'Day in the life of a Municipal District Engineer'

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Session 3   : A day in the life of a Municipal District Engineer

Stats

- 34k population

- 2 large Towns Bandon and Kinsale

- 17 Villages

- Outdoor Staff – 43

- Indoor staff – 10

- 1450km of roads

- Tourist area/Wild Atlantic Way

- 16 Beaches

- Graveyards

- Playgrounds/Amenity walks

Dunworley Beach and Wild Atlantic Way

1. Access for emergency services
2. H&S on slip/handrail
3. Erosion of cliff
4. Overnight parking
5. Cliff edge protection
6. Access to picnic benches
7. Road surface

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Stakeholder Landscape: Managing Multiple Inputs

You're accountable to a wide range of individuals and groups, including:

Internal and political
- Director
- Senior Engineer
- Senior Planner
- Staff Relations
- Health & Safety
- Councillors
- TD's

Public-Facing Interfaces
Public queries via:
- Email
- CRM system
- Public counter
- Social media

Community & Voluntary Sector
- BEAG
- Bandon Connect
- Tidy Towns
- Community Councils
- Local schools
- Churches

Over 49 public groups regularly interact with our office – all logged in the **contacts public folder**.

"A day in the life"

- **Typical workday** = approx. **420 minutes** (7 hours)

- On a **busy day**, I handle:

- **90–100 tasks**, including decisions, emails, and phone calls

- That's roughly **one task every 4 minutes**

Inbox Management

- Engineer had 1200 unread emails??

- With Outlook training and discipline, now consistently hit inbox zero

The 4 D'S of Email Management
1. **Delete**- remove anything irrelevant
2. **Do it now**- if it takes <5 minutes
3. **Delegate it**- assign it to someone else
4. **Decide when**- schedule time for it later

THE 4 D'S OF EMAIL

DELETE, DELEGATE, DEFER, DO

- Start your day by opening Outlook directly into your Calendar:
- Focus first on what's scheduled for **today**.
- **Avoid** checking emails first thing:
- Wait until **after** completing your first 1–2 key tasks (around 11am).
- Then apply the "4 D's of Email Management".

Empowering Staff Through Upskilling

- **Invest in Front-of-House Staff**:
Train your front-facing team to handle the majority of queries—this reduces pressure on engineers and speeds up resolutions.
- **Team Structure**:
  - 9 other indoor staff fully engaged
  - Front-of-house can manage ~99% of incoming issues
- **Promote Confidence and Clarity**:
  - Encourage staff: "If unsure, come and talk to me."
  - Support a culture of learning and open communication

Trust and Accountability:
- Once trained, **trust staff to make decisions**.
- Only escalate if something **may go wrong** or **has gone wrong**.

Learning Culture:
- Reflect on mistakes: *What did we learn?*
- Ask: *What would we do differently next time?*

You don't need to know everything your team is handling
— just be there when it matters most.

Leadership & Teamwork

Key Mindsets to Remember:
- "You are the critical path" – others rely on your direction.
- "Don't let others hand you their monkeys" – Develop staff to resolve their own technical issues.

Management Style:
- Manage by **exception** – trust the team, and step in only when truly needed.

Expanding my Team:
- Rely on **Councillors** to help secure agreement/drive local support.

Public as Partners:
- Public involvement **expands** the team and builds trust.
- → Engaging communities led to ongoing collaboration across projects.

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Technical issues

- **2026 folder:** open for climate adaptation, low cost safety schemes, footpath etc

- **Surface treatment:** surface dressing hot-rolled asphalt

Technical issues

- Direct labour team lay macadam and surface dress all roads

- **Innovative equipment in use:**

  - ✓ Kelly blocks

  - ✓ Minisweeper

  - ✓ Minidigger

  - ✓ Steel plates (pictured)

Road Prioritisation Strategy:
- Prioritise **towns, villages, and high-traffic routes**.
- Use RM/CIS funding for lower priority rural roads.
- Aim for **variable service levels**—focus resources where they make the biggest impact.

An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport

CCMA
Cumann Lucht Bainistíochta Contae agus Cathrach
County and City Management Association

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Smart Maintenance & Public Engagement

- **Equipment in Use**:
  - **Velocity patcher** – for fast, efficient road surface repairs
  - **Mini salter** – ideal for targeted gritting around town areas
  - Investment: Approx. €3,000
  - 2cum mini salter- live drive system

Communication & Transparency

- We provide **monthly updates to Councillors** and regularly share our work **online** to ensure visibility and accountability.
- We also **monitor social media** in real time to:
  - Spot emerging issues quickly
  - Respond proactively and maintain public trust
  - Show projects completed on socials

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THANK YOU

Join the Q&A session at Slido.com and enter 3873601 or via the QR Code. Questions must include name and associated Local Authority to be considered by the panel.