

***Minutes of the Piltown Municipal District Meeting held on Wednesday,
5th May, 2021 at 10.00am via MS Teams***

Present: Cllr. Eamon Aylward, Cathaoirleach
Cllrs. F. Doherty, P. Dunphy, T. Breathnach and G. Frisby

In attendance: S. McKeown, Director of Services, M. Arthurs, Meetings Administrator, S. Cullen,
District Engineer, Steve Coverdale, Broadband Officer and O. Bannon, S.O.

1. Minutes of Ordinary Statutory Meeting held 7th April, 2021

Proposed by Cllr. G. Frisby, seconded by Cllr. F. Doherty and agreed.

Matters Arising

- S. McKeown referred to the issue raised previously by Cllr. Doherty of littering and dumping on the River Barrow at the Pink Rock and noted the requirement for a specialist contractor to address this particular issue. He advised members that it is proposed to make an application for funding under the Anti-Dumping Initiative, the closing date for which is mid-May. A decision on funding is expected by mid-June and an update on same will be given to members as soon as available - expected to be at the July MD meeting.
- Cllr. Doherty sought update with regard to cleaning of the Ferrybank SC building. M. Arthurs advised that correspondence had issued to Derry McPhillips on the matter and he agreed to revert to members as soon as a response was received. **Action MA**
- Cllr. Doherty requested update on the N25 Waterford to Glenmore Scheme preferred route – S. Cullen advised that the peer review with TII is complete and arrangements are being made to prepare documentation for public display, which should take place before end of May. It was noted that a briefing for elected members will take place in advance of publication.
- Cllr. Dunphy asked if any response had been received from Irish Water with regard to the number of water leaks in the area and that this matter needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency. S. McKeown agreed to follow up this matter with Tim Butler. **Action SMcK**
- Cllr. Dunphy referred again to the issue of derelict sites and the difficulties in dealing with them, he asked if perhaps they could be categorised in some way to help deal with sites that can be resolved more quickly. S. McKeown advised that the Council operate a tracker for the County, to which derelict buildings that have been brought to the Council's attention are added. Notices are issued to the relevant landowners, the vast majority of whom comply with notices served and sites are checked on a regular basis to ensure they don't deteriorate. It was noted that a number of sites have been identified by the Council's Vacant Homes Officer, Evelyn Graham, for social housing purposes and these have been brought forward for approval by Council to CPO for this purpose in some of the smaller towns and villages in the County. This process has proved successful and it is intended to build on progress and to target further sites for this initiative.
Cllr. Aylward suggested that some derelict sites are listed properties that, due to associated restrictions, can incur additional large expenses to address issues and that flexibility is required in dealing with these types of properties.
- Cllr Aylward asked that a meeting be arranged in the near future with local Gardai. It was noted that these meetings have proved extremely useful in the past. **Action MA**

2. Consideration of Reports and Recommendations

(a) Broadband – Overview of additional Broadband Connection Points

S. Coverdale circulated a report on this item and outlined the process of the rollout to-date and gave an overview of the BCP process, a subsection of the National Broadband Plan and an interim measure to help serve more remote areas until such time as fibre broadband is available in the area. The selection process was noted, with suitable sites being identified within the intervention/amber area, resulting in six sites being approved and now live across the County. The locations of these six sites was noted. The costs for KCC to provide further BCPs was also noted.

Questions / comments were raised and discussed, including the following:-

- The concept of BCPs, where people can access broadband locally without the need to travel so far, an interim measure until the rollout of fibre broadband is complete.

- S. Coverdale agreed to seek information in relation to uptake/usage at BCPs and also further information on progress of the rollout and delivery of broadband in South Kilkenny for the next meeting.
- Lack of broadband a huge issue with a lot of black spots in some parishes, still some concern at distances people may have to travel to access broadband and the lack of BCPs in South Kilkenny. S. Coverdale agreed to look at more options, members to forward details of other possible locations for BCPs. It was noted that BCPs in Tipperary and Wexford may be closer and more easily accessible for some residents in the South Kilkenny area.
- It was noted that an application was being lodged by the Local Enterprise Office under the recently announced Connected Hubs Fund, which will facilitate improvements to existing hubs and enterprise centres, to include hot desks, meeting rooms and office spaces in order to promote remote working.

Cllr. Aylward and members thanked S. Coverdale for his presentation, he withdrew from the meeting.

(b) Update Monthly Roadworks

A report was circulated to the meeting and S. Cullen outlined works undertaken and completed over the period since the last meeting.

The following items were raised and discussed:-

Poulanassy Waterfall – in response to Cllr. Aylward, S. Cullen confirmed that a letter of acceptance will issue shortly, following which a start date can be agreed as soon as possible with the Contractor. It is hoped that works would commence end May/early June, with a 6-8 week work programme. Cllr. Doherty also asked if the waterfall will be closed to the public during the construction works – S. Cullen advised that it will be a matter for the contractor to ensure safety of the site and whether safe access can be provided. Interruption to access will be limited as much as possible during works, however the overriding concern is safety of the public and contractor.

Cllr. Aylward raised the issue of speeding in Fiddown village and asked about the provision of a pedestrian crossing and also an update on moving the bus stop to a safer location. S. Cullen advised that a new application is being made for funding under the TVRS process to undertake a health check on the village to identify patterns of movement, where services are and how best to link pedestrians to the various services, taking a holistic approach to smarter travel options within the village.

Cllr. Doherty sought clarification in relation to the scheme for outdoor furniture – S. McKeown advised that an outdoor dining scheme for business was currently being operated by Fiona Deegan and the Local Enterprise Office team, which provides funding of €4k or 75% of cost for outdoor furniture including tables and chairs, heaters, screenings, canopies etc, to facilitate outdoor dining. The scheme covers costs incurred from 1st April 2020, when restrictions were first introduced, up until the end of September 2021. It was noted that applicants must have a Section 254 licence if they intend putting chairs on public spaces under the remit of the local authority and may need planning permission. S. McKeown urged members to encourage contact with the Local Enterprise Office, in order to maximise the number of applications under this scheme.

Mill Road, Mullinavat – in answer to Cllr. Doherty, S. Cullen advised that in order to provide safe pedestrian facilities connecting Main Street in Mullinavat with the GAA club, particularly for school children, it is likely there will be some form of signal control on the road to govern traffic movements over the bridge and one-way traffic is likely, however the scheme is still going through the design phase and options are being considered.

Local Improvement Scheme – S. Cullen advised that no notification had been received in relation to allocation under the LIS for 2021.

Cllr. Dunphy referred to the Carrick Road, Mooncoin and Tower Road junction schemes and asked if updates could be provided at each monthly meeting – S. Cullen to arrange for future meetings. **Action SC**

Cllr. Frisby noted the emphasis on provision of footpaths and pedestrian safety measures and acknowledged the efforts of staff to get funding in place for same. He stated that these measures were providing safer facilities and much needed connectivity and encouraged people to get out and about. He welcomed the public lighting works at Milepost, which completes the final section of lighting in the Slieverue area and is much appreciated by local residents.

Cllr. Breathnach asked if there were any concerns with regard to completing the works programme and if delays could be made up over coming months. S. Cullen advised that the main impact from recent lockdown is on third party contracts and that there should be no impact on direct labour works. He stated that the only concern may be where private contractors are carrying out works on our behalf and particular attention will be paid to ensure that we have sufficient contractors available to undertake the work that has built up as a result of the lockdown.

(c) ***Update South East Greenway***

SMcK circulated report and outlined the following:

Rail and Sleeper Lifting Contract: All of the rails and sleepers have now been lifted and the final site clearance has taken place.

Detailed Design: for the main construction works (i.e. accommodation works, structures, crossing points, etc.) along the route of the Greenway is continuing and engagement with landowners has resumed following lifting of Level 5 restrictions.

Construction: the main construction of the 24km Greenway is being awarded in a number of Lots. The first 3 Lots have been tendered and will be awarded shortly. A number of planning applications will be progressed in the coming months: These include Part 8 planning for the temporary construction compound for Lot 2, which has commenced and it is hoped to have the CE Report for consideration by the elected members at the June Council Meeting; and Waterford City & County Council will also progress a Part 8 planning application to the access ramp from the Greenway to the Abbey Road. The route of the Greenway is a construction site at present and will remain so until it officially opens. As such members of the public are reminded it is not safe to enter/access the lands.

Ferrybank Car Park Option: The Car Park Options Report along with the Connect The Dots (CTD) report on the process on public engagement are now finalised and will be published on the project website in the coming weeks. Residents have raised further issues and concerns at the workshops, in particular around anti-social behaviour incidents, that will also need to be resolved. A meeting has been held with Waterford Gardai to discuss measures to mitigate the potential of anti-social behaviour along the Greenway in general and at the car park site in particular. These options will be considered as part of the detailed design and construction of the Greenway and will be discussed with local residents in due course.

Railway Abandonment: an initial meeting has been held between the executive of the 3 local authorities and executive from CIE / Irish Rail to discuss commencement of the formal transfer of the former railway lands under Sn 21 of the Transport Act. Kilkenny County Council Procurement Section will lead the negotiations on the formal transfer on behalf of the 3 local authorities.

Links to Slieverue and Glenmore: The consultant appointed, namely Roadplan, has carried out a preliminary assessment of at least 3 options in the case of each village. A public consultation (subject to Covid restrictions) will be arranged to discuss these options when they have been further investigated.

Business Development Executive (BDE) and Assistant Engineer: the interviews for the BDE position were held last month and a successful candidate has been recommended for appointment.

Project Website: www.southeastgreenway.net.

Resident Engineer: Eoin Atkinson is the Resident Engineer and he can be contacted at 087 188 4342 with any queries in connection with the Greenway. A Senior Resident Engineer, Patrick O'Connor has also been appointed and he can be contacted at 087 927 2796.

S. McKeown advised that Wexford County Council has informed KCC that the Rosslare to Waterford Greenway project has been deferred pending the outcome of a rail study that Irish Rail/CIE will undertake nationally that will include this railway line, the timescale for completion of this study is as yet unknown.

Queries raised by members in relation to the following:-

Construction costs and commencement of construction – S. McKeown confirmed to Cllr. Aylward that the Project Office had noticed that construction cost inflation was creeping into the ‘total scheme budget’ since it was finalised last September. However, he said this was not giving rise to any major concerns at present, but this can and will be raised with the Department of Tourism should the need arise. Contractors for Lot 1, New Ross section, will be notified of the award of contract shortly and it is expected that they would be on site within the month and the contractor for Lot 2 should be on site by late June, once planning is in place for the construction compound.

Links to Slieverue and Glenmore – in response to Cllr. Frisby’s request, S. McKeown agreed to request that Roadplan make a presentation to the Piltown members in relation to the options for each village, prior to the public consultation commencing.

Resident Engineer contacts – S. McKeown clarified the roles to Cllr. Breathnach and confirmed that contact can be made with either for any issues or queries that may arise.

Business Development Executive – in response to Cllr. Breathnach’s query with regard to where the new post would be based, S. McKeown advised that it has been agreed with Wexford County Council that the post will be shared in terms of office space, between the Ferrybank area office and the Area Office in New Ross.

Lot 4, New Ross to Mount Elliot – S. McKeown confirmed to Cllr. Doherty that Wexford Co Co are progressing a Part 8 Planning application for the construction compound access for same, which is expected to be in place this month and can then go to tender in June.

Retention of Sleepers – in response to Cllr. Doherty, S. McKeown confirmed that as previously advised, unfortunately all of the sleepers removed from the line are deemed to be an environmental waste and as such will have to be disposed of in accordance with EPA guidelines. It is expected that a heritage project will be delivered as part of the overall Greenway project, which is likely to be based in New Ross and is likely to have a small section of railway line and sleepers available there for the public to view, but no details of same are available at present. Cllr. Breathnach asked that the heritage project be based on the region as a whole, given the strong tradition of railways in the South East.

3. Business prescribed by Statute, Standing Order or Resolution of the Municipal District Members for transaction at such meetings

None.

4. Notice of Motion

None.

5. Correspondence

None

6. AOB:

EirGrid – Shaping Our Electricity Future

Cllr. Dunphy referred to the public consultation currently underway in which EirGrid is seeking feedback in relation to its new report, Shaping Our Electricity Future, which details four approaches to developing the grid in order to meet renewable energy targets by 2030. Cllr. Dunphy outlined the methods by which the public can engage with the process and urged everyone to get involved through the EirGrid consultation portal, consult.eirgrid.ie, where all the necessary information can be accessed and the public can submit their views in this regard. He advised that the closing date for submissions is 12noon on 14th June.

S. McKeown advised that a request has been received from Eirgrid, seeking to make a presentation to the Council in this regard in May, and this request will be considered by the CPG next week.

Cllr. Dunphy welcomed the presentation and proposed that EirGrid also be invited to attend at the Piltown MD meeting, being the only district directly affected – this was seconded by Cllr. Frisby and agreed.

Cllr. Dunphy also raised concern about the impact any such proposals would have on the SAC area along the River Suir and also on the Waterford and Kilkenny Greenway developments. Cllr. Breathnach agreed, stating that any proposals that EirGrid have in this regard must be sympathetic to the greenway developments.

Cllr. Breathnach asked, if possible, that information would be provided in relation to this matter in advance of EirGrid's presentation to the Council.

Overhanging Trees

Cllr. Doherty raised concern about overhanging branches on the public roadway at some locations and the difficulties caused to traffic as a result and asked that some action be taken in this regard. S. Cullen advised that under section 70 of the roads act the owner or occupier of lands are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure that any trees, hedges or other structures don't create a potential hazard to road users. He urged the members and public that where they are aware of any overhanging branches that they notify the area office so that landowners can be given the opportunity to address the matter.

Decarbonisation Zones

S. McKeown advised that under the Governments Climate Action Plan, all Local Authorities were required to designate a decarbonisation zone (DZ) within their administrative area by 30th April, 2021. It was noted that KCC have put forward an area of Kilkenny City as its DZ. It was also noted that elected members at the Council meeting in April, raised concerns over the tight timescale given to identify the potential DZ which did not allow for the normal public consultation process involved in decisions of this nature that impact on the local community. These concerns have since been raised with the Minister, requesting that a more defined role be provided for the elected members in the next phase of the process, which is the development of the implementation plan. It was noted that the implementation plan must be put in place before the end of this year.

S. McKeown also advised that Waterford City and County Council have indicated that they intend to designate Waterford City as their potential DZ and it is understood that their implementation plan will cover the greater Waterford City area, which would include Ferrybank. It is expected that WCCC will formally write to KCC to seek to have Ferrybank included as a key neighbourhood within the greater Waterford area and within their DZ.

Cllr. Aylward asked what the consequences and benefits were with regard to the proposed DZ. S. McKeown stated that under the Climate Action Plan and Government commitments, the move towards decarbonisation of the country has escalated. Each Local Authority will be required to put in place a climate action plan, outlining how they will reduce carbon emissions by 7% each year and to have a reduction of 51% by 2030. It was noted that the next stage for each Local Authority will be to develop a DZ implementation plan, setting out their intentions and seek funding to implement these actions, which will include actions relating to renewable energy, transport fleets, retrofitting of housing stock, encouraging people to change daily behaviour by encouraging more walking and cycling, etc.

Cllr. Frisby asked that the decarbonisation zone should be placed on the agenda for the Joint Meeting with Waterford, this was agreed.

Agree date for AGM

It was proposed by Cllr. Dunphy, seconded by Cllr. Aylward and agreed that the AGM would be held on Wednesday, 2nd June, prior to the June monthly meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Dated: _____