

Minutes of the Roads and Transportation, Strategic Policy Committee meeting  
held on 08<sup>th</sup> June 2016 in Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway

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Minutes of the Roads and Transportation, Strategic Policy Committee meeting  
held on 08<sup>th</sup> June 2016 at 10.00 a.m. in Room GO1, Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill,  
Galway.

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**I Láthair:**

**Baill:** Cllr Michael Maher  
Cllr Michael Connolly  
Comh Seosamh Ó Cualáin  
Cllr Peter Roche  
Cllr Martina Kinane  
Cllr James Charity  
Cllr Des Joyce  
Mr Bryan Egan

**Oifigí:** Mr Liam Gavin, Director of Services, Roads, Transportation, Marine and General Services Unit  
Mr Adrian Headd, A/Senior Executive Engineer, Roads, Transportation, Marine and General Services Unit  
Ms Nuala Heffernan, Administrative Officer, Roads, Transportation, Marine and General Services Unit

Cllr Byrnes apologies for his absence at the meeting were noted.

**1. Minutes of meeting of Roads SPC held on 06<sup>th</sup> April March 2016**

On the proposal of Comh Ó Cualáin and seconded by Cllr Kinane, the minutes of the meeting of the Roads Strategic Policy Committee held on the 06<sup>th</sup> April 2016 were agreed and adopted.

### **Matters arising from the minutes**

Cllr Roche referred to the provision of a pedestrian and cycle track at Annaghill (from 2<sup>nd</sup> roundabout back to the motorway overbridge) and which Mr Gavin had agreed to investigate at the previous meeting of the Roads Strategic Policy Committee. Mr Gavin said that such a provision was not included in the plans, but that if there was sufficient room for it, it would be installed. Cllr Roche said that the provision of this facility is hugely important for the school at Annagh.

### **2. Pay Parking**

An updated report on the interim review of paid parking charges was presented by Mr. Headd. Cllr Roche thanked Mr Headd for his comprehensive report. He stated that it is not practical for each Municipal District to have their own individual approach to pay parking, that a unified approach across the County was necessary. He proposed that the pay parking model currently in situ remain without any alteration. He said that he is not prepared to take a reduction in the roads funding allocation, with a subsequent impact on the number of road repairs carried out in the County.

Cllr Kinane said that she supports Cllr Roches proposal and that she does not believe that roads funding should be reduced. Comh Ó Cualáin confirmed that he is against losing any funding for roads, when additional monies are required for road repairs. He remarked that there would also be difficulties with policing any changes, due to the demands on staff resources. Cllr Charity commented that it would be disingenuous as a Councillor to look for an increase in roads funding for the Municipal District of Athenry/Oranmore on the one hand and to support a reduction in roads funding on the other hand. Cllr Joyce said that there were no gains to be made by making any change to the pay parking model currently in place and that it should be left as it is. Mr Egan said that he is in favour of a change to option 1, ie that the first hour of parking should be free from 9.00 a.m. to 10.00 a.m. He commented that pay parking should not be subsidised from other funding. Cllr Maher said he is also in favour of putting option 1 in place for a trial period of six months.

In response to a query from Cllr Kinane, Mr Headd confirmed that options 1 and 2, as presented would have no impact on the Municipal District of Conamara as pay parking does not commence in Clifden until 11.30 each day, as agreed on its implementation in the town 7 years ago.

Mr Gavin advised that the Strategic Policy Committee should be making a clear decision as to how it is proceeding. He said that the committee cannot keep looking at numerous options, that the decision made to be advised to the plenary Council has to be clear.

Mr Egan proposed that no change be made to the current arrangements regarding pay parking. Cllr Roche said, that having given all options careful consideration, that he was proposing no

change to the current pay parking model. He said that the issue is being used for political gain by some people. Cllr Kinane commented that people on the committee are supporting local communities and were not using the issue as a political football. She enquired if it is possible to remove free parking at Christmas and to implement option 1 which should have little or no financial implication. Mr Gavin reminded the committee that the loss of income which allowed for free parking at Christmas was already accounted for in the figures provided. Comh Ó Cualáin reiterated that he is in favour of maintaining the current pay parking model, but would consider option 1 as a fall back option for a period of 6 months. In response to a query from Cllr Charity, Mr Headd advised that a change in the bye-laws would be necessary to implement any change in the current system, even if for a trial period and he estimated the cost of provision of revised signage as €2,000. Mr Gavin noted that there is a fixed charge in place for the provision and maintenance of the pay and display machines. He commented that pay parking is necessary in the towns to manage traffic successfully. He said that he would prefer if no change took place, that the cost is not onerous and that there are deeper issues of concern in towns and villages other than pay parking. Cllr Kinane asked what was meant by a trial period, how it would be monitored and measured and if there could be an opt out from the change for each Municipal District. Mr Gavin said that the same regulations regarding pay parking should apply across the County. Cllr Joyce said that while he was in favour of no change, he would consider option 1 only as a fall back. Cllr Roche proposed that no change would take place but that that option 1 should be considered, for a trial period of six months, if there is agreement among the majority of the plenary Council. Cllr Maher said that all the information, as provided in the interim review, should be advised to all Councillors prior to the meeting of the plenary Council. Cllr Connolly said he is in favour of Cllr Roches proposal. Mr Headd proposed that the trial period for any change should commence on the 01<sup>st</sup> January to allow for an accurate comparison. Cllr Connolly said that he had received feedback from local businesses, that the provision of 2 hours free parking was excessive. Cllr Kinane reiterated that the information on all the options should be circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting of the plenary Council, with the impact on the funding for each Municipal District noted. She said that she wants the redistribution of roads funding listed as a priority item on the agenda of the Council meeting. Mr Gavin advised that this is a separate matter and should be dealt with separately. Cllr Charity said that the matter should be postponed for consideration to the next meeting. Cllr Maher said that the trial period should be for a fixed period of time from January to June 2017.

### **3. Roads Funding Model**

A map was circulated to the committee of all areas within 25km of Galway city with each Municipal District highlighted on it. Two options for the redistribution of funding were considered in the circulated report:

- a) Each Municipal District that has roads within 25km of the city to be reallocated the same specific amount from any additional non-national roads funding received.

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- b) Each Municipal District to be reallocated a percentage of the amount of any additional funding non-national roads funding received, based on the percentage of non-national roads in the Municipal District.

Mr Gavin outlined that he had used an amount of €160,000 as an example in looking at both options, as this was the amount of additional funding for non-national roads funding received in 2015. He noted that the Municipal District of Ballinasloe loses the most as it has no non-national roads within 25km of the city. Cllr Connolly said that he would not agree with either proposal, that the Municipal District of Ballinasloe should not lose out on essential funding to benefit other Municipal Districts. He stated that roads within a 25km zone of the city are in better condition than those outside that zone. Cllr Roche said he concurred with Cllr Connolly, that roads within the 25km zone of the city are already best served. He noted that all of the Municipal District of Oranmore is within the 25km zone and would benefit most from the redistribution of funding. He said that he was not supporting any change in the current funding model. Cllr Charity said that 20% of Local Property Tax and 30% of commercial rates in County Galway are collected within the Municipal District of Athenry/Oranmore but that this Municipal District is only in receipt of 9% of roads funding. He noted that the proposed reallocation of funding would also benefit those living in other Municipal Districts as many people travel into the city from those districts. Cllr Joyce declared that funding is required for roads in the rural area of the Municipal District of Tuam and would not support any proposal to remove funding from the Municipal District. Cllr Kinane said that she was hugely disappointed with the views expressed by Councillors, she declared that there is a huge injustice created with the method of allocating roads funding. She commented that the role of the Strategic Policy Committee is to create policy for the whole County not individual Municipal Districts. She said that it may be of benefit to the Oranmore area if the boundary of the city is extended. She said that the Municipal District of Athenry/Oranmore is the most heavily populated Municipal District and has the least amount of roads funding available to it. She requested that her proposal be given a chance by the committee, by the members at least abstaining on a vote regarding it. She proposed that the option of allocating €160,000 evenly across all 4 Municipal Districts within the 25km zone of the city, be approved. Comh Ó Cualáin said that he had no objection to bringing the matter to the plenary Council for discussion. He agreed that he was representing the whole County as well as an individual Municipal District. Cllr Maher said that if the proposal was rejected, it could encourage the extension of the city boundary which would have an impact on the rates collected in County Galway. He said that the proposal needs the support of the SPC to bring it to the plenary Council for discussion. He commented that he would support bringing it for discussion to the plenary Council. Cllr Connolly said that he had no objection to the matter being referred to the Council for discussion. Cllr Maher reminded the committee that the funding referred to for redistribution only amounted to 10% of any additional funding received for non-national roads. Mr Gavin asked for clarification with regard to what is to be brought before the plenary Council for discussion. Cllr Charity proposed that only the option of reallocating the same amount to each of the 4 Municipal Districts within 25km zone of the city be brought to the Council for consideration. Cllr Kinane agreed with this proposal. Cllr Roche said that he would like it noted

to the plenary Council that not all members of the SPC were united in their opinion on this matter. Cllr Charity suggested that the inclusion of a 5km zone within Ballinasloe town could be considered for the reallocation of this funding. Mr Gavin said that the volume of traffic in Ballinasloe is much lighter than the traffic entering the city. Cllr Roche said that he has difficulty in accepting that there is an issue with fairness and equality as the allocation by km is a fair system which has been in place for many years. Cllr Maher enquired about the possibility of looking at any other models of funding allocation. Cllr Charity proposed that a 5km zone around Ballinasloe and other major towns be included in the model. Mr Gavin suggested that the 25km zone could be reduced to 15km and consideration could also be given to including a major town in each Municipal District, based on the population density. He further suggested that another option is to reallocate 1% of funding from each of the 4 Municipal Districts to the Municipal District of Athenry/Oranmore, with a possible caveat of a maximum amount that could be lost by each Municipal District.

#### 4. Any Other Business

Mr Gavin advised the committee that the oral hearing for the N63 would be held shortly and that any landowners who may have issues they wish to raise are welcome to attend. He said that he is aware that there are eight to ten people who may have some concerns.

In response to a query from Cllr Charity, Ms Heffernan advised that his proposals regarding horse drawn carriages/sulky racing had been referred to the Housing SPC for consideration.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Roads and Transportation SPC would be held on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September at 10.00am in Áras an Chontae.

**Críochnagh an cruinniú ansin.**

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Cllr. Michael Maher**

**Cathaoirleach**

**Roads & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_