
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

<p>Minutes of the Roads & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held at Áras An Chontae on Thursday 28th May 2015</p>

I LÁTHAIR:-

Baill: Cllr. Joe Byrne
Cllr. Des Joyce
Cllr. Martina Kinane
Cllr. Michael Maher
Cllr. Seosamh Ó’Cualáin
Cllr. Peter Roche
Mr. Byran Egan,
Mr. Tom Madden, Ballinasloe Training for Employment Ltd.

Oifigh: Mr. Liam Gavin, Director of Services
Mr. Evan Molloy, Senior Engineer
Ms. Rose Gaughran, Senior Staff Officer

Apologies were received from Mr Mark Coffey.

Liam Gavin welcomed everyone to the meeting and clarified that the purpose of this Strategic Policy Committee is to develop policies for Roads, Transportation, Marine and General Services in the County. All policies agreed would then go forward to the full meeting of the council for consideration and adoption.

It was agreed by the meeting that item 1(d) on the agenda would be taken first.

1 (d). Method of Allocation of Roads Funding.

Cllr. Kinane addressed the meeting regarding the current policy of allocating roads funding throughout the county by length of road per Municipal District. She stated that this method is unjust and unfair and needs to be urgently reviewed. She requested that this SPC develop an optimal road funding system, which would consider all relevant parameters such as volume of traffic, local development, population etc. which are major contributing factors in road deterioration in the Municipal District of Athenry/Oranmore. She said that such a review would help to reduce the number of road accidents and increase safety for road users equally across the County.

Cllr. Byrne disagreed with Cllr. Kinane, and pointed out that the road network in the Municipal District of Athenry/Oranmore is far smaller than the Municipal District of Loughrea and as such

there are fewer roads repaired, pro-rata in the Municipal District of Loughrea than in the Municipal District of Athenry/Oranmore.

Cllr. Roche asked the Director if he could clarify the geographical spread of funding and examine if more funding can be obtained for all areas. Cllr. Ó' Cualáin stated that deterioration of road surfaces depends a lot on the local terrain and the problem is lack of funding overall in the County. Cllr. Joyce stated that the current allocation of funding per km is probably the fairest and that more funding is required overall.

Mr. Madden also stated that more funding is required. He asked how housing estates in Ballinasloe are affected, since the amalgamation of the Town Council and the County Council. Mr. Egan stated that funding on a per km basis is not equitable. Funding per km travelled should be considered i.e. volume of traffic per km.

Cllr. Maher reiterated that we are here to review processes and to consider the needs of all the Municipal Districts. Over the years the money available has been reduced and what was a 7 year maintenance programme is now gone to 14 years.

In response to the points raised Mr. Molloy informed the meeting that:

- the current system of allocation per km is in place for a long number of years
- this is the system of allocation in other Counties
- a condition rating survey was carried out on Regional and Local Roads in Galway in the past few years and the results show that the condition of these roads is generally uniform across the Municipal Districts. This would suggest that the current system is working well.
- recent reclassification of some National Roads down to Regional Roads has meant an increased cost for Galway County Council.
- the current repair cycle for roads is now 20 years which is far too long.
- the requirement is really for more funding across the County rather than changing the system of allocation.
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Mr. Gavin confirmed that Galway County Council is the roads authority for roads within housing estates, which have been taken in charge in Ballinalsoe. These roads are included with all others for funding when drawing up the annual roads programme. If an estate is not in charge then the roads cannot be included for funding. He said that the decision regarding distribution of funding on a km basis is ultimately a political decision and that the current system is working well. He advised that if there are specific issues with certain roads these can be considered separately.

Other issues impacting on road surfaces were discussed ie.

- a large number of houses which are higher than the road cause flooding on the roads
- the planning condition of 3m set back at the front of houses is not being enforced
- houses lower than the road have water runoff from the road
- closing of pipes due to works being carried out causes flooding

Mr Gavin said that all of these issues cause deterioration of the road surface particularly when frost occurs. Cllr Maher requested that all the issues raised would be considered by council officials as part of a review of the system for allocation of funding for road maintenance. If members have any other points that they wish to be included in the review they should send them into the Director as soon as possible.

Cllr. Kinane then left the meeting.

1 (a) On-Street and Off-Street Parking Bye-Laws

Liam Gavin informed the meeting that this item is being opened up for discussion, as questions have been raised at recent council meeting as to the effect of pay and display parking in the county. Pay & display parking was introduced to regulate parking and generate revenue. There are substantial costs incurred in providing car parks which have to be recouped and pay & display serves to regulate parking in town centres and frees up parking spaces for businesses. He suggested that members may wish to look at all the Bye-Laws currently in place and send in their suggestions/recommendations, which will be taken into account as part of a review of parking bye-laws and pay & display parking in the county.

A discussion took place which highlighted the following points;

- The pay & display machines do not take notes
- There is not enough consultation with local people and residents
- Free parking allowed at Christmas and other times causes problems as people tend to abuse free parking
- Consideration to be given to 2 hours free parking
- Request to examine the situation in Roscommon town which does not have any parking charges
- Consideration of a grace period
- The income generated by the current system
- People are aware of the days when the warden is not in the town and do not pay for parking on these days.
- Galway County Council charging system is fair as you can get a ticket for a minimum of 20c for short visits.
- There is no provision for bus parking in Gort
- The market in Barrack Street, Loughrea should be moved to Main Street

Mr. Molloy informed the meeting that there is a benefit in the regulation of parking and freeing up of spaces in towns where pay & display is in operation. There is a need to upgrade the pay and display machines. This and the employment of wardens are expenses on the council. He agreed that a review of the current bye-laws would make sense at this time and all suggestions/recommendations should be forwarded to him or Liam Gavin for inclusion in this review. Mr. Gavin agreed that the routine of the wardens and the method of payment of parking fees would be examined. Details of finances involved in providing pay & display and income generated will be circulated to the next meeting. It was agreed that this item would be brought to the attention of members at Municipal District Meetings.

1 (b) Skip bye-Laws

The draft Skip Bye-laws to regulate the use of skips on roadsides and footpaths were discussed. The following points were raised:

- can some allowance be made for persons who want to get a skip for a few hours only to remove rubbish, to discourage them from putting it in a trailer and dumping it illegally.
- there is no recognition regarding different sizes of skips in the draft bye-laws.
- there is no responsibility for what goes into the skip.
- what is the position regarding hoarding licences? Can this be looked at in conjunction with the skip bye-laws?
- the pricing should be re-examined with a view to reducing same.
- issues of lighting and safety should included in the bye-laws

It was agreed to consider all of the points raised. Mr. Molloy pointed out that a licence application can be refused if it is considered that it is not safe or appropriate for the proposed location.

1 (c) Horse Drawn Hackney Carriages Bye-Laws.

These bye-laws are proposed for Cill Rónáin on the Aran Islands only. The purpose is to regulate the horse drawn traffic on Inis Mór where issues of safety and fouling have become a cause for concern. Bye-laws have been drafted and are currently with the Councils Law Agent for advice. When they are received back from the Law Agent, they will be circulated to all members of the committee and included for consideration at the next meeting of this SPC. A query was raised as to whether the matters in these bye-laws might already be dealt with by the Taxi Regulator.

2. Other Proposals for Policy Consideration

Cllr. Roche asked for clarification regarding the policy of maintenance of footpaths and public spaces in Villages and Towns. He queried if there is there specific funding for this work under the roads programme and if the Council can make more use of community workers and FAS schemes to do this type of work.

Mr. Molloy confirmed that there is no separate funding for maintenance of footpaths and open spaces in the Councils budget. He advised that funds are allocated under the Restoration Maintenance programme per Municipal District. He agreed that there has not been much work done in this area in recent years and that funding should be sought to carry out an assessment of footpaths countywide. He clarified that FAS workers cannot work on public roads.

Cllr. Byrne asked if Galway County Council has a policy regarding cycle networks in the county. Mr. Gavin confirmed that this matter will be examined with a view to formulating a policy for cycle networks in the County. National cycle networks are a priority at present.

Cllr. Ó Cualáin raised the matter of Buses stopping on roadsides in Conamara. He stated that a large number of tourists alight from these buses and create dangerous situations on narrow roads. He queried if the Roads SPC could regulate such behaviour.

Mr. Madden clarified that there is a clear policy in cases of community involvement in carrying out works in towns and villages, that there be no displacement of existing jobs. Communities should consult with the local authority in advance to ensure there is no breach of this policy.

Cllr. Roche requested that a policy be devised whereby work can be carried by skilled communities without job displacement. Cllr. Meagher confirmed that there are 12 people working in Loughrea under the TÚS scheme which has not caused any job displacement.

Mr. Gavin informed the meeting that there is a Safety Policy in place for these work situations and this will be circulated to the committee members.

Cllr. Joyce asked if anything can be done about ponding which occurs at some rural houses.

Cllr. Byrne said that there is confusion regarding the allocation of NOM monies. It was agreed that the policy regarding NOM funding would be brought to the next meeting.

Mr. Egan asked that every street in the County have place names at each end. In reply Mr. Molloy confirmed that all roads have road numbers, but that this is subject to constant updating.

Mr. Madden informed the meeting that 'Bealach na Gaillimhe' has signed a service level agreement with the Department of Transport covering road transport which will work from Loughrea as a base. He agreed to give a full report on this matter to the next meeting.

In response to Cllr. Roche, Mr. Gavin agreed to have an update on the construction of the Greenway and the motorways for the next meeting. He advised that if any of the members have particular concerns regarding these projects they should contact Mr. Molloy directly.

Críochnaigh an cruinniú ansin.