

**Minutes of Meeting of Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee
held on 3rd October 2022 via Zoom**

PRESENT: Cllr. Michael O'Meara (Chair)
Cllr. Jim Ryan
Cllr. Micheál Anglim
Cllr. Hughie McGrath
Cllr. Michael Fitzgerald
Cllr. Declan Burgess
Cllr. Kevin O'Meara
Cllr. Mark Fitzgerald
Mr. Liam Browne, PPN
Mr. Gerard Shanahan, PPN (Social Inclusion)
Mr. Marcus O'Connor, Director of Services, Roads, Transportation
and Infrastructure
Mr. Liam Brett, Senior Engineer, Roads Operational
Ms. Michèle Maher, Administrative Officer, Roads
Mr. Kieran Malone, A/Senior Engineer, Roads Operational
Mr. James Hayes, Senior Staff Officer, Roads (Minutes)
Mr. Michael Tierney, Executive Engineer, Roads

APOLOGIES: -

1. Minutes of Meeting held on 30 May 2022 and Matters Arising

Cllr. Michael O'Meara welcomed everybody to the meeting, particularly Mr. Liam Browne who has been nominated to the Infrastructure SPC as a representative of the Public Participation Network.

The Minutes of the meeting of 30 May 2022 were proposed by Cllr. Jim Ryan and seconded by Cllr. Declan Burgess. There were no matters arising.

2. Clonmel Emergency Flood Response Plan

Mr. Kieran Malone gave a presentation updating the meeting on the Clonmel Emergency Flood Response Plan. The items covered in the presentation included: historical flooding of Clonmel Town, vulnerable locations, response agencies, flood defence elements, flood emergency response plan, flood prediction and monitoring, Storm Ophelia, flood emergency level thresholds, plan implementation, levels of response, roles and functions of agencies, update on recent exercise in Hydra suite in Clonmel.

Cllr. Michael O'Meara thanked Mr. Malone for his comprehensive presentation. Cllr. O'Meara noted how this was a success story and seems to work very well.

Mr. Marcus O'Connor noted how the Clonmel Scheme was seen by the OPW as one of the best in the country and the OPW point to this scheme as to how it can be done.

3. Draft Review of Public Lighting Policy

Mr. Michael Tierney presented the draft review of the Public Lighting Policy. Focus was on changes from the 2018 policy. Following areas were commented on:

- Cost of lights in 2021 and 2022
- Policy objectives
- Policy strategies – point c is new to include PLEEP project
- Data/Asset management
- Smart lighting
- Description of PLEEP project – new item on draft policy
- Prioritisation of annual funding
- Practical applications of policy
- Design standards
- Discussed Kelvin scale of colour for lighting – 2,700K to 3,000K is the range to use as per recent research, particularly for Special Areas of Conservation. 3,000K is appropriate in towns.
- Discussion on dimming profiles, what they do and where you use dimming.

Cllr. Michael O'Meara thanked Mr. Michael Tierney for his presentation of the draft policy. Mr. Liam Brett commented on the task of reviewing the policy as requested at last meeting, issues around energy costs, and the need to reduce the Council's carbon footprint. It was noted that a balance needs to be found between finding savings and providing lighting. Mr. Brett noted that 38% of the Council's energy use is public lighting but in terms of electricity use public lighting accounts for 65% of the usage.

Cllr. Declan Burgess initially wished Cllr. O'Meara well in his new role as Chair of the SPC and thanked Cllr. Jim Ryan for his tenure as Chair. He also welcomed Mr. Liam Browne (PPN) to the SPC.

Cllr. Burgess thanked Mr. Tierney for his review of the policy and the importance of such a review. Cllr. Burgess acknowledged improvements seen in public lighting particularly in Cashel area. Cllr. Burgess welcomed several aspects of the draft review including priority of funding, allocations to Municipal Districts and section on Active Travel. Under point 6 'Prioritisation of annual funding' he requested that 60kph areas be added here in line with point 9, and this was agreed. He further commented on the draft policy relating to Heritage Sites, and asked if some allowance should be made for those. Cllr. Burgess also noted the need for a speed limit review and that it would complement the lighting policy.

Cllr. Jim Ryan wished Cllr. Michael O'Meara well in his new role and thanked Mr. Tierney on his work as Public Lighting Engineer and the tremendous work done in

Thurles MD and throughout the county. Cllr. Ryan agreed with the vast majority of points in the review report. He had an issue with the lighting policy outside 50kph zones in rural areas, particularly outside schools, community halls, businesses, churches and junctions. Cllr. Ryan stated the policy doesn't allow for lighting in these areas, and he will not support a policy that does not include this. Cllr. Ryan stated that unless a clause is added for these exceptional issues he could not support the policy. Cllr. Ryan proposed that a condition be added so that lighting could be provided in area outside the 60kph zone.

Mr Liam Browne asked if the Council had given any consideration to using solar powered lighting, and what is the procedure for people to report outages of public lighting, also the % of faults.

Mr. Liam Brett addressed several of the points raised above. Areas within 50kph zones are no. 1 priority and this includes junctions, 60kph areas were not mentioned in previous policy. Road safety is key, and funding, approval and segregation are key. Regarding heritage lights, the Council is under pressure from many groups who wish to hand over costs/maintenance of lighting at heritage sites. A priority hierarchy in policy is key. Mr. Brett commented that solar power is something the Council is looking at, particularly for certain active travel projects. However, it should be noted that the technology isn't there yet with regards to capacity to take a traditional light through the night. The target for lighting outages is 1% and the Council is meeting this. Constant pressure is applied to Contractors to meet this target. Reporting of outages is via the Council website or by contacting the customer service desk directly. It should be noted that the Council's maintenance contractor does drive-bys to capture outages.

Mr. Tierney commented on having met suppliers of solar lighting. While they work at a certain time of the year they would not be good during winter and would need a power backup. Mr. Tierney described current maintenance supply issues and upgrades to LED should minimise this.

Cllr. Ryan noted that pole numbers are missing from some poles in existing stock and asked that the contractors be contacted on this, Mr. Tierney undertook to attend to this. On policy within the 80kph zone, he asked if county council funding could be included in addition to active travel funding as AT funding may not always be available. This change would see him favour the policy as presented.

Director of Services, Marcus O'Connor set the context for this policy by advising the members that we are in a climate emergency, our carbon footprint and reduction of emissions is important. He advised that there cannot be public lighting on demand. The Council is replacing all public lighting with LEDs at cost of €7m, this could be undone by putting in more public lighting and ignoring climate challenges. The Council must limit lights to areas where they are most needed.

Regarding the council providing and paying for public lighting at heritage sites, he noted that it is impossible to control that, and it was stopped a number of years ago for that reason. Mr. O'Connor stated the Council is lucky to have a contract in place for lighting costs and the recent large increases have not been passed onto us yet. However, in early 2024 we will see these costs. If significant numbers of additional lights are installed, the Council will run up huge bills which we cannot meet.

Key areas identified at the last meeting by members have been acknowledged in the new draft policy, however there are limited resources. In response to Cllr. Burgess, it was agreed that the policy be adjusted for 60kph junctions.

Mr. O'Connor advised that the speed limit review is delayed by national proposals around 30kph in certain urban zones. He noted that the review is not likely to result in many changes due to national guidelines. National proposals should be ready by year end and the members will be updated further in due course.

Cllr. Ryan in responding to Mr. O'Connor stated that in Thurles MD he is only aware of four areas without public lighting outside speed zones. There are areas of employment and sports facilities not covered under the draft policy, and he asked if the District GMA funding could be used. Mr. O'Connor responded that four areas by forty councillors, across a range of locations, would open the floodgates regarding public lighting and be difficult to control. He advised that GMA funding cannot be used for projects that have an ongoing maintenance cost.

Mr. Liam Browne stated that he agreed with most of what Mr. O'Connor said but was sympathetic to Cllr. Ryan's comments. Mr. Browne then queried current policy on housing developments and taking the public lighting in charge. Cllr. Micheál Anglim stated he agreed with Mr. O'Connor and suggested a middle ground whereby each MD would be limited to four or five additional locations.

Mr. O'Connor responded to Mr. Browne advising that the Council was taking housing developments in charge and upgrading the lighting where necessary. As part of this policy new housing estates would be required to have LED lighting in place.

Mr. O'Connor stated the draft policy did try to acknowledge and recognise the issues raised by members at the last meeting and referred to points 10 and 11 of the prioritisation of annual funding section of the draft policy with the annual allocation to Municipal Districts different from the last policy.

Cllr. Jim Ryan highlighted the issue of the Mill Road in Thurles and commercial property outside the 80kph, it needed lights and footpaths installed out to it. Cllr. Ryan stated he would not be supporting the policy.

Mr. Liam Brett responded that the location in Mill Road is in line with policy, the premises is within 50kph. Mr. Brett advised that lights/footpath could go in, but landowners agreements need to be put in place.

Mr. Marcus O'Connor stated that each case is different and not as easy as it may seem, but the policy would cover them. Point 11 should help Municipal Districts and they can sit down on an annual basis and decide on their priority areas.

Chairperson, Cllr. O'Meara noted that the draft policy had been thoroughly discussed by the Committee and advised that the next step is to present the draft policy to the Plenary Council meeting in December for their consideration.

5. Any Other Business

No further business was identified.

6. To note date of next meeting

Monday, 5 December 2022, at 11.00am.

It was discussed and agreed that the next meeting be in person in Thurles, venue to be confirmed.

Signed: _____

Cllr. Michael O'Meara
Cathaoirleach