

**Minutes of Meeting of the Physical Development Strategic Policy Committee held on
Tuesday 15th November, 2022 at 3:30 pm in the Council Chamber,
Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.**

Present:

SPC Members

Cllr. J. Crowe, Chair
Cllr. P. O’Gorman
Cllr. J. Cooney
Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy
Cllr. I. Lynch
Mr. P Hayes
Mr. D. M. Wise

Staff of Clare County Council

Ms. L O’Neill, SEO, Ennis MD
Mr. J. Leahy, SE, Transportation
Mr. S Lenihan, SE, PMO
Ms. C Maguire, Heritage Officer
Mr. M Lahiffe, SE, Climate Action
Mr. C McDonagh, EE, Transportation
Mr. L O’Connor, AO, Transportation
Mr. C Feeney, SE, Environment
Ms. J Sheils, CO, Environment

Apologies : Ms. C Kirby, Mr. A Kelly, Cllr O’Callaghan, Ms A Wheeler, Ms T O’Donoghue

Ms Leonore O’Neill introduced Morgan Lahiffe, newly appointed Senior Engineer for Climate Action to the members of the SPC committee.

Item 1 – Confirmation of Minutes of the SPC Meeting of 31st May, 2022.

The Minutes were proposed by Cllr J Cooney and seconded by Mr. D. M. Wise

Item 2- Matters Arising

Damon Mathew Wise stressed the importance of his name being identified in its’ full form in all documentation, stressing the importance of the “” element due to issues with other individuals with a similar name.

Item 3 – Project Management Office Update

Sean Lenihan delivered a very comprehensive presentation and update on the major capital projects currently being undertaken by the PMO. This included updates on the Killaloe Bypass, Blakes Corner project, N19 Shannon Airport Access Road, Springfield/Clonlara CFRAMS Flood Relief Scheme and the re-alignment of the N85 at Kilnamona among others.

Thanks to Sean for the excellent presentation were expressed by the SPC Members present.

Cllr Cooney requested an update on the progress of the Scariff Limerick Greenway and requested details on the situation in Springfield over the last few weeks.

Cllr Lynch requested an update on funding for Phase 3 of the Greenway project, and queried the possibility of a rail link to Shannon Airport.

Damon Matthew Wise commented on the walkway from O'Briens Bridge to the University of Limerick. Advised that due to overgrowth the walkway is blocked in some places. He advised that the walkway was supposed to allow Universal Access but is not useable for bicycle and wheelchair users.

In response to queries raised, Sean Lenihan advised that the council has hired 2 temporary pumps for Springfield pending the delivery of permanent pumps.

Sean confirmed that the Scariff to Limerick project is ongoing, and is being led by Waterways Ireland. Clare County Council are on the steering committee, with a meeting due to take place in 2 weeks.

Sean advised that a rail link to Shannon Airport is absolutely a priority for Clare County Council but he is not hopeful of the rail link progressing in the near future.

Item 4 – Active Travel Update

John Leahy introduced the Active Travel Programme presentation and Conor McDonagh, Executive Engineer. John advised that we are currently in Year 2 of a 5 year programme and the Active Travel Programme is a great opportunity for Clare.

Conor delivered a very comprehensive and informative presentation on the Active Travel Programme including context, strategy, objectives and types of schemes as well as a summary of the projects currently underway or completed to date.

Thanks to Conor for the informative presentation were expressed by the SPC Members present.

Damon Matthew Wise raised concerns about speeding cars at St Caimin's, Shannon and requested that a speed limit of 30KPH be introduced. Damon noted concerns in relation to high kerbs which can cause considerable damage to wheelchairs. He also highlighted the dangers of crossing roads near bus stops and the necessity to cross grass in order to access some bus stops.

Cllr Lynch advised that there is currently no cycle lanes in Kilrush, and would like to see these introduced. Cllr Lynch also advised that some areas are heavily pedestrianised and adequate street lighting would make a difference.

Cllr. Cooney queried if the council is required to provide match funding.

Cllr O'Gorman advised that a large number of people were forced to cross a busy main road in order to access the bus stop at the Shannon Springs hotel.

Cllr Colleran Molloy queried if lights are to be introduced on the Ballybeg Road, and requested that Conor expand on the work to be done at St.Flannans.

In response to queries raised, John Leahy SE Transportation confirmed that he would review the issues raised by DM Wise, and Cllrs Lynch and O’Gorman.

Conor advised that he will revert directly to Cllr. Colleran Molloy regarding her St.Flannan’s query.

In response to Cllr. Colleran Molloy’s query about lighting on the Ballybeg Road, Conor advised that the bat assessment has been completed, and lighting will be progressed in Ballybeg.

In response to Cllr. Cooney’s question, John confirmed that NTA provides 100% funding and the council is not required to provide match funding. He advised that the Municipal Districts will be asked to make applications for future projects in December.

Item 5 – Climate Action Plan update

Chair Crowe welcomed Morgan Lahiffe to the SPC meeting.

Morgan delivered an informative and comprehensive presentation on Clare County Council’s Climate Action Plan including an overview of Climate Policy and Climate Action Timelines. Morgan advised that additional staff will be recruited to the Climate Action team over the next few months.

The SPC members expressed their thanks for his informative presentation and welcomed him to his new role. Damon Matthew Wise highlighted the importance of ensuring that the consultation process must include all of the UN Convention groups.

Item 6 – Clare County Council Biodiversity Plan update

Congella Maguire, Heritage Officer presented a wide ranging and informative presentation on the Clare Biodiversity Programme 2022 including details of funding and the range of biodiversity projects in Co.Clare. Projects covered in detail included the Clare Wetland Survey, Clare Barn Owl survey and the Invasive Alien Species (IAS) initiative. Congella confirmed that Clare County Council will be among the first local authority to appoint a Biodiversity officer, which will be a hugely positive step forward.

The SPC members expressed their thanks to Congella for her informative and very interesting presentation.

Cllr. Lynch queried the length of the No Mow May initiative, advising that this had been extended to August in some areas.

Cllr. O’Gorman advised that the No Mow May initiative was a success but went on for too long in some locations. He queried if the cut grass could be collected and used as compost.

DM Wise advised that some projects (Community Gardens) suffer a lack of accessibility such as pavements and walkways.

Cllr. Crowe queried if there is any more that can be done about Japanese Knotweed.

Cllr. Colleran Molloy asked if it was possible to outlaw rodenticides.

In response to the queries raised, Congella advised that the council have looked into the possibility of composting grass cuttings and would require a licence to do so. Regarding the question of IAS, Congella stressed that effective control of Invasive Species needs to be carried out year-on-year and the council needs to support the community is so doing. Regarding rodenticides, Congella advised that society needs to look at alternatives.

Item 7 - AOB

Cllr. Cooney suggested that it would be beneficial to hold additional meetings during the year. He advised that morning meetings may be preferable to afternoon meetings and requested that this question be looked at in the New Year.

Leonore O’Neill and John Crowe thanked everyone for their participation in the meeting.

Item 8 - Date of next meeting : March 8th 2023.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____

Cllr. John Crowe
Chairperson

Signed: _____

Liam O’Connor
Administrative Officer

Date: _____