

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: 23rd October 2017

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

The Agenda for the meeting was as follows:

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 19/06/17
2. Environmental Services:
 - a. Draft River Basin Management Plan
 - b. Update on CFRAMS for Co. Wicklow
3. Roads & Transportation Services update
4. Update on Storm Ophelia (16/10/17)
5. Any Other Business
6. Dates for meetings in 2018

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read, agreed and signed off.

Following from the minutes the rep asked Cllr Fitzgerald, who was chairing the meeting in the absence of Cllr Doran, what was the result of his request that the 80km/h speed limit on the Coolgreaney Road into Arklow be taken out further from the edge of town. Cllr Fitzgerald replied that this limit is to be moved 250m out from its existing position.

2a. Environmental Services – Draft River Basin Management Plan

A short presentation on the Draft River Basin Management Plan was given. The first plan was in 2010 and in this second plan more public consultation has been called for. A new plan is prepared every 6 years and this plan for 2016 – 2021 is running 2 years late.

Good water quality is very important for the tourism industry in County Wicklow and Ireland's Ancient East project has the potential to generate a lot of income.

A lot of agencies are involved in the preparation of the plan including LAWCO (Local Authorities Waters and Communities Office) who will coordinate the implementation of the plan and the Programme of Measures.

The aim of the River Basin Management Plan 2018 – 2021 is to prioritise and target those waterbodies that are deemed to be 'at risk'.

Apparently some 35 new staff are to be employed nationally on the implementation of the plan.

Members of the SPC were told that if they knew of a waterbody that needs attention then they should notify the Council/LAWCO. A Recommended Areas for Action feedback form for County Wicklow was circulated.

The situation of the Avoca River quality was brought up and the acid mine drainage problem. A certain amount of work has been done by capping spoil heaps and combining flows from adits but the cost of proposed remediation by treating the drainage was considered prohibitive and there was the added problem of disposing of toxic sludge.

The water quality of the River Dargle would be generally good but the quality was affected by a sample which was taken from the lower section of the river which has been undergoing flood protection works.

2b. Environmental Services - Update on CFRAMS for Co. Wicklow

Marc Devereux gave an update on Catchment Flood Risk and Assessment Management (CFRAM) studies. Public consultation on the draft Flood Risk Management Plans for the Eastern CFRAM study has been completed.

The OPW have put a final plan together for approval by the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government (DHP&LG).

The plan which consists of two parts: the Eastern CFRAM Study and the Southeastern CFRAM Study, is to be approved by mid-November.

The two big flood schemes are the Dargle and Avoca Rivers. There are other smaller schemes like the one at Baltinglass. Some of the smaller schemes may be funded under OPW low cost schemes.

3. Roads & Transportation Services update

Sean Quirke, Director of Services with the Council gave a short report to the meeting.

He said there are some suggestions of progress on funding for design work on the M11/N11 Corridor Study based on the Needs Assessment Report that was commissioned by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

The review of speed limits within the county has been completed and new signs are to be erected soon.

Archaeology works are to start on the N81 south of Hollywood next year. More funding is needed to complete the works on the bend at Calary.

4. Update on Storm Ophelia

Wicklow County Council received 72 calls, plus texts and tweets regarding Storm Ophelia. Feedback from the public after the storm was generally good. Electricity was off for a short period on the 16th of October.

It was felt that Wicklow and the east coast escaped the worst of the storm. There was virtually no traffic on the roads as people heeded the warning to stay indoors. The roads were mainly affected by debris only.

There was wind and flood damage to Arklow Caravan Park and Gaines was lucky not to have been flooded. The rock armour was breached to the north of the Avoca estuary at Arklow and the footpath was badly damaged. Water came over the rock armour on the south side also.

5. AOB

The rep raised how the coastal protection works at The Murrough stood up to the storm. Marc Devereux said that the protection works are fine with some deposits building up on them but they have not been severely tested yet.

6. Date of Meetings in 2018:

SPC meetings are to be held on 26th of February, 28th of May, 24th of September and 26th of November.