

Minutes of Roads and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee
Meeting held on 01st September 2015

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Roads & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee Meeting
held on 01st September 2015**

I LÁTHAIR:-

Baill: Cllr Michael Maher, Chairperson
Cllr Joe Byrne
Cllr Des Joyce
Cllr Martina Kinane
Comh Seosamh Ó’Cualáin
Cllr Peter Roche
Cllr James Charity
Mr Byran Egan
Mr Tom Madden

Oifigh: Mr Liam Gavin, Director of Services
Mr John Leahy, A/Senior Engineer
Mr Adrian Headd, A/Senior Executive Engineer
Ms Nuala Heffernan, Administrative Officer

Mr Gavin welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the members of staff of the Council. He advised that Mr Headd would present a report he had prepared in relation to Pay Parking in County Galway.

1. Minutes of Roads and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee meeting 28th May 2015

The minutes of the Strategic Policy Committee meeting held on the 28th May 2015 were proposed by Cllr Kinane, seconded by Mr Madden and agreed.

Matters arising

In response to a query from Cllr Kinane, Mr Gavin confirmed that the Council could only provide traffic calming measures at schools when funding has been provided for such works. He advised that he had issued correspondence to the Department of Education requesting funding for such works, but that no response had been received to date. Cllr Kinane referred to the extension which is currently being built at Clarinbridge School and Cllr Byrne referred to the new school to be constructed at Kilcornan. These works will make the matter of traffic safety at

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these locations increasingly important. Cllr Joyce asked who is ultimately responsible for the provision of traffic calming measures. Mr Gavin said that the Council is the Roads Authority, but that there is insufficient thought or funding allocated for traffic safety measures when schools are being developed. Comh Ó Cualáin said that many schools were constructed a long time ago and were directly on the side of the road.

Mr Madden advised the meeting that Integrated Rural Development, Galway Rural Development and Bealach na Gaeltachta have amalgamated and are based in Loughrea. A Rural Transport Policy is being produced at national level and he will report back to the SPC on its development.

Cllr Charity enquired about the Council's policy on the installation of speed bumps. He said that there is an issue with speeding outside village centres. Mr Gavin said that the use of speed bumps on a stand-alone basis is dangerous. He also advised that there is a cost involved for which no funding has been provided. He confirmed that the Council has no settled policy in relation to speed bumps, but that they could be considered for certain locations only.

Cllr Roche expressed his thanks to Mr Evan Molloy, who had recently retired from the Council, for his work on behalf of County Galway over many years. He also welcomed Mr Leahy to his new role in the Local Authority.

Cllr Connolly welcomed Mr Leahy to his new role in the Roads Unit of Galway County Council. He referred to parking problems outside schools. He said, that in his experience, that Parent Associations and Boards of Management think that the Council has a larger role to play in relation to parking than it does. He suggested that the Council respond quicker to queries raised by parents and advise them of what it will and will not do in relation to parking matters. Cllr Maher proposed that a letter be issued to the Department of Education from the Roads Strategic Policy Committee regarding the concerns of the Committee and requesting funding for traffic calming measures at schools. Mr Egan proposed that correspondence be issued to the Boards of Management of all schools, advising them of the Council's role in relation to parking at schools. Mr Gavin said that as representations are received by the Council from Parking Associations, Boards of Management and schools they will be responded to. Mr Egan said that there are grants available for traffic calming measures from the Department of Education. Mr Gavin advised that grants were only available for works within the grounds of the school, and not on the public road. Cllr Byrne confirmed that this is the case. Mr Gavin said that Notice of Motion allocations could not be spent on traffic calming measures.

2. Parking Bye-Laws

Mr Headd presented the report that was prepared on Pay Parking in County Galway. He outlined the current situation with Pay Parking charges and detailed five alternatives for the reduction of Pay Parking charges, with details of the cost implications.

Cllr Maher asked why Pay Parking charges did not commence in Clifden until 11.30a.m. He also noted that the charges varied in the town of Ballinasloe. He enquired if the costings

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provided included an amount for free parking in the month of December, leading up to Christmas.

Cllr Byrne said that he had met business people in the town of Gort to discuss pay parking charges and its' impact on their business. He advised that 2 hour free parking has been introduced in Ennistimon and Lahinch and was very successful. He said that he believed that allowing for free parking in the town would increase income for the businesses in the area, and as a result that the amount of rates collected would increase.

Cllr Charity expressed concern at the lack of a business case made in the report. He suggested that a report should be prepared by consultants which would project what business is lost because of the parking charges currently in force.

Cllr Connolly said that there is a huge appetite to alleviate pressure on businesses in the County by the reduction of Pay Parking charges. He said that prior to the introduction of Pay Parking there was no turnover of parking spaces in the towns. He said that whatever alternative was chosen for Pay Parking should apply Countywide.

Mr Gavin advised the provision of free parking for the month of December would be at an additional cost to that outlined in the alternatives presented in this report. He said that the implementation of any alternatives which would allow for free parking for a period, at any time during the day, would require full-time warden presence in the towns. He said that he was not convinced that the provision of free parking alternatives would improve business in the towns. He advised that a study had shown that in a place with free parking there are 1 to 2 turnovers of parking spaces each day, whereas in an area of pay parking there is a turnover of 8 -11 of parking spaces each day.

Cllr Joyce suggested that 2 hour free parking at any time be introduced. Cllr Kinane enquired about a facility to transfer unused tickets to others. She said free parking is about keeping businesses opened, and suggested that charges for long-term parking be increased. Cllr Roche said there was no appreciation for free parking with people occupying spaces for the whole day. Cllr Connolly said that there was excellent feedback from businesses with regards to the free parking provided in December last year. Mr Gavin said that there would be administrative difficulties with transferring unused tickets. He expressed the opinion that there would be decreased demand for car parks if long-term parking charges were increased. Mr Gavin said that Cllr Maher, as the chairperson of the SPC, would return to the Council with a recommendation on a pay parking alternative.

Mr Madden proposed that the first two hours parking in the morning, from 9.00a.m. to 11.00a.m. be provided free of charge, at an approximate cost of €90,000, be recommended. Cllr Byrne proposed that the provision of two hours free parking at any time be recommended, at an approximate cost of €120,000. Cllr Kinane suggested that as a balance, one hour free parking at any time should be recommended, at an approximate cost of €60,000. Cllr Charity suggested that an independent report should be procured on the potential benefits for businesses and the potential for an increase in the rates collection. Cllr Roche referred to the implications of

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requiring additional Community Wardens in the towns to monitor and implement any alternatives to allow free parking at any time. Mr Leahy proposed that any alternative proposed should be trialled on a pilot basis. He said that there is no evidence to suggest that pay parking has a negative effect on business. Mr Gavin confirmed that the alternatives which allowed for any time free parking would require an increased Community Warden presence in the towns. He said that a balanced report had been prepared and presented to the Committee, with various alternatives which allowed the Committee to make the final decision. Cllr Byrne said that the Strategic Policy Committee should outline all the alternatives to the full Council. Mr Gavin said that it is the role of the Chairperson of the SPC to present a report and recommendation to the full Council on the matter. Mr Madden proposed that the introduction of two hour free parking at any time be recommended by the SPC, this was seconded by Cllr Byrne. Cllr Kinane proposed that one hour free parking from 9.00a.m. to 10.00a.m. be recommended. This was seconded by Cllr Maher. Mr Madden said that parity was required across the County and the times should be amended in Clifden to reflect this, pay parking should apply from 9.00a.m. to 6.00p.m. Cllr Maher said that the alternatives to provide free parking, for any period of time, would have implications for other services, such as litter management with an increased presence of Community Wardens required to monitor and manage pay parking in the towns. Following discussion, it was agreed that a proposal to provide free parking for a period of two hours in the morning, from 9.00a.m. to 11.00a.m. would be recommended to the Council. Cllr Kinane withdrew her previous proposal.

3. Horse Drawn Hackney Carriages Bye-Laws

It was agreed to postpone discussion on the horse drawn hackney carriages bye-laws to the next meeting.

4. Any Other Business

Greenway

Mr Gavin advised that Council staff had visited approximately 200 landowners in relation to an emerging preferred route for the Galway to Dublin Greenway. He said a presentation on the route would be made at each relevant Municipal District meeting. He confirmed that the Minister of the Environment and Local Government, Mr Alan Kelly, had requested that a report be prepared and submitted to him on the route options and the level of opposition to the project. This is to be submitted in mid-September.

Additional Meeting

It was agreed to hold an additional Strategic Policy Committee meeting on 13th October at 11.00a.m.

Críochnaigh an cruinniú ansin