

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 & Emergency Services SPC

Name of Representative: Tim Morgan

Date of Meeting Attended: 12th January 2021 (via Zoom)

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

The Agenda for the meeting was as follows:

1. To note minutes of 30th September 2020
2. Briefing session on the N11/M11 Junction 4 to Junction 14 Improvement Scheme
3. Discussion - public consultations – NTA & Irish Water

The National Transport Authority (NTA) has commenced a review of the 2016–2035 GDA Transport Strategy. This review will assess how the current plan is being implemented and will help guide the strategy update that will set out a transport infrastructure and service investment framework for Dublin, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow until 2042. The NTA is now calling on you to help shape the strategic objectives and inform policy direction. Submission deadline for this round of consultation is Friday 22nd January 2021. The link can be found as follows: <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/consultations/greater-dublin-area-transport-strategy/>

Irish Water has published the NWRP draft Framework Plan, its first National Water Resources Plan, for consultation. Irish Water is now inviting feedback on the NWRP draft Framework Plan and associated SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement (NIS). A ten-week statutory public consultation runs from Tuesday 8 December 2020 to Tuesday 16 February 2021.

The link can be found as follows: <https://www.water.ie/projects-plans/our-plans/nwrp/>

4. Summary updates on schemes 2020 / proposed 2021 & to note Update on BusConnects, Update on Public lighting LED retrofit roll-out & Draft Agreement between WCC and TII to install Ramp Metering at junction 6 Fassaroe
5. Allocations NTA, TII DTTAS & Irish Water 2021
6. Fire Services Capital Allocations & Update
7. AOB
8. Schedule of Meetings 2021

1. Minutes of previous meeting

Cllr Derek Mitchell chaired the meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting of 30th of September were approved.

2. Update of M11/N11 Junction 4 to Jct 14 Improvement Scheme

The project is at Phase 2 'Options Selection'. Within this phase there are 3 stages and the interim update (Bulletin No.5) reports on the outcomes of Stage 1 'Corridor Assessment'. Ronan McEnroe of Kildare NRDO and Martin Allen of Arup gave short presentations to the meeting.

The scheme has been split into northern and southern sections with the dividing line being just north of the Glenview hotel. On the Northern Section the online (N11) red corridor has emerged as the preferred option.

On the Southern Section the online (N11) red corridor and the offline cyan corridor (to the west of the Glen of the Downs) will be advanced to Stage 2. In addition the viability of a tunnel option under the Glen of the Downs will be assessed. All the corridors to the east of the Glen of the Downs have been discounted.

The transport assessment which includes additional lanes, parallel roads, junction improvements, Park & Ride alternative, rail and bus alternatives, and safety improvements will run concurrently with the corridor assessment. At the end of Stage 2 they will have a preferred corridor and a preferred transport solution.

A separate project to assess the feasibility of bus lanes on the N11/M11 corridor has progressed (bus lanes could offer a practicable interim solution in advance of the main N11/M11 scheme). This project called the N11/M11 Bus Priority Interim Scheme is at feasibility stage and involves the NTA, TII, WCC & DLRCC.

They hope to complete Phase 2 by the end of Q2 2021. Phase 3 will be Design and Environmental Evaluation.

Cllr Behan had a question on the options for the northern section. Martin Allen said that public transport measures, junction improvements, parallel road and additional lane solutions are all being considered. Cllr Behan was worried about access to N11/M11 from Bray and that the road design should not cause undue delay to traffic entering the N11 from Bray.

The rep stated that the tunnel option is to be welcomed though it was introduced at a later stage and that there may be comparable road projects in Europe where tunnelling has been done in order to avoid damage to sensitive landscapes.

Cllr Mitchell was concerned about the population projections that may have been used for the design of N11/M11 scheme as the population for Greystones is much less than that used in some studies.

3. Discussion - public consultations – NTA & Irish Water

(1) NTA: review of the 2016 – 2035 GDA Transport Strategy. See link in agenda (above).

Cllr Mitchell firstly asked what the Council officials (on the Zoom call) are doing about review of the strategy. Colm Lavery, Arklow District Manager, replied they are going to make a submission. Michael Flynn Engineer said they are in close contact with the NTA about the N11, Wicklow ports, etc. and the Council is part of a steering group. He said it is important to know about transport services for Wicklow.

Cllr Behan had a question on Fassaroe. He said the Luas cannot come to Bray until the Metro comes to Sandymount. Cllr Blake asked about the status of the N81 and the Blessington bypass. Michael Flynn said the bypass is effectively suspended for the time being. Council officials said that studies are being done and local schemes are possible.

Cllr Mitchell had prepared a draft submission on the NTA review of the GDA transport strategy. In it he says that there is emphasis on short distance transport methods with priority given to the central (least expanding) area and that the Wicklow population is growing faster than the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) plan and central areas. The EMRA plan puts the Wicklow population at 170,000 in 2031. The current zoning far exceeds this figure and reductions in zoned land will be required. He says transport planning needs to reflect this significant increase over the EMRA population target. Similar issues apply to Wicklow Town, Ashford & Newtown.

Cllr Mitchell goes on to say Dublin priority is to give more road space to cycling and walking leaving less space for buses and cars. Also there are proposals to decrease the Dublin speed limit to 30 or 40 km/h slowing down buses. All of these will slow down Wicklow commuter buses. For example the plan to encourage cycling over Bray Head will potentially significantly delay buses going north.

(2) Irish Water: consultation on National Water Resources Plan (NWRP) draft Framework Plan. Tom O'Leary of IW made a short presentation on the NWRP draft Framework Plan. IW have also published a non-technical summary (NTS) to accompany the Environmental Report and a consultation leaflet. This plan is concerned with the future of drinking water resources (not wastewater or drainage) and is being prepared to meet the objectives of the 25-year Water Services Strategic Plan.

Phase 2 of the NWRP consists of 4 individual Regional Water Resources Plans (NW Region, SW region, SE Region and E & Midland Region). County Wicklow falls within the E & Midland Region. There were no specific comments on the NWRP consultation. For more information see the link in agenda (above).

4. Summary updates on NTA schemes 2020 / proposed 2021, update on BusConnects, update on Public lighting LED retrofit roll-out & Draft Agreement between WCC and TII to install Ramp Metering at Jct 6 Fassaroe

A presentation was made by a Council official giving a summary of the expenditure on the 2020 NTA schemes under 3 different headings as follows:

- *Covid-19 Interim Mobility Measures; €0.33m spent on 29 schemes. 15 schemes were completed and 14 are ongoing*
- *July 2020 Stimulus Active Travel Measures; €2.86m spent on 21 schemes. Application made for funding of €0.68m to complete 9 schemes*
- *Sustainable Transportation Measures Grant Schemes; €0.67m spent on 20 schemes.*

The proposed 2021 NTA schemes are as follows:

- *5-Year Cycle Implementation Plan
Implementation of GDA Cycle Network Plan
Currently at draft stage
Increase in funding for provision of cycle infrastructure*
- *2021 Sustainable Transportation Grant Schemes
Applications for funding for schemes in Wicklow being prepared*

Colm Lavery commented that work has currently been suspended under Level 5 restrictions and only essential repairs are being carried out.

A summary of Urban Regeneration & Development Fund (URDF) and Rural Regeneration & Development Fund (RRDF) schemes was given as follows:

URDF Schemes;

*Arklow Parade Ground Public Realm Phase 1 (tender advertised on etenders, closing date 03 February)
Fitzwilliam Square [Wicklow Town] Public Realm (works due for completion by end of January 2021)*

RRDF Schemes;

*Baltinglass Town Centre Plan (Arup completing detailed design)
Place-making Newtown Mount Kennedy (preparing brief for consultant procurement)*

Under 'Other Roads Schemes' the following details were presented:

Baltinglass Bridge (Arup Consulting Engineers finalizing feasibility report);

Rathdrum (funding application submitted in December 2020 for community centre/hub and public realm improvements);

Blessington Inner Relief Road (in process of appointing consultants);

Kilmacanogue to N11/Southern Cross Greenway (preliminary design being completed, public consultation on route options ongoing).

Under **BusConnects** update the following was presented:

The third public consultation on the BusConnects scheme concluded in December 2020 including the Bray to City centre BusConnects route.

Presently the BusConnects scheme is addressing the infrastructure provision - further elements of the scheme will address bus services.

Wicklow County Council is actively engaged with the NTA and Jacobs Consulting engineers re the Bray route.

Under the **Public Lighting** Energy Efficiency Project the following information was given:

A national scheme to retro fit all public lighting with energy efficient LED lights is underway. The country is divided into 3 regions – Wicklow is in the Eastern region. They are presently in the process of appointing consultants for the Eastern region.

Cllr Blake had a question about LEDs. Lights are replaced by LEDs as faults occur. Kilkenny is the HQ for the Eastern region. The Council hopes to be able to appoint a contractor in mid-2021. As regards the Baltinglass Bridge project work is ongoing though nothing seen on the ground.

Cllr Mitchell was concerned about the progress on a cycleway which connects five schools in Greystones area. It is still progressing despite being held up by a CPO.

Under the Draft Agreement between WCC and TII to install **Ramp Metering at Junction 6 Fassaroe** the following was presented:

The developer of the Fassaroe lands is presently finalising preparations for a planning application to ABP.

The Bray Transport study required a 'Framework for Traffic Management' agreement between WCC & TII. A draft agreement is being finalised.

Essential infrastructure will be installed for the management of traffic flows at Junction 6 (lights, sensors, CCTV cameras). These will only be used if traffic conditions require intervention.

Ramp metering seems to refer to the traffic control that TII would deem necessary at this junction in order to facilitate proposed development at Fassaroe. (Under the Bray transport study the Fassaroe land development would consist of 4,000 houses and the Luas.)

Michael Flynn stated that the process of reaching agreement with TII should be as transparent as possible. He said the Council's view is that ramp metering wouldn't help but TII want some method of traffic control at the junction.

Cllr Behan said that 1,000 units are proposed for Fassaroe initially and will be more than 4,000 units finally. The proposal is for traffic lights to restrict motorists coming freely onto the N11 from Fassaroe.

5. Allocations NTA, TII DTTAS & Irish Water 2021

Helena Dennehy, Executive Officer, presented a sheet showing figures. She said a lot of schemes are in play at the moment. €1.7m was spent in 2020. The budget for 2021 is €1.7m again.

Cllr Behan was concerned that Irish Water don't respond to him on issues raised by constituents at his clinics. He wondered what the protocol is for IW to come back to the Council on big capital projects. Cllr Fitzgerald commented that he has good communication with IW.

6. Fire Services Capital Allocations & Update

Aidan Dempsey, CFO, announced the following capital projects giving a total budget of nearly €3m in next 2 years.

Project	Year	Amount
New Baltinglass Fire Station	2022/3	€ 1,000,000
New Dunlavin Fire Station	2023	€ 1,000,000
New Fire Engine	2022/3	€ 450,000
2 x New Water Tankers	2022/3	€ 250,000
Provisional		
Improvements to Training Centre Bray	2022/3	€ 100,000

Also a contract has been awarded for the introduction of a new fire kit for fighters and 12 new staff recruited following the induction course in Bray in last November. There are a total of 95 staff (12 in Bray) in the 10 stations and there are 4 vacancies for 2021.

A review of the National Fire Service Capacity to look at the impact of Covid-19 took place between June and September last year. The review was undertaken by the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM). The quality of submissions provided by Wicklow County Fire Service was commented upon very favourably by NDFEM.

The review of the updated report on the provision of a full time Fire Service for Bray by Dr Brian Sweeney, former Chief Fire Officer of Strathclyde, is ongoing.

Cllr Behan was happy that the number of fire staff has increased in Bray. It is enough for a 2-pump station but still operates as a 1-pump station with Greystones for the time being.

7. AOB

The rep expressed interest in the National Water Resources Plan (NWRP) of Irish Water, the need for protection of water in the environment and recommended that members take a look at the documents (e.g. the Non-technical summary) prepared by IW (see link above).

Michael Flynn acknowledged the work of the winter maintenance crews of the Council. He said they provide a critical service. Cllr Blake also expressed thanks to the Council staff for their work.

8. Schedule of Meetings for 2021

The next SPC meeting will be on 13th of April 2021. Then 6/7/21 and 12/10/21 at 9.30am (via Zoom).