

**Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee 2 – Infrastructure Policy,
Transportation, Fire and Emergency Services Issues held in County Hall on
Friday 3rd March 2017.**

Present: Cllr. Matt Doran (Chairman).

Cllr. Tomás Breathnach; Cllr. Michael Doyle; Cllr. Michael McCarthy; Cllr. Fidelis Doherty; Cllr. Eamon Aylward, Cllr. Sean Tyrell.

Ms. Mairead Phelan; Mr. Barry Lynch; Mr. Michael Rice.

In Attendance: Mr. Tim Butler, Director of Services; Mr. Michael Murphy, Acting Senior Engineer, Mr. John Collins, Acting Chief Fire Officer, Mr. Martin Butler, Administrative Officer.

Apology: Mr. Gary Graham.

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of previous meeting of SPC 2 held on 2nd December 2016.

Proposed by Cllr. Fidelis Doherty

Seconded by Cllr. Michael Doyle
and Agreed.

2. UPDATE ON N25 NEW ROSS BY-PASS.

The Chairman Cllr. Matt Doran welcomed Mr. Sean Dobbs, Project Liaison Officer to the meeting.

Mr. Dobbs then gave a presentation on the by-pass detailing the background to the scheme and the current position with this scheme. The scheme is currently in the 13th month of a 36 month project. The current number of vehicles on the O'Hanrahan Bridge is estimated to be between 17,000 and 18,000 vehicles per day and the new by-pass will reduce this flow of traffic by over 50%.

In 1993/1994 it was the objective of Kilkenny and Wexford Development Plans to put in place a by-pass and a route was selected and published in 2002. In 2008 a scheme was approved by An Bord Pleanála. The scheme was tendered in 2016 and construction is expected to be completed in the spring of 2019. It will consist of 14km of dual carriageway and includes 46 structures in total. The Barrow Bridge will be the landmark structure, and there will be a railway bridge with 8 road under bridges and 3 road over bridges and a selection of farm underpasses/culverts etc. The Bridge over the Barrow will be 300m wide and will have a 36m headroom clearance for ships. The contract was awarded to

BAM Iridium Consortium on 6th January 2016. It is a public private partnership and it will operate and maintain the road for 25 years and it will then revert back to the Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

3. KILKENNY CITY BUS NETWORK

At this point of the meeting Cllr. Matt Doran welcomed the following members of SPC 5 - Cllr. Maurice Shortall; Cllr. John Brennan, Cllr. Breda Gardner and Ms. Sadhbh O'Neill.

Mr. Tim Butler outlined in a presentation details of the Kilkenny City Bus Network. Consultations have taken place between the National Transport Authority (NTA) and Kilkenny County Council in relation to the provision of a Kilkenny City Bus Network. The NTA is committed to introducing a subsidised bus service in the City with regular timetable and recognisable bus stops and where possible bus shelters. Bus poles and associated infrastructure will be funded by NTA and installed by the local authority.

The process includes network planning, engagement, procurement, infrastructure and launch of the service. Using data from Census 2011, Mr. Butler outlined the challenges involved in planning a network for Kilkenny such as the historic city centre with narrow streets, weigh restrictions on High Street and large retail/business parks to the east and south of the Ring Road.

Two routes are proposed both of which will be less than 9km in distance with an average journey time of ½ hour. The routes are devised with the intention of serving areas of high population density, deprivation and low car ownership, schools, businesses and retail parks and hotels are served.

An engagement process is now underway which involves consulting with the County Council and Elected Members and officials, Local Business Groups, public organisations such as schools, hospitals and community groups. The NTA's Smarter Travel Team will promote the Leap Card option. The NTA will tender for this and the successful tenderer will be required to provide the busses and provide clear signs on it. It is anticipated that the bus service will be in place before the end of this year. Following the presentation there was a discussion and Mr. Butler replied to queries from the discussion.

4. ROADS MANAGEMENT OFFICE

A presentation was made by Mr. Michael Murphy, Acting Senior Engineer for Roads. The Roads Management Office (RMO) was set up in 2014 and it covers all 31 local authorities. It provides centralised supports, discussion forums, guidelines and technology support to local authorities in order to improve Roads Assets Management Outcomes, best practice and capacity in local authorities, efficient management of road licensing activities, consistency in road

maintenance practices, and a central data base of all road network expenditure. The RMO office is based in Donegal and there is also a recently established RMO public lighting office based in Cork. All roads are digitally mapped and all works carried out on the road network are added into the system annually.

Kilkenny County Council currently deals with the Pavement Management Support Unit and the Road Works Licensing Support Unit. Pavement rating is recorded both by mechanically and visual methods. In the case of visual rating roads are rated 1 to 10 with 10 being the optimum rating. In general roads rated 1 to 4 require improvement works, roads rated 5 to 6 require surface dressing and roads rated 7 to 10 are in good condition. Funding in future by the Department will be based on the ratings awarded to each road. Currently, restoration and improvement, maintenance and discretionary grants are included on the Pavement Management System (PMS).

The National Oversight and Audit Commission is a statutory body established by Ministerial Order under Section 126(b) of the Local Government Act 2001 to oversee the local government sector. The NOAC's statutory functions are wide and include scrutinising performance of local government body against relevant indicators or as prescribed by ministerial regulations.

The Roads Management Office Road Works Licensing was introduced in May 2015 and is a web based system – Map Road License (MRL). Gas Networks Ireland, Eir, ESB are included on the system with Irish Water now coming on board.

The RMO public Lighting Office was recently established and it contains an inventory of 475,000 lights in Ireland of which approximately 280,000 are in need of some improvement. Currently Kilkenny County Council costs for public lighting is €1.2 million annually and a recent public lighting maintenance tender was prepared for counties Kilkenny and Carlow. The aim of the RMO Public Lighting is to gain efficiencies through collective tendering and management of the maintenance and improvement of public lighting. It is expected in future that these tendering processes will be done regionally.

Following the presentation there was a discussion and Mr. Murphy replied to questions from the committee. Arising from the discussion it was agreed to include on the agenda for the next SPC2 meeting policy in relation to underpasses.

5. UPDATE ON FIRE & EMERGENCY OPERATION PLAN 2015-2020

Mr. John Collins, Acting Chief Fire Officer gave an update on the plan under the following headings:

This plan details current arrangement with the fire authority but it also sets out strategic plans and targets for the Fire Authority up to 2020. The plan is to be reviewed from time to time but it will be reviewed at least once every 5 years.

Organisation – Recruitment is currently taking place in Kilkenny City and Thomastown.

Fire Stations – Contracts for Graiguenamanagh Fire Station have been signed and construction to commence in March 2017. Capital funding has been sought for a new Fire Station in headquarters. Urlingford Fire Station is in the Department of Housing, Planning, Communities and Local Government's proposed new build Fire Station Capital Programme 2016 – 2020 for 2020.

Fire Appliances – A jeep for Kilkenny City and for Thomastown is ordered and to be delivered at the end of March 2017. The jeep for Castlecomer has been replaced with a 2007 jeep and the jeep for Graiguenamanagh has been replaced by a 2011 jeep.

Equipment – Grant funding received and 21 dry suits with ancillary equipment purchased.

Water Supplies – 1989 Water Tanker in Kilkenny City replaced with a 2007 Water Tanker.

Training – In 2015 additional training and courses were delivered.

Health & Safety – Ongoing compliance with Safety Management Plan.

Operational Roads & Procedures – Pre Incident plans have been carried out on 25 no premises.

Operational Standards – **Mobilisation times.**

(a) Average Time to Mobilise Fire Brigade (fire in minutes) Part-Time Station.

In 2015 the average time to mobilise the Fire Brigade (fire in minutes) part-time station for Kilkenny County Council was 6.77 minutes which is faster response than our 2014 figure of 6.88 minutes. The national average median for part-time stations was 5.65 minutes.

(b) Average Time to Mobilise Fire Brigade (non-fire in minutes) Part-Time Station.

In 2015 the average time to mobilise fire brigades (non fire in minutes) part time stations was 6.78 minutes. The national average median for part-time stations was 5.75 minutes.

Fire Safety/Fire Prevention – Kilkenny Fire Rescue Service held fire station opening days in all seven Fire Stations.

Major Emergency Management

The Major Emergency Management Plan was reviewed in 2015 and 2016 and will also be reviewed in Quarter 4- 2017.

Following the presentation a discussion followed and the meeting discussed the location of the Fire Station HQ in the city and the need to review its location and give consideration to its relocation in Kilkenny.

This concluded the business of the meeting.