



Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

Cork County Council

Minutes of Proceedings at Meeting of Cork County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Cork and by Microsoft Teams on Monday 22nd July 2024.

I LATHAIR

Comhairleoir Mairtín O’Cochláin, Leas Mhéara Chontae

Comhairleoiri: Uí Bhambaire, Ó Colmáin, Ó Coileáin S, Uí Chochláin G, Ó Foghlú, Uí Shúilleabháin M, Ó Coileáin, D, Ní Chróinín, Ó hArrahtáin, Ó Murchú OG, Uí Bhuachalla A, Daltún Ó Súilleabháin, Ní Charthaigh U, Mac Craith, De Faoite, Barra, Ó Finn, Ní Cheallacháin, Rasmussen, Sheppard, Mac Coitir, Mac Carthaigh N, Uí Bhriain, Ó Donnchú, Ó Floinn, Ó Dubhghaill, Ó Muineacháin B, Ní Mhurchú T, Ó Sé SP, Críod, Ó Luanaigh, Ó Luasa, Uí Loinsigh, Ní Mhuineacháin G, Ó Haodha, Ó Madaoin, Ó Murchú G, Ó Sé T, Ní Heachthigheirn, Ó Buachalla S, Cocking, Ó Héighheartaigh, Léineacháin Uí Foghlú, Ó Maolchathaigh, Mac Uaid, Ní Cheallaigh, Ó Donnabháin, Ó Seasnáin, Towse.

PRESENT

Councillor Martin Coughlan, Deputy County Mayor, presided.

Councillor: Bambury, Coleman, Collins J, Coughlan G, Foley, O’Sullivan M, Collins D, Cronin, Harrington, Murphy PG, Buckley A, Dalton O’Sullivan, McCarthy U, McGrath, White, Barry, Finn, O’Callaghan, Rasmussen, Sheppard, Cotter, McCarthy N, O’Brien, O’Donoghue, O’Flynn, Doyle, Moynihan B, Murphy T, O’Shea JP, Creed, Looney, Lucey, Lynch, Moynihan G, Hayes, Madden, Murphy G, O’Shea T, Ahern, Buckley J, Cocking, Hegarty, Linehan Foley, Mulcahy, Quaide, Kelly, O’Donovan, Sexton, Towse.

Chief Executive, Senior Executive Officer Corporate Services.

[a] CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

1/7-2

*Proposed by Cllr. Seamus McGrath
Seconded by Cllr. John Paul O’Shea*

RESOLVED:

“That the minutes of the Meeting held on 8th July 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Deputy Mayor.”

Cllr Liam Quaide requested that it be noted that he disclosed his employment with the HSE and stated that this did not give rise to any conflict of interest in relation to his appointment to the Regional HSE Forum on 21st June 2024.

[b] VOTES OF SYMPATHY

2/7-2

TO: Councillor Ann Bambury on the passing of her Aunt Fiona Collins.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

To discuss the recent discharge into the River Bandon.

Proposed by Councillor Noel O'Donovan

Seconded by Councillor John Paul O'Shea

Members agreed to discuss this matter at 1 pm.

[c] STATUTORY BUSINESS

3. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES:

3/7-2

Members agreed that there were no groups to be put in place for committees.

Appointment of 2 Members to Southern Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force.

Position 1: Councillor Seamus McGrath proposed Councillor Deirdre O'Brien for a position on the Southern Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force, seconded by Councillor Gearóid Murphy.

The Senior Executive Officer confirmed Position 1 is filled by Councillor Deirdre O'Brien.

Position 2: Councillor John Paul O'Shea proposed Councillor Rory Cocking for a position on the Southern Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force, seconded by Councillor Michael Hegarty.

The Senior Executive Officer confirmed Position 2 is filled by Councillor Rory Cocking.

Appointment of 1 Member to Crawford Art Gallery.

Position 1: Councillor Seamus McGrath proposed Councillor Bernard Moynihan for a position on the Crawford Art Gallery, seconded by Councillor Frank O'Flynn.

The Senior Executive Officer confirmed the position is to be filled by Councillor Bernard Moynihan.

Appointment of 7 Members to the Cork Education Training Board.

Position 1: Councillor John Paul O'Shea proposed Councillor Úna McCarthy for a position on the Cork Education Training Board, seconded by Councillor Michael Hegarty.

The Senior Executive Officer deemed Councillor Úna McCarthy elected to the Cork Education Training Board.

Position 2: Councillor John Paul O'Shea proposed Councillor Noel McCarthy for a position on the Cork Education Training Board, seconded by Councillor Michael Hegarty.

The Senior Executive Officer deemed Councillor Noel McCarthy elected to the Cork Education Training Board.

Position 3: Councillor Seamus McGrath proposed Councillor Patrick Gerard Murphy for a position on the Cork Education Training Board, seconded by Councillor Deirdre Kelly

The Senior Executive Officer deemed Councillor Patrick Gerard Murphy elected to the Cork Education Training Board.

Position 4: Councillor Seamus McGrath proposed Councillor Patrick Mulcahy for a position on the Cork Education Training Board, seconded by Councillor Deirdre Kelly

The Senior Executive Officer deemed Councillor Patrick Mulcahy elected to the Cork Education Training Board.

Position 5: Councillor Seamus McGrath proposed Councillor Gillian Coughlan for a position on the Cork Education Training Board, seconded by Councillor Deirdre Kelly

The Senior Executive Officer deemed Councillor Gillian Coughlan elected to the Cork Education Training Board.

Position 6: Councillor Alan Coleman proposed Councillor Eoghan Kenny for a position on the Cork Education Training Board, seconded by Councillor Mary Linehan Foley.

The Senior Executive Officer deemed Councillor Eoghan Kenny elected to the Cork Education Training Board.

Position 7: Councillor Alan Coleman proposed Councillor Finbarr Harrington for a position on the Cork Education Training Board, seconded by Councillor Mary Linehan Foley.

The Senior Executive Officer deemed Councillor Finbarr Harrington elected to the Cork Education Training Board.

Appointment of 8 Members to the Historic Monuments Advisory Committee.

Position 1: Councillor Seamus McGrath proposed Councillor Michael Looney for a position on the Historic Monuments Advisory Committee, seconded by Councillor Deirdre Kelly

The Senior Executive Officer confirmed Position 1 is filled by Councillor Michael Looney.

Position 2: Councillor Seamus McGrath proposed Councillor Deirdre O'Brien for a position on the Historic Monuments Advisory Committee, seconded by Councillor Deirdre Kelly

The Senior Executive Officer confirmed Position 2 is filled by Councillor Deirdre O'Brien.

Position 3: Councillor Seamus McGrath proposed Councillor Audrey Buckley for a position on the Historic Monuments Advisory Committee, seconded by Councillor Deirdre Kelly

The Senior Executive Officer confirmed Position 3 is filled by Councillor Audrey Buckley.

Position 4: Councillor John Paul O'Shea proposed Councillor Ted Lucey for a position on the Historic Monuments Advisory Committee, seconded by Councillor Michael Hegarty.

The Senior Executive Officer confirmed Position 4 is filled by Councillor Ted Lucey.

Position 5: Councillor John Paul O'Shea proposed Councillor Anthony Barry for a position on the Historic Monuments Advisory Committee, seconded by Councillor Michael Hegarty.

The Senior Executive Officer confirmed Position 5 is filled by Councillor Anthony Barry.

Position 6: Councillor John Paul O'Shea proposed Councillor Liam Quaide for a position on the Historic Monuments Advisory Committee, seconded by Councillor Michael Hegarty.

The Senior Executive Officer confirmed Position 6 is filled by Councillor Liam Quaide.

Position 7: Councillor Alan Coleman proposed Councillor William O’Leary for a position on the Historic Monuments Advisory Committee, seconded by Councillor Finbarr Harrington.

The Senior Executive Officer confirmed Position 7 is filled by Councillor William O’Leary.

Position 8: Councillor Alan Coleman proposed Councillor Alan Coleman for a position on the Historic Monuments Advisory Committee, seconded by Councillor Mary Linehan Foley.

The Senior Executive Officer confirmed Position 8 is filled by Councillor Alan Coleman.

4. DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY
SECTION 183 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001:

4/7-2

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF WEST CORK:

Disposal of land at Ardgroom, Bantry, Co. Cork

In accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, the disposal of the property as shown hereunder shall be carried out in accordance with the terms specified in the notice issued to members dated 12th July 2024.

Situation: Right of way over half road at Barrakilla, Ardgroom, Bantry, Co. Cork.

Area: Right of way measuring 61m x c. 2.6m wide.

From Whom acquired: Record not available. Land acquired by Cork County Council in 1997.

Consideration: €1.00

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF COBH:

Disposal of land at Woodbrae, Glanmire Co. Cork.

In accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, the disposal of the property as shown hereunder shall be carried out in accordance with the terms specified in the notice issued to members dated 12th July 2024.

Situation: Woodbrae, The Hermitage, Glanmire, Co. Cork

Area: Leasehold area as per Folio CK17577L plus Extra bit of land measuring 0.006 hectares (as per map)

From Whom Acquired: Unknown – predated Council records.

Consideration: €750 plus €500 towards the Councils Legal/Admin Costs

[e] REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

COBH MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

5 (a)/7-2

“That this Council receive a report in relation to the timeline for the development of the strategy for electric vehicle charging infrastructure for Cork County.”

Cllr. Cathal Rasmussen proposed, seconded by Cllr. Sheila O’Callaghan

Members noted the response from Niall Healy, Director of Services, Roads & Transportation, as follows:

Response:

The preparation of EV charging strategies is being led by Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland (ZEVI) in partnership with local authorities across the country.

ZEVI was launched by the Minister for Transport in July 2022. Its purpose is to lead on Ireland's transition to zero emission vehicles. To this end, it has prepared a draft National and Regional EV Charging Strategy which is currently open to public consultation. As a follow on, ZEVI is engaging with local authorities across the country to prepare and implement local strategies. This process has commenced recently. Cork County Council is the lead authority for the Cork County and Kerry region and, with the support and guidance of ZEVI, is one of the first movers in the country in commencing work on the development of a Regional and Local EV Charging Network Plan. A tender competition has been initiated for the appointment of suitably qualified consultants to prepare the strategy for the Cork County and Kerry region. The closing date for receipt of tenders is 26th July 2024. It is expected that the development of the strategy will take circa 9 months to prepare. The strategy, once prepared, will set out the requirements for EV chargers across Cork County & Kerry.

It is important to note that the local authority's role in the implementation of any such strategy is to plan, coordinate and facilitate the rollout of the EV charging infrastructure. Local authorities will not be involved in installing, maintaining, or operating the charging infrastructure; rather, this will be managed and delivered by Charge Point Operator(s) (CPOs) who will in time be selected by the local authority to undertake the role. It is understood that ZEVI is currently developing a suite of guidance documents and supports in this regard.

The preparation of the strategy is the first phase of the process. This will identify the hierarchy of needs and general locations. The following phases will include infrastructure planning, business model and proposed partnering approach, procurement, and implementation. These phases will be guided by ZEVI at a national level. There is no timeline for same at this point.

It is understood that additional resources will be made available to local authorities to assist in this significant body of additional work as the project progresses.

During this discussion, the members made the following points:

- There are concerns about the length of time taken to develop this.
- There is no point in purchasing an EV if there are no charging stations available.
- That lack of infrastructure is a countywide issue.
- What would the cost implications be for developing this strategy?
- There has been an alarming decrease in the sale of EVs.

Chief Executive, Moira Murrell responded as follows:

- This is a national rollout.
- It is broken down into regional strategies.
- Cork County Councils role is to coordinate the roll but Local Authorities are not the provider.

COBH MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

“That this Council call for conditions taking account of proper speed control measures to be considered for all planning applications for housing estates.”

Members noted the response from Pádraig Barrett, Director of Services, Planning & Development, as follows:

Response:

The approach from the Planning and Development Department is to ensure that proposed residential developments incorporate traffic calming measures as a central part of their design and layout in the first instance. These measures can therefore form an integral part of the plans and particulars of a planning application and assist in mitigating against potential traffic issues. Planning conditions that take account of proper speed control measures are being considered and will continue to be considered for all planning applications for housing estates. Traffic speed mitigation measures developed through a design approach and consistent with the County Development Plan is an effective tool.

It is important to note that the attachment of conditions to a recommendation to grant permission is one of the final stages in the planning application process. Opportunities, at earlier stages in the processing of an application, are used to minimise the volume of conditions generally. Pre-application consultation is a useful opportunity to highlight the type of information required by the planning authority to fully consider and make a determination on a specific development proposal, particularly in relation to traffic calming measures. In this way, the design solution for traffic calming measures can be incorporated at the earliest stage and is absorbed as a fundamental component of the plans and particulars of a planning application. If issues still arise at planning application stage, a further information request may issue and seek additional clarification on traffic calming proposals.

If permission is granted, standard planning conditions can be used to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with submitted plans and particulars of a planning application. When required, bespoke planning conditions are used to reinforce certain aspects of the proposals or to slightly alter aspects to achieve a better outcome. Careful consideration is required to ensure that any bespoke traffic calming conditions are properly adapted to the specific development proposal. These conditions can therefore vary and must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The assessment of the proposed development against the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan 2022 as well as the multi-disciplinary approach to planning application assessments in Cork County Council, help ensure that traffic calming measures are developed as a central part of residential development design and layout. These aspects and the general approach are highlighted below.

Planning Policy and Development Management

When a planning application is made, the Planning Authority assesses the proposed residential scheme against the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan 2022. The proposed development must comply and be in accordance with these policies and objectives if the application is to be successful.

Seven key principles of placemaking are established in the Development Plan. This includes ‘Ease of Movement’ which seeks the following local outcome:

“Streets and routes should be direct, overlooked, barrier-free and measures used to slow traffic down to encourage pedestrian and cycling safety. Use of DMURS to apply at all settlement levels.”

The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) is promoted strongly in the Development Plan. DMURS reinforces the place function of our streets together with a minimal signage approach on local streets to allow self-regulation and results in lower speeds. DMURS sets out an integrated approach to street design in urban areas to balance user needs and create connected physical, social and transport networks that promote sustainable alternatives to car journeys. The Development Plan requires all new developments to comply with latest DMURS standards.

Where traffic movements associated with a development proposal have the potential to have a material impact on the safety and free flow of traffic on a National or Regional Route, the County Development Plan will require the submission of a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA), Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and a Road Safety Audit to be prepared in accordance with the Traffic Management Guidelines Manual 2003 issued by the Department of Transport and the Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines published by the TII in 2014. Objective TM 12-8 (Traffic/Mobility Management and Road Safety) refers:

County Development Plan Objective TM 12-8: Traffic/Mobility Management and Road Safety	
a)	Where traffic movements associated with a development proposal have the potential to have a material impact on the safety and free flow of traffic on National, Regional or other Local Routes, the submission of a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and Road Safety Audit will be required as part of the proposal. Where a Local Transport Plan exists, it will inform any TTA.
b)	Support demand management measures to reduce car travel and promote best practice mobility management and travel planning via sustainable transport modes.
c)	For developments of 50 employees or more, residential developments over 100 units, all education facilities, community facilities, health facilities, as well as major extensions to existing such uses developers will be required to prepare Mobility Management Plans (travel plans), with a strong emphasis on sustainable travel modes consistent with published NTA guidance to promote safe, attractive and convenient, alternative sustainable modes of transport as part of the proposal. Where a Local Transport Plan exists, it will inform any Mobility Management Plan.
d)	Ensure that all new vehicular accesses are designed to appropriate standards of visibility to ensure the safety of other road users.
e)	Improve the standards and safety of public roads and to protect the investment of public resources in the provision, improvement and maintenance of the public road network.
f)	Promote road safety measures throughout the County, including traffic calming, road signage and parking.
g)	Co-ordinate proposed zoning designations and/or access strategies in settlement plans with speed limits on national roads.

Multi-disciplinary Assessment

The assessment of the planning application is referred to various sections of the Council. This includes Estate Engineers, Area Engineers, and the Sustainable Travel Unit (STU). Their assessment of the development considers proper speed control measures, the principles of DMURS and the policies and objective of the County Development Plan. Planners and Engineers typically engage initially with applicants/developers at pre-planning consultation stage, where the applicant is advised of the need for a TIA and/or TTA to ensure that the traffic generated by large residential housing schemes can be catered by the adjoining road network.

In relation to the proposed development itself, the applicant is advised of the need to include detailed proposals for traffic calming measures for the development (including details of junction layout - signing and lining) in accordance with the guidance given in Section 4 of Cork County Council's "Making Places: a design guide for residential estate development".

For larger residential developments, the Planning Authority may request a Road Safety Audit to assess the proposed layout for any potential safety issues, with particular attention being given to the needs of vulnerable road users. The applicant may also be advised to consult with the TII Standard DN-GEO-03084 'The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads' describes the requirements that shall be implemented on National Roads on the approaches to towns and villages in terms of the provision of traffic calming measures and pedestrian crossings.

Conclusion

Planning conditions that take account of proper speed control measures are being considered and will continue to be considered for all planning applications for housing estates. The approach of ensuring that proposed residential developments incorporates traffic calming measures as a central part of their design and layout continues to be an effective way of achieving a positive outcome. The Planning Authority will continue to advocate for early engagement with developers at pre-planning stage to ensure traffic calming measures are a key consideration in design and layout.

[f] REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF OFFICERS TUAIRISCÍ AGUS MOLTAÍ Ó OIFIGH

DRAFT STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE (SPC) SCHEME

6/7-2

*Proposed by Cllr. John Paul O'Shea
Seconded by Cllr. Seamus McGrath*

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO COUNTY OF CORK ROADS TRAFFIC SPECIAL SPEED LIMIT BYE-LAWS FOR NATIONAL AND REGIONAL & LOCAL ROADS TO REFLECT THE FOLLOWING 3 NO. ITEMS:

7/7-2

2 no. Speed Limit appeals

- R600 at Gallanes, Clonakilty – a change in the speed limit from 60km/h to 50km/h
- R591 at Durrus Village (from village to beyond GAA Grounds) – a change in the speed limit from 50km/h to 60km/h

*Proposed by Cllr. Patrick Gerard Murphy
Seconded by Cllr. Daniel Sexton*

Road reclassification due to Baile Bhuirne to Macroom Bypass

- The change to 100kph from the default urban (50kph) speed limit on that section of the new N22 Baile Bhuirne to Macroom Bypass that passes through the old UDC boundary
- The reclassification of the old N22 route to Regional Road status
- The reassignment of any special speed limit bye-laws on the old N22 route to the non-national set of bye-laws

*Proposed by Cllr. Michael Creed
Seconded by Cllr. Ted Lucey*

**SCÉIM DEONTAIS IMEACHTAÍ AGUS TIONSCNAIMH GAEILGE 2024
IRISH LANGUAGE EVENTS & INITIATIVES GRANT SCHEME 2024**

8/7-2

*Proposed by Cllr. Gillian Coughlan
Seconded by Cllr. Seamus McGrath*

[e] CORRESPONDENCE FROM GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

9/7-2

Correspondence received 12/07/2024 from the Minister of Transport in response to the Council's letter dated 23/02/2024 in relation to bus services in Cork.

During this discussion, the members made the following points:

- Members welcomed the response.
- Many issues were still occurring but members in Carrigaline will be meeting Bus Éireann to discuss issues.
- The upgrade to the app is welcomed.
- The recruitment drive should result in more reliable services.

10/7-2

Correspondence received 15/07/2024 from the Minister of Transport in relation to roads funding.

Members noted the correspondence.

[h] NOTICES OF MOTION

PROVISION OF CCTV

11/7-2

Cllr. Ian Doyle proposed, seconded by Cllr. Sinead Sheppard

“In light of the Recording Devices act going through the Dail for legislation that Cork County Council would look again at the provision of CCTV in our County Towns and Villages.”

Members noted the response from Nicola Radley, Director of Services, Corporate Services, as follows:

Response:

The Garda Síochána (Recording Devices) Act 2023 was enacted and signed into law by the President on the 5th of December 2023. Section 6 of this Act will repeal the current authorisation process for community CCTV provided for by section 38 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005 and will revoke the related statutory instrument S.I. 289 of 2006. (Garda Síochána (CCTV) Order, 2006).

Whilst the legislation has been enacted and a commencement order for certain sections of the Act has been signed by the Minister, the sections governing the authorisation of installation and operation of

CCTV have not yet commenced, and won't commence until after the operational code of practice has been agreed.

When the relevant sections of the Act are commenced, any new community CCTV schemes will fall under the provisions of the Recording Devices Act 2023. Section 7 of the 2023 Act provides for a transition period of 4 years within which the authorisation of existing community CCTV schemes under section 38 of the 2005 Act remains valid. After this 4 year transition period a new authorisation under section 27 of the 2023 Act will be required.

A further consideration for potential CCTV schemes are the ongoing operational and maintenance costs involved, which are considerable. The CCMA Corporate Committee have established a working group to advise on the best way forward regarding CCTV schemes and is one of the consultees that will comment on the draft code of practice before it is approved by the Minister.

During this discussion, the members made the following points:

- Has been on the agenda for many years.
- Should be a specific department with funding for CCTV.
- So many benefits to CCTV in towns.
- Local Safety Partnerships will have a lead role in this.
- Write to the Garda Commissioner to seek an update on code of practice.
- Will help curb illegal dumping and anti-social behaviour.
- Needs to be resourced and systems need to be updated.

Chief Executive, Moira Murrell responded as follows:

- Legislation is enacted, however there is a code of practice to be agreed nationally.
- There is a significant process to go through before implementing.
- It will take time to roll out.

Members agreed to write to the Garda Commissioner to seek a timeline for issuing of the code of practice.

12/7-2

BATTERY STORAGE UNITS

Cllr. John Paul O'Shea proposed, seconded by Cllr. Trish Murphy

“That Cork County Council outline its policy and any national policy that maybe available on Battery Storage Units and to the safety of same near residential areas. There is a significant increase in the number of applications for these battery storage units across the county in recent times with a lot of public concern about them”.

Members noted the response from Pádraig Barrett, Director of Services, Planning & Development, as follows:

Response:

Policy Context

From a policy context there is strong support at European, National and Local level for battery storage units with an aim to meet our energy and climate targets and become a carbon neutral economy.

European Level

The Renewable Energy Directive III is the legal framework for the development of clean energy across all sectors of the EU economy. It sets an overall renewable energy target of 42.5% by 2030.

In March 2023 the European Commission made a list of recommendations for a greater deployment of energy storage and underpinning a decarbonised and secure EU energy system (2023/C 103/01).

National Level:

The *Electricity Storage Policy Framework for Ireland* was published in July 2024 by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications. The Framework includes 10 government actions to support electricity storage systems. Energy storage is vital to enhance security of energy supply.

In terms of the role of the local/planning authority, the framework states the following:

“The local/planning authority plays a significant role in relation to electricity storage facility developments in its capacity as planning authority, building authority and fire authority. The planning authorities assess individual electricity storage planning applications with recourse to all relevant policy documentation, including regional spatial and economic strategies and development plans (which must be consistent with the National Planning Framework). Principal assessment criteria, in addition to compliance with national, regional, and local policies, will depend on the specific electricity storage project under review and the proposed location but considerations include: the most efficient use of land and infrastructure; the visual impacts of storage units as well as potential environmental/ecological risks posed by electricity storage projects in the proposed location.”

It also states that “Under Section 13 of the Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003, Fire Authorities may advise a planning authority in relation applications for planning permission for development and permission for the retention of structures, Section 34 (which relates to permission for development and for the retention of structures) of the Planning and Development Act 2000.”

The framework notes the following: “The new Planning and Development Bill (2023) is considering the designation of all electricity storage systems as integral parts of the electricity network system and therefore Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID). Electricity storage systems would therefore be treated in a similar manner to all renewable energy generation and grid infrastructure and will as Strategic Infrastructure Development require only an application to An Bord Pleanála. Further, planning permission timelines for electricity storage systems will adhere to those set out for Strategic Infrastructure Developments in the Planning and Development Bill.”

The Draft Updated National Energy & Climate Plan makes several references to supporting battery storage. It includes an objective *to support energy storage measures to better balance our variable RE supply and provide mitigation to fossil fuel import measures.*

Regional Level:

Objective RPO 222 Electricity Infrastructure of the RSES states that *It is an objective to support the development of a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity and to support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity networks and facilitate new transmission infrastructure projects that might be brought forward in the lifetime of this plan under EirGrid’s (2017) Grid Development Strategy (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process) to serve the existing and future needs of the Region and strengthen all-island energy infrastructure and interconnection capacity.*

Local level:

Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 includes the following objectives in support of energy storage.

ET 13-1 Energy

- a) *Ensure that County Cork fulfils its potential in contributing to the sustainable delivery of a diverse and secure energy supply and to harness the potential of the county to assist in meeting renewable energy targets and managing overall energy demand.*
- b) *During the life of this plan, the Planning Authority will prepare a renewable energy strategy for the county.*

ET 13-2 Renewable Energy

- a) *Support Ireland's renewable energy commitments as outlined in Government Energy and Climate Change policies by facilitating the development of renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, geothermal, hydro and bio-energy and **energy storage** at suitable locations within the county where such development has satisfactorily demonstrated that it will not have adverse impacts on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or amenities.*

ET 13-3 Hybrid energy Systems

Support and facilitate proposals for hybrid energy systems and /or co-location of renewable energy where applicable where such development has satisfactorily demonstrated that it will not have adverse impacts on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity, or amenities.

Cork County Climate Action Plan 2024 includes the following:

Objective 4.8.1.1. Support the development of renewable energy infrastructure.

4.8.1.1.2 Promote renewable energy generation, storage, and distribution infrastructure in accordance with the CDP within the county, whilst promoting the need to consider environmental protection requirements at the outset of and during such projects.

Energy Storage Planning Applications

All applications are assessed on their merits, assessed against the land use zoning policies of the Plan, the Core Strategy and wider Climate change and Energy policies of the Plan. Key considerations include landscape and visual impact, include site selection and justification, access, residential amenity, surface water management/flood risk assessment, built heritage and archaeology and impact on any SEVESO sites.

Applications for battery storage tend to be associated with renewable energy developments such as wind and solar and are located in close proximity to these developments in order to store the excess energy created.

Since the adoption of the County Development Plan in April 2022, there have been two planning applications for battery storage granted. In addition, there has been one extension of duration and two

applications to amend existing permissions granted (one has been appealed to ABP). The EOD and applications to amend related to permissions which were granted prior to the adoption of the CDP.

Planning applications for electricity storage are assessed in the context of the policies of the National Planning Framework, the RSES, the CDP, relevant guidance and in accordance with normal proper planning and sustainable development considerations. All planning applications of this nature will be referred to the Environment Directorate for review and report both in the context of the impact of the facility on the broad range of environmental media and also by the Fire Services Department in the context of fire risk. The Environment Directorate shall have regard to established national and international standards and risk assessment methodologies in making recommendations on the granting of conditional permission or refusal of the application.

During this discussion, the members made the following points:

- This is a new phenomenon.
- More guidance is needed.
- People are worried about the proximity of these units to urban areas.
- There is a fear of fire or explosion among people.
- Safety is of paramount importance.
- Motion referred to environment and planning SPCs to produce a policy document.

Chief Executive, Moira Murrell responded as follows:

- The Executive will work with the Members through the relevant SPCs.
- Any policy produced will need to align with national policy.

13/7-2

VERGE & HEDGE CUTTING

Cllr. Finbarr Harrington proposed, seconded by Cllr. Peter O'Donoghue

“That this council would as a matter of urgency request the department of housing, local government, and heritage, to review and amend its policy around the prohibited period for verge cutting along all public roads to read that “there is no prohibited period for verge cutting on all public roads”. I would also ask that this matter be referred to the councils’ roads SPC and that all stakeholders be invited to a consultation on implementing a work plan to make safe our road network.”

Members noted the response from Niall Healy, Director of Services, Roads & Transportation, as follows:

Response:

Cork County Council is committed to ensuring that roadside verges and boundaries are maintained in a manner which ensures that roads are safe for all road users, and which provides for the protection and enhancement of the biodiversity value of roadside boundaries.

Cork County Council Roads and Transportation Directorate has developed a policy on Roadside Hedgerow and Verge Maintenance which was adopted in March 2022, this policy applies to public roads under the remit of the Roads Directorate. A copy of the policy is attached.

The Roads and Transportation Directorate are happy to refer the matter to the Roads & Transportation SPC for information and consideration.

During this discussion, the members made the following points:

- Vegetation grows at an alarming rate at this time of the year.
- Growth needs to be managed better.
- Roads are narrowing significantly.
- Funding and resources are causing issues.
- Farmers are worrying about sanctions if they cut hedges/ditches etc.
- Noxious weeds are causing issues.
- The hedge cutting scheme in West Cork MD is oversubscribed every year.
- Majority of landowners cut their own hedges.
- People are struggling to see road signs due to overgrowth.

Other members made the following points:

- There is a biodiversity crisis.
- There is already a provision in the act to allow cutting if there are road safety issues.
- The wildlife act is a weak protector of wildlife.
- Important to keep the natural beauty of our rural areas.

Members agreed to amend the motion as follows and write to the Minister:

Proposed by Cllr. Alan Coleman

Seconded by Cllr. Mary Linehan Foley

“That this council would as a matter of urgency request the department of housing, local government and heritage, to review its application of the wildlife act with regards to verge/hedge cutting and maintenance of footpaths”.

14/7-2

REDUCTION OF VAT RATE

Cllr. Marie O’Sullivan proposed, seconded by Cllr. Jack White.

“That this council would again write to the Minister of Finance asking him to review again the possibility of the reduction in VAT from 13.5 % to 9% in the budget for food businesses and other businesses such as hairdressers, beauticians etc as we are seeing many closures within these smaller SMEs”.

During this discussion, the members made the following points:

- SMEs are under pressure due to the higher VAT rate.
- There has been a fall in tourism numbers this year.
- Many businesses are going into the mobile business trade.
- Local businesses need to be listened to.
- Businesses have been thankful for the ICOB grant.
- The cost of doing business is increasing and this needs to be addressed.

Members agreed to write to the Minister to request the reduction in VAT to 9%.

[k] VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS

15/7-2

TO: Noel O’Donovan on winning the U80 Cows section of the National Herds competition.

TO: Cork Senior Hurlers on reaching the All-Ireland Final.

TO: Glanworth Ladies Football Club on their 40th Anniversary.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

16/7-2

DUNMANWAY WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT.

To discuss the recent issues with the Dunmanway wastewater treatment plant.

During this discussion the Members made the following points:

- It was shocking to see the recent pollution.
- The Dunmanway wastewater treatment plant was no longer conforming to water quality standards.
- The plant needs a major upgrade.
- There are tankers of waste from other areas being delivered to the Dunmanway plant which is unacceptable.
- People are frustrated with the lack of action from Uisce Éireann.
- Uisce Éireann have been shirking their responsibilities.
- This is a countywide issue.
- Our watercourses need to be managed better.
- Major investment is needed from Uisce Éireann throughout the county.
- An urgent meeting is needed between the action group and Uisce Éireann.
- More dialogue is needed between Uisce Éireann and elected members.

Chief Executive, Moira Murrell responded as follows:

- Uisce Éireann are open to meeting Council to discuss issues.
- Need to align needs in CDP with Uisce Éireann's plans.

Divisional Manager, Michael Lynch responded as follows:

- Dunmanway is on a programme of works for Uisce Éireann.
- The discharge into the River Bandon is a matter for Uisce Éireann to follow up on.

Members agreed to write to the Minister and Uisce Éireann to highlight the ongoing issues and request an urgent meeting with Uisce Éireann.

[1] ANY OTHER BUSINESS

CLIMATE ISSUES

Councillor Peter O'Donoghue stated that it is important that as a Council we are careful of over analysing climate issues when making decisions.

~ **THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING** ~

