

County Wicklow Public Participation Network

Representative Report

Please complete and return to countywicklowppn@gmail.com within one week after each meeting.

Name of Committee: Transportation Water & Environmental Services SPC

Name of Representative: Tim Morgan

Date of Meeting Attended: 26th February 2018

Most important actions or issues to emerge from a County Wicklow PPN perspective:

The Agenda for the meeting was as follows:

1. Minutes of meeting held on 23rd October 2017
2. Ethics - Local Government Act 2001
3. Environmental Services
 - Update on Harbours and Port 2017
4. Roads & Transportation Services
 - To note Submission - Rail and Commuter Transport Plan for East Wicklow
5. Environmental Services
 - Update on Climate Change/Energy
6. Any other Business

1. Minutes of previous meeting

Cllr Fitzgerald chaired the meeting in the absence of Cllr Doran. The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read, agreed and signed off.

2. Ethics - Local Government Act 2001

Two circulars from the Dept of Environment Community & Local Government dated January 2015 were attached to the email sent notifying members of the SPC meeting. They were both coded LG2/2015 and titled 'Part 15 - Local Government Act 2001 Revised Annual Declaration Forms'.

The first one consisted of 24 pages and was named LG2- 2015 plus Appendices 1 and 7 for Non-Members. The second one had 96 pages and named LG2-2015 Revised Annual Declaration Forms.

Part 15 of the Act sets out the ethical framework for all those involved in the local government service both members and employees. The circulars were for information purposes and not discussed at the meeting.

From reviewing the documents after the meeting it seems that under Appendix 7 of the circular PPN Reps as non-members of the Council are expected to disclose any interests at a committee meeting if such interests would be in conflict with taking part in certain discussion at the meeting and that reps are expected to follow the Councillors Code of Conduct.

3. Environmental Services - Update on Harbours and Port 2017

An official from the Port Service outlined developments at the Wicklow ports. He said the Wicklow port was busy last year and that about 25 ships used the port in the last quarter of 2017. Some of the commodities exported were forestry logs and processed timber as well as scrap metal and glass cullet (for recycling).

The port has been handling the pipes for the construction of new 4km water pipeline for the transfer of treated water from Vartry to Callowhill. Various works going on at the port included new gates, paving, traffic management planning and staff changes.

He also referred to the tidying up of the harbour at Arklow and the refurbishment and proposed relocation of the lightship lantern. The survey for the dredging at Arklow has been completed and dredging is required in all 3 harbours including Bray where some dredging has been done to facilitate sailing.

Cllr Fitzgerald mentioned that there is no freight handling in Arklow and that containers could be reused. The rep asked if Arklow Maritime museum had been consulted in regard to the lightship. It seemed they hadn't.

4. Roads & Transportation Services - Submission on Rail and Commuter Transport Plan for East Wicklow

Cllr Derek Mitchell gave a short summary of his report entitled 'Rail & Commuter Transport Plan for East Wicklow' to the meeting. In the Jan 2018 version of his report he says that the long term Irish Rail and National Transport Authority (NTA) plan is to provide a shuttle service on the rail line to the south of Bray. He understands from the plan that northbound direct diesel trains will terminate at Greystones to allow a better DART service in County Dublin.

He states that the plan will mean more people will use the heavily congested N11. He feels that Wicklow is being ignored, the rail line is being underused whilst being maintained at some expense by Irish Rail.

Cllr Mitchell's alternative plan is to provide a tripling of rush hour (peak time) rail capacity and an express bus service on the N11 with Park 'n' Ride at a limited cost.

In the short term he suggests that the two Wicklow rush hour diesels should be lengthened from 4 to 8 carriages with the addition of a third rush hour diesel from Wicklow at 07.21 (ex Greystones) or possibly a DART. This would require train splitting (though there are alternative solutions) at Wicklow Town going South and platform extensions.

For the longer term Cllr Mitchell suggests the provision of a 20 minute DART service to Greystones (an increase of 50%) and a shuttle south of there in addition to rush hour direct diesels. This would require double tracking from Bray Head tunnel exit to Greystones, re-signalling section, passing loop at Newcastle, extra carriages, rearranging tracks at Greystones, extending platforms south of Wicklow Town and probably selective door opening carriages.

He also advocates express buses on the N11 with Park 'n' Ride sites and CCTV at about 5 locations. Like the successful 84X service they should skip Bray Main Street taking the N11/M50. Some of these should go on the M50 to Cherrywood and Sandyford junctions and the LUAS at Red Cow where many Wicklow residents work.

He states that this plan is a low cost way of getting commuters off the N11 road and is cheaper than bringing the DART to Wicklow or boring a new tunnel in Bray Head, both of which have environmental issues.

His report goes on to describe the Irish Rail and NTA plan and longer term strategy in more detail and outlines the problems with the strategy and why shuttles won't work. He writes that the previous shuttle to Bray of the 1980's was a failure and became underused. He also states that currently there are no commuter shuttle services in Ireland. Other shuttles are for short distances and are well outside the Dublin area.

He states that the shuttle-only strategy will not work and will result in a modal shift from rail to road. A strategy based on retaining and lengthening direct diesels, adding an extra rush hour diesel, an extra DART from Greystones and increasing the capacity of the critical Greystones to Bray section.

Cllr Fitzgerald congratulated Cllr Mitchell on the production of his report. Cllr Fitzgerald stated that 16 buses leave Arklow daily for Dublin and Wexford Bus is not yet coming into town. Cllr Mitchell stated that he gets a lot of complaints about transport especially regarding bus route 133 when it had been rerouted but signage hadn't changed. There was a review of Cllr Mitchell's plan in the Wicklow Times of 23rd of January 2018.

5. Environmental Services - Update on Climate Change/Energy

Moira Byrne of WCC gave a presentation on Climate Change in Ireland which was very similar to the one she gave to the Environmental Network meeting at An Tairseach in December 2017.

Ireland was performing well on climate change mitigation (up to 10/15 years ago) but is now performing badly. She referenced the graphic in the Weekend Review of The Irish Times of 18th November 2017.

The heading stated that 'Ireland is Europe's worst performing country in combating climate change, a study has revealed. The State has fallen 28 places to 49th in the 2018 Climate Change Performance Index.' The bar chart shows performance by 4 categories (Emissions, Renewable energy, Energy use & Climate policy).

Mitigation refers to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and increasing carbon sinks whereas adaptation refers to dealing with actual or expected impacts and by creating resilience.

She referred to the National Mitigation Plan of July 2017 which covers all the country and the whole of government. In terms of GHG emissions agriculture produces about one third while energy produces about one fifth but transport is also a significant GHG emitter due to the personal use of cars.

She also referred to the Draft National Adaptation Plan of September 2017 and the National Adaptation Framework of January 2018. Also the notion that local authorities can respond more quickly than national bodies and that local action requires unique solutions.

Climate change adaptation: strategies to adapt to change in the areas of housing, roads, agriculture, biodiversity, forestry, coastal protection, etc.

For example the River Dargle Flood Defence Scheme in Bray. It was begun in 2012 and restarted in 2014. The scheme gives defence for the 1-in-100-year flood event and 1-in-200-year tidal event.

Useful websites include climateireland.ie and dcae.gov.ie. The website ireland2050.ie just launched has helpful tools on it.

She said the consumption of electrical energy in the Council has increased significantly of which public lighting accounts for 67%. There was a discussion on the merits of converting all public lights to LED lights. It could cost in the region to €8-9m for WCC to change to LED. Wexford County Council are in the process of converting to LED technology.

6. AOB

The rep raised the issue of **wire weed**, an invasive seaweed, in Greystones. The presence of wire weed in Greystones harbour was brought to the attention of Co Wicklow PPN by Anne McEvoy of Greystones sub-aqua (Aquanauts) diving club. They are monitoring its spread.

The rep gave a bit of background information about the plant species. The scientific name for wire weed is *Sargassum muticum*. It's also known as Japweed and Strangle weed and is not to be confused with the terrestrial plant (*Polygonum aviculare*) of the same common name.

It is native to the North West Pacific shores and its habitat is on hard surfaces in shallow (<5m) coastal water.

It is a non-native seaweed introduced initially to France on oysters which came from either Canada or Japan. It probably spread from France to the UK where it was first found on the Isle of Wight in 1973. It is found on the south coast of England, parts of the west Wales coastline and along parts of the south coast of Ireland as well as in the north east of the country around Belfast lough.

Cllr Mitchell asked for an update on the **N11/M11**. Engineer Michael Flynn responded to say that surveying is ongoing in relation to upgrading the access/egress from the filling station at Kilmacanogue. Arup are the consultants and the project is being led by the National Road Design office in Kildare.

In relation to the proposed N11 upgrade between J4 and J14 where an extra lane is to be constructed in both directions for part of the distance from M50/M11 merge the project is still in a pre-construction justification phase and still within the Strategic & Transport Planning Dept of TII. So very much a long term project.

Cllr Fitzgerald enquired if bus lanes can be extended from Dublin south into County Wicklow and if hard shoulders of M11/N11 could be used by buses. In reply it was stated that TII are engaged in discussion with the County Council about bus lanes on the existing road and if they can be part of design for J4-J14.

6. Date of next meeting:

Next SPC meeting to be held on 28th of May 2018.