacity and reliability an issue

*Poor numbers walking & cycling – **safety perceived to be an issue** (my emphasis).*

The Director also asked how many people there had travelled by car – as expected most had. He did not ask what options people had or point out that roads had been the main recipient of investment for the previous 50 years.

There were no Progress Report on projects.

3. Briefing from Declan Keogh, Road Safety, Cycling & Sustainable Transport Officer

Declan presented a report which included:

- Announcement that a School Street would be piloted in Monasterevin and Athy. This is a positive thing.
- KCC use of social media focusing on people ie pedestrians and cyclists wearing headphones when using the road. KCC also produced awareness and guidance videos directed at cyclists. His promotion did not include any advice to drivers who are responsible for most road fatalities He stressed the importance of “Sharing the road” (which is an outdated concept). I pointed out that cyclist are protected by segregated facilities and that most bike /car collision are the fault of the car driver. He did not accept this.

- Cycle Cafes – there are two type of cycle cafes – one where cyclists can have a coffee, bun etc with bike parking. The alternative is a place which offers a full range of tools for a cyclist to carry out maintenance on a bike – they are also called a bike kitchens. The Kildare initiative is basically the first but will probably have a few basic tools such as screwdriver, spanner, allen keys attached to a standalone pillar by cable. Most cyclists carry such tools but they are nice if you are stuck. Not a game changer though as regards modal change.

Sustainable Transport – included an update on the Grand Canal, Barrow Blueway and a shared path connecting to schools in Clane.

4. Proposed Work Plan 2020

The list from the previous council was reproduced. Some 8-9 items were listed. Some were reports and not really work items. Some were short term items eg Policy on Fish Eye mirrors on public roads while others were long term eg Development of Accessible Public Realm Streetscapes. There was only one direct reference to cycling – Biannual Report from the Cycling Forum.

Cllr. Joe Neville, Chair, proposed that the work plan should be updated and was open to suggestions for additional items. **Need to response to this.** I suggested that the Cycle Forum was a major omission as there had been no reference to re-establishing it since the local elections in May 2019.

5. Covid-19

Councillors had made a number of suggestions to the Chair in response to the offer of funding to improve walking and cycling in the county but to me they are all long term items. I seriously doubt that they will qualify for funding.

The Director stated that there was a high demand for the use of limited road space. He repeated the inaccurate view of some traders that customers want to park outside their shop. Small traders consistently overestimate the number of customers who arrive by car and underestimate the number who walk/cycle. The clear impression given was that any application for funding under Covid-19 would be extremely limited.

Towards the end of the meeting, Cllr Mark Stafford stated that the Corporate Body would be carrying out a review of Standing Orders of the SPCs probably in the week starting 5/7/2020. **Refer to PPN**

After the meeting, I spoke with the Director re the correspondence (6 items) which I had sent the previous day. I told him that I had not wanted it to be considered at this meeting. It had been submitted basically in order to appear in the records and after the officials give their response, it would be considered at the next meeting of the SPC.

6. Conclusion

Not much was achieved at this meeting but the emails were acknowledged and we will wait to see the officials' response. Of the seven councillors, I feel that I have a good relationship with four. My dealings with Joe Neville have been limited and it is too early to say how receptive he is.

Gerry Dornan,
Chair, Maynooth Cycling Campaign
PPN Representative on Transportation SPC