

**Minutes of the Roads, Transportation & Marine Strategic Policy Committee
meeting held on Thursday 21st May 2020 at 10.00 a.m.
The Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway.**

I Láthair:

Baill: Cllr. Peter Roche (Cathaoirleach)

Cllr. Geraldine Donohue

Comh. Tomás Ó Curraoin

Cllr. Jim Cuddy

Cllr. Gerry King

Mr. Tom Madden

Mr. Diarmaid Kelly

Mr. Martin Gibbons

Mr. Kenny Deery

Oifigi: Mr. Jim Cullen, Director of Services, Infrastructure and Operations Unit

Mr. Damien Mitchell, Senior Engineer, Infrastructure and Operations Unit

Mr. Derek Pender, Senior Engineer, Infrastructure and Operations Unit

Mr. Fiona Holland, Senior Engineer, Infrastructure and Operations Unit

Ms. Eibhlin Curran, Administrative Officer, Infrastructure and Operations Unit

Apologies: Cllr. Pat Hynes

Absent: Cllr. Michael Connolly

1. Minutes of meeting of Roads SPC held on 17th April 2019

On the **proposal** of Cllr. Cuddy, and **seconded** by Comh. Ó Curraoin, the minutes of the meeting of the Roads, Transportation and Marine Strategic Policy Committee held on 17th April 2019 were agreed and adopted.

Matters arising from the minutes.

Cllr. Cuddy stated that the road works in Claregalway should commence while schools remain closed and suggested that these works continue at night-time once normal daytime traffic congestion resumes.

2. Roadworks Programme 2020 Update

D. Mitchell provided an overview of the Roads Programme 2020, outlining the sources of funding, various schemes and projects to be carried out.

Comh. T. Ó Curraoin commended the Infrastructure and Operations Unit on the tremendous work that has been done, considering the limited funding received and the large size of the County. Cllr. G. King concurred with this and sought clarification on what kind of road is eligible for a Community Involvement Scheme (CIS) application. D. Mitchell explained these would usually be public roads that require works to improve the safety of the road, works such as improving visibility at a junction or specific drainage works. D. Mitchell stated that Galway County Council received 85 CIS applications which is in excess of the funding available to them.

Cllr. P. Roche, Cathaoirleach, requested clarification on whether any issue is anticipated due to Covid-19 concerning funding already allocated. D. Mitchell confirmed that the department was contacted and there should be no issues with monies already allocated. J. Cullen concurred that road grant allocations for 2020 are secure however other funding streams such as commercial rates will be affected and stated that these issues will need to be addressed at plenary council meetings as they arise.

Mr. D. Kelly asked which scheme or roads project would traffic calming conditions come under. D. Mitchell advised that there would be a number of options and this could come under specific improvement schemes for which there is a specific funding.

D. Pender responded to Cllr. Cuddy's query with regard works at Claregalway. He advised that where possible, work will be carried out at night. Commencement date is not readily available. Phase 4 has been completed and all documentation has been submitted to the TII. NRPO are currently awaiting approval from TII to progress into Phase 5.

In response to Cllr. Peter Roche, Cathaoirleach, D. Pender stated that the initial expectation of commencing works on site was in Q4, 2020, however this timeline is now ambitious due to covid-19. D. Pender stated that the TII have been progressive and are in constant communications and that Galway County Council had done all that was required of them at this point.

3. Noise Action Plan

F. Holland provided an overview of the Noise Action Plan which is specific to all major roads for County Galway, which are outlined on page 4 of the report. F. Holland advised of the consultation process involved and that it must be looked at from a Planning perspective also. Starting round 4, GCC must now submit another list of roads and there will be a new Noise Action Plan in 2022. There is an annual report to the EPA on the progress of the plan.

Mr. D. Kelly questioned why there were no 'quiet areas' mentioned in the plan and suggested that in future the consultation period should not clash with holiday season. F. Holland advised that there were constraints at the time of the plan, but that 'quiet areas' can be included in the next plan. She agreed that the consultation period over the Christmas period wasn't ideal but that the timeframe didn't allow alternative dates as GCC were compelled to comply with statutory obligations.

4. Galway City Ring Road Update

D. Pender gave an update on the N6 Galway City Ring Road Project and provided an update report to the committee. Mr. K. Deery stated that this is a large-scale project that is going to have a huge impact in the west and the Chamber wants to note that they are there to assist and support in any way they can. K. Deery expressed his concern that there is a lot of rhetoric at present about work life changes and will the need be the same as it was before (Covid19) due to higher numbers remote working. K. Deery expressed concerns regarding government formation and changing workflow patterns. K. Deery stated that more were presenting against the proposed N6 Galway City Ring Road Project than for it. He asserted that a collaborative approach was required to get this over the line and every effort should be made and the Chamber are willing to offer support where they can.

Cllr. Cuddy asked if there is an alternative plan if An Bord Pleanála do not give the go ahead. If they do give the go ahead, when would works commence and is the finance ringfenced.

Comh. Tomás Ó Curraoin asserted that there have been a lot of objections to the N6 Galway City Ring Road Project and asked what plans are in place to overcome those.

In response to the queries raised, D. Pender advised that they've done deals to agree accommodation works with a lot of those affected. Initially there were 290 objections but there are not as many anymore. D. Pender advised the committee that if approval to go ahead was granted today, it would be a minimum of 24 months before works could start. D. Pender also explained that if the N6 Galway City Ring Road Project does go ahead, the racecourse will not be required to close, and it will not affect the summer racing festival.

J. Cullen stated that when the Oral Hearing resumes, they will be ready to deal with the new arguments against the proposed works due to the new environment since covid-19.

Cllr. G. Donohue asked for confirmation that those involved with CPOs would be taken care of properly. J. Cullen advised that the team dealing with it have taken a very compassionate approach to the property owners in trying to resolve their genuine difficulties.

Cllr. Jim Cuddy and Cllr. Gerry King raised concerns over Local Improvement Schemes (LIS's) and solicitors advising people not to buy houses where the road is not taken in charge by Galway County Council. J. Cullen clarified that LIS's and the sale of houses are two separate issues. The status of the road, whether it is in charge of the local authority, is irrelevant when it comes to acquisition/disposal of a property. LIS's involve works on non-public roads and it remains a non-public road after the works are done. The LIS applicant must sign to state that they understand that they accept liability for the future maintenance of that road. J. Cullen stated that Galway County Council does not have enough funding to maintain the 6500 Km of public road network as it is and there is no basis to allow for LIS roads to be taken in charge – this would not be an appropriate use of public monies. J. Cullen explained that it is not for the local authority to change its processes to spend public monies to solve individual issues.

Cllr. P. Roche queried if it is a statutory charge when a member of the public is charged for a letter of certification that a road is taken in charge. J. Cullen advised that while every local authority charge for certification letters, it is not necessarily a statutory charge, but it forms part of the revenue budget and it is a reasonably modest administrative charge in terms of acquisition/disposal of a house.

Cllr. G. Donohue questioned how private landowners would maintain a private road and if there could be signage on the road indicating that it was private. J. Cullen advised that signage on roads indicate a 'public road'. It would not be possible to have signage on every road in the County. Having works done to a road under the LIS does not exclude the applicant from reapplying again under the scheme at a later date. This is how private landowners can continue to maintain the road.

5. Any Other Business

Cllr. G. Donohue expressed apologies on behalf of Cllr. P. Hynes who could not attend the meeting. Cllr. G. Donohue sought clarification on the PSCI rating and asked if there was a way to find out the rating of a road. J. Cullen advised that he'd get the local area engineer to liaise with Cllr. G Donohue with regard same.

It was agreed to hold the next meeting of the Roads, Transportation and Marine Strategic Policy Committee on Friday 18th September at 10.00am. The 16th December at 10.00am was provisionally put forward for the following SPC meeting; this is to be confirmed at the September meeting.

Cllr. Peter Roche Cathaoirleach thanked the committee members for their attendance.

Críochnaigh an cruinniú ansin.

11.25a.m.

Approved by: _____



Cllr. Peter Roche

Cathaoirleach

Roads & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee

Date: 18/9/2020