

Minutes of the Physical Development Strategic Policy Committee Meeting
Tuesday, 19th September 2023 at 2.30pm

Present:

SPC Members

Cllr John Crowe, Chair
Cllr Joe Cooney
Cllr Clare Colleran Molloy
Cllr Liam Grant
Cllr Ian Lynch
Cllr Pat O’Gorman
Cllr Alan O’Callaghan
Ms Theresa O’Donohoe
Mr Damon M. Wise Âû

Staff of Clare County Council

Siobhán McNulty, A/DOS, Physical Dev
John Leahy, SE, Transportation
Morgan Lahiffe, SE, Climate Action
Cyril Feeney, SE, Environment & Water
Anne Griffin, A/SEO Shannon MD
Liam O’Connor, AO, Transportation
Sinead McDonnell, Executive Scientist
Valerie Fleming, ASO, Physical Dev

Apologies: Padraic Hayes; Adrian Kelly, CFO; Seán Lenihan, SE.

1. Minutes of Physical Development SPC meeting held on 6th June 2023

Cllr Ian Lynch requested that the minutes be amended to record the agreed change of start time to 2.30pm for the September 2023 meeting with the possibility to agree an earlier time for subsequent meetings.

With this amendment included, the minutes of the Physical Development SPC meeting held on 6th June 2023 were proposed by Cllr Joe Cooney, seconded by Cllr Pat O’Gorman and agreed.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

The Chair agreed to deal with Item no 4 next.

4. Presentation on bathing water quality

Sinead Mc Donnell, Executive Scientist gave a detailed presentation on bathing water quality and testing.

Theresa O'Donohoe asked who is responsible for preventing short term pollution events, Sinead responded that the environment section has an inspection programme for farm and domestic wastewater treatment plants. In addition Uisce Eireann has a role in the control and management of discharge from urban wastewater treatment plants.

It was noted that the environmental laboratory tests for E.coli and Intestinal Enterococci only.

Cllr Pat O'Gorman asked if dog poop bags and bins are provided at all 8 Blue Flag beaches in Clare and Cyril Feeney responded that waste disposal facilities are provided at all beaches and further consideration can be given to providing such bags.

3. Update on funding of Roadworks Programme & Active Travel

John Leahy, Senior Engineer, updated the meeting regarding the Annual Roadworks Programme and status of Active Travel projects in Clare.

Cllr Joe Cooney asked if the inclement weather will delay the Roadworks Programme for 2023 and also queried where funding of projects in rural areas will come from now that Active Travel funding will be focused on urban areas. He stated his disappointment that IPB funding has reduced to €100,000 per MD and asked if planning contributions will be distributed among the MDs. Cllr Cooney noted there is no Road Safety Officer and requested this post be filled as a matter of priority. There was also some discussion on the correlation between hedgerow management and the safety of pedestrians and cyclists on our county's roads.

Cllr Pat O'Gorman requested an update on the N19 Shannon Airport access road project and added that he has been advised that vehicles are being damaged as a result of works on the N18, especially where the temporary works are in place overnight.

He referred to issues regarding public lighting in housing estates where lights are not working for several weeks at a time and requested additional resources (a second roads crew) for the Shannon MD.

Cllr Ian Lynch stated that greater funding is needed for West Clare especially in the areas of road drainage and the maintenance of roads in housing estates. He added that West Clare MD could also benefit from another roads crew.

Cllr Liam Grant expressed his disappointment that Active Travel funding is concentrated in urban areas as there remains a need for additional footpaths to provide access to villages throughout the county.

John Leahy responded that although the Roadworks Programme was interrupted in June due to heat and in July due to heavy rainfall it is now back on target. John advised that an Active Travel funding application will be submitted in December which will prioritise applications for each MD. The IPB funding is due to expire and then funding through planning contributions will be sought. There is a €90k grant available for hedge cutting this year and additional funding has been sought for 2024. The PMO is dealing with the Shannon Airport access road and it is making progress. Regarding the outage of public lighting John confirmed that this is largely due to the need to complete safety works which require the attendance of the ESB.

Cllr Joe Cooney requested an update regarding the filling of the Senior Executive Engineer position in Killaloe MD and the filling of other vacant positions due to sick leave.

Siobhán McNulty advised that she is working closely with HR but that it is policy of the Council not to back fill long term sick leave positions.

Cllr Ian Lynch asked for an update regarding the position of the Road Safety Officer and if any preventative measures are being utilised in relation to climate change adaptation.

John Leahy advised that roads that flooded year on year have been flagged and remediation has taken place on a number of these with 16 schemes completed in 2022 and 18 due to be completed in 2023.

Siobhán McNulty confirmed that the Road Safety Officer position is vacant and she is liaising with senior management to fill this post.

5. Update on Climate Action Plan

Morgan Lahiffe, Climate Action Officer, advised that the preparation of the Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 has now moved to stage 2, which is publication and public consultation on the draft plan. All submissions received will be considered and the plan will go to the elected members for adoption before 24th February 2024. The pre-draft public consultation survey received 188 submissions with 83 responses received from the student consultation survey.

The Plan has 5 themes and actions are currently being finalised along with the SEA/AA process.

Cllr Joe Cooney asked if it is planned to complete the actions by 2029, how the actions are to be funded and what the implications are if the actions are not completed.

Theresa O'Donohoe referred to the low carbon plan for Ballyvaughan and requested additional EV charging points. She also referred to the completion of the SEA/AA in advance of receiving submissions on the draft plan and asked for confirmation that a second SEA would be completed if there were fundamental changes to the draft Plan.

Cllr Liam Grant mentioned *waterstations.ie* who provide water taps at public locations.

Cllr Pat O'Gorman asked if funding will be forthcoming for the implementation of this plan.

Morgan Lahiffe replied that the plan is based on short-, medium- and long-term actions and not all of these actions will require significant funding. He stated that there are actions in the plan relating to EVs and also to water stations. He added that all actions recognise submissions received in the pre-draft consultation but if there are fundamental changes to the plan then the SEA will be revisited. He expects that funding will be provided to implement actions of the Clare Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029.

6. AOB

The next meeting of the Physical Development SPC is scheduled for 14th November 2023.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Cllr. John Crowe
Chairperson

Signed: _____
Liam O'Connor
Administrative Officer

Date: _____