

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

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL**

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

I LÁTHAIR:-

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

Oifigigh: Mr Liam Gavin, Director of Services
Ms Nuala Heffernan, Administrative Officer

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

The minutes of the Roads Strategic Policy Committee meeting held on the 14th October 2015 were proposed by Cllr Roche, seconded by Cllr Byrne and agreed. Cllr Connolly apologised for his absence at the previous meeting.

Matters arising

Cllr Connolly referred to the decision made at the SPC meeting on 01st September regarding the amendment of pay parking bye-laws in County Galway. He said that it is the role of the SPC to make recommendations to the plenary Council, but that the ultimate decision on policies is a role of the plenary Council. He said that 80% to 90% of recommendations of the Strategic Policy Committees are adopted at plenary Council.

Cllr Connolly said that while it is necessary to regulate parking, that there is demand from the retail sector for free parking and that the Council is losing its rates base in the centre of towns. He stated that the proposal adopted by the plenary Council will allow people time to shop in the

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town without fear of getting a parking fine. Mr Gavin said that the CPG had decided to return the decision made at the plenary Council back to the SPC for discussion. Cllr Maher advised that Cllr Finnerty is to prepare a report for the SPC on pay parking proposals.

2. Funding for Public Lighting

Mr Gavin advised the SPC that Galway County Council did not have an accurate inventory of public lighting in its charge but that a survey to establish the number of lights in our charge was currently being compiled. He said that the current energy cost for public lighting was based on 10,000 lights, but the initial report from the survey taking place advises that Galway County Council has 13,000 public lights in its charge. This will lead to an increase in the energy costs of 5% -8%.

He confirmed that a tendering process had taken place in 2015 to appoint a contractor for the maintenance in the Connacht region, in which Galway County Council is included, and that a competitive price had been achieved.

Mr Gavin also advised that there was a new statutory requirement on Galway County Council to test all their public lighting to ensure they are earthed correctly which will require an allocation of funding. He confirmed that there is also a proposed programme of replacement of old fittings with more energy efficient ones, with a necessary annual allocation of €50,000. The allocation in the budget for public lighting is €1,000,000 but this may be insufficient to cover additional costs outlined. He suggested that he may request Councillors to allocate funding from their Notice of Motion allocations towards some of these public lighting costs and that it was not possible to provide additional public lights given these budgetary restraints.

Cllr Maher accepted that Councillors were previously requested to allocate funding to School Flashing Lights due to insufficient funds being available to repair them. Cllr Byrne said it was necessary to look at providing additional lights where there is a health and safety issue, as a life could be saved. He proposed that it be included as an allowed option for NOM allocations. Cllr Kinane said she seconded that proposal as there are ongoing security issues in rural areas. She said that if a light is provided on the request of a residents association they should pay for the running costs. Cllr Roche said he agreed that Cllrs should be allowed allocate NOM funding for public lighting. Cllr Connolly said that there were some individual public lights in inappropriate locations but that a valid case could be made for public lights to be installed at locations such as funeral parlours, schools and outside rate payers premises as infill lights.

In response to a query from Comh Ó Cualáin, Mr Gavin advised that the Council paid for public lights installed on Council owned piers and harbours, others were owned and paid for by the Department of Marine.

Mr Gavin noted that there is insufficient funding for the running costs associated with the current number of public lights and additional lights could not be considered. He confirmed that the Council would not fund public lighting in private estates. He said consideration would be given to relocating some public lighting if considered appropriate. He advised that any complaints

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regarding out of order public lighting should be referred to the Roads Section for repair. In response to a query from Cllr Byrne regarding the allocation of Low Cost Safety funding to the provision of public lighting, Mr Gavin advised that Transport Infrastructure Ireland were unlikely to allow this funding be allocated to it.

Cllr Kinane said that public lighting is critical infrastructure and that the Council should request additional funding for it from Central Government. She said that an additional light is needed in Tawin Island for a section of road that is unlit.

3. Allocation of Roads Funding

Mr Gavin reminded the Committee that the current method of allocation of roads funding is on a kilometre basis. He circulated a map outlining a 25 kilometre area around Galway City, detailing the increase in traffic volume in this area. He said he had been asked at a previous meeting to consider reallocating a % of the additional funding, sometimes received during the year for Non-National Road repairs, by redistributing to these areas. He said that he took 10% of the funding and reallocated it across the 25 kilometre area by Municipal District which would result in additional funding allocated to roads with heavier traffic volumes. There would be a consequent reduction for some Municipal Districts.

Cllr Kinane said that she was in agreement with the reallocation as presented and was asking her colleagues to support her in bringing it to the plenary Council. Cllr Byrne said he was in agreement in principal, as it only affected additional funding and not the whole Roads budget. Cllr Charity noted that there would be no guarantee of this funding on an annual basis. Cllr Connolly said that this would result in a net loss for the Municipal District of Ballinasloe. Comh Ó Cualáin said that there would only be a benefit for a small section of the Municipal District of Conamara. Cllr Maher said he knew that there would not be support for the proposal from the members of all the Municipal Districts but that he had no issue with it. Cllr Roche expressed reservations with the proposal, and said that the new Tuam-Gort Motorway would bring considerable additional traffic into roads in the Tuam area. Mr Gavin confirmed to him that this reallocation of funding was proposed for every time additional funding was made available for Regional and Local Road repairs. Cllr Joyce said that while the concept was good, that roads close to the city area are in a much better state of repair than those further out. He said he would not be supporting the proposal. Cllr Kinane said that this proposal was the right thing for the County and those on the SPC were representing the County and not just their Municipal Districts. Cllr Charity said that the traffic situation is not unique to the Municipal District of Athenry/Oranmore, that roads in other areas are in appalling condition and that Councillors have a responsibility to all road users. Cllr Maher proposed that the re-allocation of the funding be considered on a once off trial basis, Cllr Kinane said it should be for at least the duration of this SPC. Cllr Connolly said that the Municipal District of Ballinasloe would lose the most in this proposal that people in isolated areas expect their roads to be repaired and are entitled to do so. Cllr Charity said that the people in the most heavily populated areas are paying higher property tax and development contributions. Mr Gavin said that the Committee could vote to take the proposal to the Council. Cllr Roche said he would not be comfortable being asked to bring the

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proposal forward. Cllr Joyce said he was in favour of discussing the matter with other Councillors prior to this. It was agreed to bring the proposal to the plenary Council, but that it would be noted that not all in the Roads and Transportation SPC would be voting in favour of it.

4. Horse Drawn Hackney Carriages Bye-Laws

Mr Gavin confirmed that the Draft Horse Drawn Hackney Carriages Bye-Laws had been sent to the taxi regulator for her opinion. He suggested and it was agreed that they be put on public display in the interim.

Cllr Charity said that he had drafted bye-laws on the regulation of horses in the County, in particular in relation to sulkies on the road. He advised that he had also forwarded a Notice of Motion requesting that consideration be given to the regulation of horses. It was agreed that draft bye-laws would be considered in 2016. This matter is being referred to Housing for consideration.

5. Roads Update

Mr Gavin circulated and read an update document on the progress of roads projects in the County.

Cllr Roche enquired about future funding for Community Involvement Schemes and said that the scheme should continue next year. He also said consideration should be given to increasing the number of Community Employment Schemes in the County. Cllr Connolly also referred to CIS schemes and said that the response time for applications was too short. Cllr Kinane queried if CIS works could be divided up over a period of 3 years.

Comh Ó Cualáin referred to works on the N59 and said that the Council should ensure Eir poles were relocated. He referred to the development of an interpretative centre at Pearse's Cottage and said that it was an excellent development but that the car park being provided may not be sufficient. He said a footpath should be provided between the overflow car park and the interpretative centre.

Cllr Connolly enquired about the N63 at Abbeyknockmoy and if the proposed road is to be built to the specification provided as part of the Part VIII planning application, and if it included replacement of the bridge and rail track. Mr Gavin confirmed that it would be built as per planning permission and that a letter of comfort regarding this would be issued to Cllr Connolly.

Cllr Kinane enquired about applying for a Low Cost Safety Scheme. She asked how she would get a Community Employment Scheme set up in her Municipal District. She also asked about getting roadsweeping done in her District. She queried how coastal protection works following damage caused in storms are funded.

Mr Gavin confirmed that 38 Community Involvement Schemes had been approved for funding in 2015, of which 36 were now complete. He said that applicants can reapply for the scheme

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next year if funding is provided. He said that the timeframe for applications was driven by timeframe put in place by the Department. He said that Eir poles on the N59 would be relocated as part of the works. He advised that the Department of Social Protection is prioritising Gateway schemes rather than Community Employment Schemes, and that there was limited funding provided to operate such schemes. He said that no strict guidelines are in place as regards applications for Low Cost Safety Improvement Schemes and that Councillors should make proposals regarding such schemes to their local area engineer. He noted that funding is only provided for approximately 10 schemes each year. In relation with coastal protection works, he advised that such works are only carried out on public lands, and any requests for such works should be submitted to Ciarán Wynne who deals with coastal issues.

6. Skip Bye-Laws

Mr Gavin said that the draft bye-laws had not been reviewed yet, but would be rescheduled for consideration by the SPC in 2016.

7. Pay Parking

Mr Gavin advised the Committee that it had been decided at the plenary Council to provide free parking from 11.00a.m. in the County of Galway for the month of December.

He referred to the previous decision regarding the provision of 2 hours free pay parking at any time at the plenary Council. He advised that the Municipal District of Tuam had made a decision not to proceed with the decision of the Council. He said that there were different decisions made by different Municipal Districts. He confirmed that the Corporate Policy Group had decided to refer the matter back to the Roads and Transportation SPC for it to be revisited. Mr Gavin advised that in addition to the costs outlined in the report previously circulated regarding Pay & Display income reduction, consideration had to be given to the salary costs of Community Wardens. He said that parking regulation is essential and that it was proven that the turnover in areas where there was no parking charges was 1 to 2 per day, whereas in areas where parking charges apply that the turnover is 8-10 times per day.

Cllr Connolly said that he agrees that parking should be regulated. He outlined that Cllr Finnertys proposal was that payment of a minimum of 50c should apply and that this would allow for an additional 2 hours free parking after the time allowed for 50c had elapsed. Cllr Maher said that the matter would be reconsidered at the next meeting of the SPC, as he had not received the written proposal from Cllr Finnerty.

8. Any Other Business

Ms Heffernan confirmed that she had written to the representatives of the CIF and IFA who had been nominated to the SPC but who had not attended any meeting of the Committee to date. She confirmed that no response had been received to date. It was agreed to seek another nomination to the Committee as per the Standing Orders.

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Comh Ó Cualáin requested a report on the 250 piers in County Galway and how funding was provided for their development, repair and maintenance. Mr Gavin agreed to prepare a report for the next SPC meeting.

Mr Gavin noted that at the plenary Council meeting that the SPC had been requested to discuss Notice of Motions. It was agreed to discuss the matter at a future SPC meeting.

The dates for the meetings of the Roads and Transportation SPC in 2016 were agreed as, 20th January, 23rd March, 21st September and 07th December 2016. All meetings are to commence at 10.00a.m.

Cllr Kinane referred to the responsibility to install gullies as part of a house construction. Mr Gavin said it could be enforced if it was included as a planning condition. He said he would draft a policy and bring it forward for consideration by the SPC in 2016.

Cllr Roche asked if there were any changes proposed to the cost/benefit analysis for flood mitigation works. Mr Gavin advised that benefits were weighted towards schools, hospitals etc and that land flooding is not given huge consideration. He confirmed that this was set down by the Office of Public Works.

Críochnaigh an cruinniú ansin