

Minutes of Roads and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee
Meeting held on 20th January 2016

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Roads & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee Meeting
held on 20th January 2016**

I LÁTHAIR:-

Baill: Cllr Michael Maher, Cathaoirleach
Cllr Joe Byrne
Cllr Des Joyce
Cllr Martina Kinane
Comh Seosamh Ó'Cualáin
Cllr James Charity
Cllr Michael Connolly
Cllr Pete Roche
Mr Byran Egan
Mr Tom Madden
Mr Michael Healy

Oifigigh: Mr Liam Gavin, Director of Services
Mr John Leahy, Senior Engineer
Mr Ciarán Wynne, A/Senior Executive Engineer
Mr Adrian Headd, A/Senior Executive Engineer
Mr Enda Mulryan, A/Senior Executive Engineer
Ms Nuala Heffernan, Administrative Officer

**1. Minutes of Roads and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee meeting 01st
December 2015.**

The minutes of the Roads Strategic Policy Committee meeting held on the 01st December 2015 were proposed by Cllr Kinane, seconded by Comh Ó Cualáin and agreed.

2. Public Lighting

Mr Mulryan circulated a comprehensive report that he had prepared on the current status of public lighting in County Galway and the proposals for ongoing improvements in the public lighting hardware and the reduction in public lighting running costs.

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He outlined the content of the report. He advised that there are an estimated 13,000 public lighting lanterns in the County and that there has been some retro-fitting of LED lanterns, with the provision of limited funding. He said that there is an ongoing struggle with maintaining public lighting in working order, as the stock is ageing. He advised that there is a new statutory requirement to test all public lights to ensure they are safe at a cost of approximately €35,000 per annum for a period of 7 years. There is an increase in the cost of maintenance of the ageing stock. He confirmed that Galway County Council is obliged, under the National Energy Efficiency Plan, to reduce its energy consumption by 33% by 2020. A significant amount of the Council's energy costs are associated with public lighting, which will have to be replaced by LED lighting to reduce the energy costs. He explained that a standardised template is being developed by the LUX committee for the creation of a public lighting inventory. A grant was received by Galway County Council to fund a review of the Council's inventory, but that the grant provided was insufficient to complete this review. He confirmed that there is an annual cost of €66 in energy costs for each additional light added to the inventory. He told the committee that the cost of providing an additional underground light is €3,919 as compared to €925 for an additional overhead light.

The committee thanked Mr Mulryan for his comprehensive report. Cllr Maher said that it raised the question of insufficient funding for public lighting which should be brought to the attention of Central Government. In response to a query from Cllr Roche, Mr Mulryan advised that the energy provided through solar power is insufficient for the purposes of public lighting. Cllr Byrne and Cllr Connolly reiterated that the cost of the operation of public lighting should be brought to the attention of the Government, with a request for an increase in funding. Cllr Connolly suggested that some lights could be decommissioned which would allow for infill lights to be provided in more appropriate areas. Comh Ó Cualáin agreed with this suggestion. He referred to a poor response time by Electric Skyline for the repair of public lighting which is out of order. Cllr Kinane also referred to the delay in response to a call for repairs of public lights. Mr Gavin advised the Councillors to refer any issues with Electric Skyline to Mr Mulryan for follow-up. Cllr Joyce said, that as the requirement to reduce energy costs was a national one, funding for it should be provided at a national level. Mr Egan said that there is unanimous agreement among the members of the SPC, that representations are made to the Minister for additional funding for public lighting. Mr Madden reminded the committee that there would also be a cost with decommissioning lights and that he concurred with the proposal to seek funding at a national level.

Mr Mulryan advised that there may be some options such as low cost loans or Public Private Partnership agreements to fund improvements in public lighting. He confirmed that there would be ongoing additions to the public lighting network as part of capital projects. He said that the amount of lights upgraded to LED lighting was minimal. He also said that he would contact Electric Skyline with regards to the response time to requests for repairs to public lights. He stated that there should be an accurate database available in mid-2016 of the public lighting stock in the County. Mr Gavin said that he would bring the report prepared by Mr Mulryan and the funding requirements to the attention of Central Government through the LUX committee.

On the proposal of Cllr Charity, seconded by Cllr Connolly it was agreed to remove the reference to the option of using Notice of Motion monies to fund public lighting from the report.

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3. Update on Flooding

Mr Gavin advised the SPC that approximately €1.5million had been spent to date on the clean up and emergency repairs in the aftermath of the severe flooding event in December 2015. He said that €1million had been received from the Department to date towards these costs, with further funding expected towards both the clean up costs and the necessary repair works. He said that there would have to be serious consideration given as to how to prevent/lessen the impact of flooding when it happens again. He stated that in some areas, it would not be possible to protect houses and relocation would have to be considered.

Cllr Roche said that 95% of flooding instances can be dealt with by mitigation measures and that all options should be explored, taking into account local knowledge. He referred to the recent coastal protection works done on Inis Mor and said that the work was not aesthetically pleasing.

Cllr Connolly stated that anywhere an engineering solution was found and implemented after the flooding event of 2009, that it had been effective. He said that assurances should be given to the public that further mitigation works would be implemented to prevent flooding again.

Cllr Byrne said that septic tanks in 18 houses in Cahermore are submerged and that a channel needs to be dug to release the water. He stated that Galway County Council can execute emergency works under the Local Government Act 1949 to save lives. Cllr Kinane said that saving people and their homes has to be made a priority.

In response to a query from Mr Egan, Mr Gavin confirmed that the information mapped regarding road segments flooded is available to the public.

4. Pay Parking

Mr Headd outlined a draft report that he had prepared regarding pay parking in County Galway and detailed the implications of various suggested options for changes in parking charges. Cllr Roche said that any change would lead to a loss of income for the Council, that the current charges were reasonable, and should remain in situ. Cllr Joyce and Comh Ó Cualáin concurred with this suggestion. Mr Gavin confirmed that any loss in income in pay parking would lead to a reduction in Local Road Maintenance funding. In response to a query from Cllr Roche, Mr Gavin said that each Municipal District could implement its own pay parking charges, but that consistency is preferred throughout the County. Cllr Byrne asked that local businesses be surveyed regarding the implications of free parking in the month of December. Mr Gavin agreed to discuss the matter with local Community Wardens. It was decided to revisit pay parking for discussion at the next meeting in March in order to prepare a recommendation for the Corporate Policy Group.

5. Piers and Harbours

Mr Wynne displayed a map of County Galway with all the piers and harbours in the County marked on it, including those in the charge of Galway County Council and those in the charge of

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the Department of Marine. He advised that there were 244 landing places in the County, of which 88 are in the charge of Galway County Council.

Cllr Maher referred to recent reports of funding of €8million to be provided for the development of Inis Oirr Harbour, and said that the Department would have to guarantee the availability of the funding, prior to the commencement of the works. Comh Ó Cualáin said that piers and harbours were important infrastructure for a coastal County such as Galway. He noted that piers and harbours support employment such as fishing and seaweed farming. He referred to the lack of consistency regarding funding amounts each year, and the fact that there are various Government Departments involved, depending on the pier concerned. Cllr Maher said that a priority list of piers for repairs should be drawn up by the Council. Cllr Byrne said that no funding had been provided for piers in South Galway in many years and that safety improvement works are needed in Kinvara. Cllr Roche advised that piers and harbours are the sole method of access for many islands and are essential infrastructure. Cllr Maher said that the Councillors should address the responsible Ministers about the shortfall in funding for the repair and provision of piers and harbours.

6. Any Other Business

Allocation of Roads Funding

Cllr Kinane referred to the recent discussion at the Council meeting regarding the redivision of roads maintenance funding. She said that any proposal that is agreed regarding the division of the funding at the SPC meeting should be supported by all members of the SPC at the plenary Council. Cllr Maher said that he was not comfortable in bringing forward any proposal that did not have the support of all the members of the SPC. Cllr Joyce said that it could be noted at the plenary Council that the proposal was a majority decision of the SPC, rather than a unanimous agreement. Cllr Roche said that he was vehemently opposed to revisiting the mechanism of allocation of roads funding. He suggested that an additional allocation, specifically for the Municipal District of Athenry/Oranmore, would be supported, if a compelling case was made for it. Cllr Maher said that he would advise the plenary Council that the proposal to alter the mechanism of the allocation of roads funding was a proposal of the SPC, but that all members of the SPC were not in favour of it. Cllr Charity said that the Municipal District of Oranmore pays a larger amount of property tax than other Municipal Districts and that the roads funding should be redistributed in a more equitable manner. Cllr Maher confirmed that he would present the recommendation to the plenary Council, but would note that it did not have the support of all members of the SPC.

Críochnaigh an cruinniú ansin