

MINUTES OF THE TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE
ON WEDNESDAY 6TH OCTOBER 2021 AT 11.00am

I Láthair:

Baill: Cllr. Peter Roche (Cathaoirleach)
Cllr. Jim Cuddy
Cllr. Albert Dolan
Comh. Tomás Ó Curraoin
Cllr. Gerry King
Mr. Diarmaid Kelly
Mr. Kenny Deery

Oifigí: Mr. Derek Pender, A/Director of Services, Infrastructure and Operations Unit
Mr. Damien Mitchell, Senior Engineer, Infrastructure and Operations Unit
Ms. Fiona Holland, Senior Engineer
Ms. Sajil Elwood, Assistant Staff Officer

Apologies: Cllr. Geraldine Donohue
Cllr. Pat Hynes
Ms. Eibhlin Curran, Administrative Officer

Absent: Mr. Martin Gibbons
Mr. Tom Madden

ITEM NO. 1 - MINUTES OF ROADS & TRANSPORTATION SPC MEETING HELD ON THE 30th June 2021.

On the **Proposal** of Cllr. Jim Cuddy and **Seconded** by Cllr. Albert Dolan, the minutes of the meeting of the Transportation & Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee held on 30th June 2021 were agreed and adopted.

Matters arising:

Cllr. Cuddy referred to the issue of the bi-lingual signage on the M17 and queried has Galway County Council impressed upon by the T.I.I. the need for these signs on the motorway.

Mr. Pender advised that he would write to the T.I.I. on behalf of the SPC Committee. Cllr. Roche commented that this issue is dragging on and correspondence needs to issue.

ITEM NO. 2 – DRAFT POLICY ON ROADSIDE MEMORIALS.

Cllr. Roche advised that the Draft Policy on Roadside Memorials had been an Item on the June Plenary Meeting and was referred to the SPC by the elected members as there wasn't agreement reached and the Draft Policy was not adopted.

Mr. Pender advised on foot of been referred back, it was agreed that the SPC would give further consideration to the draft policy and a commitment was given that input would be sought from all the elected members.

It was agreed that notification would be sent to all the elected members, inviting them to make their submissions. Cllr. Dolan concurred that this was the right approach to invite all elected members to give their feedback and that as a result they would end up with a more rounded policy that can be brought back to the plenary meeting for adoption by the elected members.

ITEM NO. 3 – DRAFT BYELAWS FOR INIS OIRR PIER.

Report dated 28th September 2021 was circulated to the members of the SPC prior to the meeting taking place.

Ms. Holland outlined to the members of the SPC the background and need for the Draft Byelaws for Inis Oirr Pier. She advised that for many years there have been serious difficulties managing the number of visitors to the island in conjunction with the need for commercial activity including water boat, cargo boat and boating for the fishing industry. There are 3 passenger ferries serving Inis Oirr that at high season bring thousands of passengers to the island. There are no formal regulations on the pier to control activities in a safe manner. The Byelaws aim to regulate activities on the existing pier and to provide for a Harbour Master, with a view to improving the safety of the pier for the Islanders and tourists. The Byelaws are also required to allow construction of the new development of the harbour to take place. She advised that there is a schedule of fees contained within the byelaws, however these fees would not come into effect until the substantial completion of the new pier development. At this point a Chief Executive order would impose the charges/fees for the pier. She advised that the next stages are:

- ***Translate Document***
- ***Public Consultation***
- ***Review submissions***
- ***Prepare Report***
- ***Present to Plenary Council for Adoption***

Matters arising:

Cllr. King commented that this is an important document and is very welcome as this is a busy pier, especially in the summer months. He queried will this apply to other piers going forward.

Ms. Holland replied that this was specific to Inis Oirr Pier only. She advised that there are byelaws for Kilronan Pier in place.

Comh. Ó Curraoin welcomed this document. His only concern was, would similar byelaws be done for smaller piers, that are generally used by the local community.

Cllr. Cuddy welcomed the document, he questioned who will decide on the scale of charges for the pier, would it be GCC or the Harbour Master.

Ms. Holland advised that there is a schedule of charges at the back of the Draft Byelaws and that following public consultation the final draft of the byelaws (which includes the fees) would be presented to plenary council for adoption.

Mr. Kelly thanked Ms. Holland for all the work done on this document. He queried was the map showing the pier as it currently exists.

Ms. Holland replied that the draft byelaws and map are for what is there presently.

Mr. Kelly queried if there are many fishing vessels using this pier, and have the Council engaged with the fishermen. He commented that he was there recently, and he observed that all the ferries seemed to be arriving at the same time.

Ms. Holland replied that there are fishermen using the slipway at present but are not really able to gain access to the pier structure due to the limited space. The new development will allow for improved access to the pier structure. She advised that it is the intention to regulate and enforce the timings for the arriving of ferries.

Mr. Kelly asked could the document as presented be amended as this matter was not clear from reading the document. He asked was the plan to control and limit the numbers of people on the pier? He noted that no filming is allowed on the pier.

Ms. Holland replied that it was the intention to control the numbers on the pier as far as is reasonably practical and advised that there will be no touting or selling of tickets on the pier.

Cllr. Cuddy queried would there be link-up from ferries leaving from Galway Docks. Ms. Holland replied that they will be creating communication links going forward but at present the ferry leaving Galway Docks does not travel to Inis Oirr Pier.

ITEM NO. 4 – CANCELLED BUS ROUTE X20 GALWAY.

This item was referred to the SPC by the elected members from the September 2021 plenary meeting. Cllr. Roche stated that the concerns of the SPC and elected members of Galway Council need to be voiced to the Department in relation to the cancellation of Bus Route X20.

Cllr. Cuddy highlighted this is a serious issue, the Minister for Transport needs to intervene in this decision and a case needs to be made for the reintroduction of this bus route service.

Comh. Ó Curraoin concurred with Cllr. Cuddy's comments. The government are saying that we need to be reducing traffic congestion on the roads and a decision was made to cancel a bus route.

Cllr King outlined that a similar situation occurred in Cashel, Connemara area recently. Bus Eireann cancelled a bus route without giving any advance notification, resulting in people been left waiting at a bus stop. These snap decisions are affecting rural life. A strong case needs to be made by the SPC.

Mr. Kelly stated that these bus links are vital, and the SPC need to voice their concerns and objections strongly.

Cllr. Dolan outlined that bus routes are a significant link for students, they provide them with access to education facilities and this needs to be emphasised in correspondence to the Minister of Transport.

It was agreed that a letter would issue from the SPC to the Minister of Transport voicing their concerns, making a strong recommendation for the Bus Route to be reinstated.

ITEM NO. 5 – LOVE 30 CAMPAIGN FOR LOWER SPEED LIMITS.

This item was referred to the SPC by the elected members from the September 2021 plenary meeting. Mr. Pender stated that as previously advised by Mr. Mitchell this item is currently been considered by the Minister at a national level and that the Council needs to await the decision of the Minister.

Cllr. Dolan agreed that it would be foolish of the SPC to make any recommendations until the National Policy has been agreed by the Minister.

Cllr. Cuddy concurred with Cllr. Dolan and once the national policy is agreed this will act as a guide for GCC.

Comh. Ó Curraoin referred to the Speed Limit Review that will be taking place next year and suggested that at this time, it could be looked at the issue of speed limits near schools and in housing estates. He outlined that as a result of speed limits changing in areas under the last speed limit review it resulted in some people been refused planning permission.

Mr. Kelly commented that there is a need for specific areas to be made safer and that clarity needs to be sought in relation to this item. He noted that the Love 30 Campaign has been done in parts of Galway city and is working well.

Cllr. Roche queried can electronic speed signs be adjusted accordingly if a speed limit changes in an area. Mr. Mitchell confirmed that they can.

Mr. Mitchell advised that periodic speed limits were introduced for school areas for drop off and pick up times. It was felt that it was more effective to put in periodic signs as there was only a need to reduce speed for a period of time.

ITEM NO. 6 – CORRESPONDENCE

Cllr. Roche advised that he had received correspondence from Dr. Evelyn Francis Parsons in relation to Junction 15 exit on the M6. He wished to advise that this issue was dealt with at local level by the Ballinasloe MD.

ITEM NO. 7 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Comh. Ó Curraoin referred to funding that has been received for providing Bus Shelters under the Active Travel Scheme 2021. He queried is their scope on the design of these bus shelters or is it a standard design, as in some areas the standard design does not provide enough shelter from the weather.

Mr. Mitchell advised that the NTA are responsible for the Bus Shelter Programme and they have a strict criteria, and as part of the funding they have a standard design. If the NTA are providing the funding they manage and provide the bus shelters. He advised that they await to see what level of funding the NTA will provide. He clarified that if the NTA provide the funding they will provide the standard design bus shelter, if the Council provides the funding for the bus shelters, they can design same.

Cllr. Cuddy outlined that there is only one bus shelter in Claregalway. There is no reason why there cannot be another and a pedestrian crossing in this area. Bus shelters need to be provided for people willing to use public transport.

Mr. Deery referred to the delayed decision date by An Bord Pleanála for the proposed ring road for Galway City. He outlined that the business sector is concerned at this stage. He questioned what the view of the SPC for consideration of alternative options is.

Mr. Pender replied that the new decision date is 19th November 2021 and that he would be disappointed if An Bord Pleanála did not approve. He advised that It was premature to be considering alternative options.

Cllr. Cuddy commented that it seems An Bord Pleanála have not enough staff to make a decision, he is getting less optimistic as the decision keeps been deferred. The costs are escalating every time the decision is deferred.

Mr. Kelly referred to the issue of prohibition signage on marine piers, in particular Rinville Pier. He referred to the Cuan Beo survey that was carried out in March 2021 in relation to sea swimming which Rinville Pier was part off. He sought clarity on where it is stated that it is unsafe to swim in these areas and is there a policy in relation to the use of these piers. These signs have made the piers unattractive, and he feels the use of these signs is inappropriate.

Cllr. Cuddy outlined that Rinville pier attracts swimmers all year round, and no incidents have taken place, it is a popular swimming area.

Ms. Holland replied to Mr. Kelly's comments and advised that concerns were raised by locals and Water Safety Ireland in relation to swimming at Rinville Pier. Water Safety Ireland recommend that people swim in designated bathing areas. It was as result of this that the signs where erected.

Mr. Kelly stated that they need to be enhancing these facilities, and advised that the local community are upset with the erection of these signs.

Mr. Kelly looked for an update in relation to East Galway WWTP. Mr. Pender advised that he would revert back to him in relation to this matter.

Cllr. Dolan sought an update on how much of the funding has been spent to date in relation to the Active Travel Programme, and a timeline for completion.

Mr. Mitchell replied that all funding has been allocated to the MD areas and that approx. 60% of the works are complete. The Roads Programme generally finishes in September and after that period other projects can begin. The works are on-going in all MD areas, subject to contractor's availability.

Cllr. King referred to the issue of speeding and speed limit signs, especially along the N59 route. He queried is there another means of traffic/speed reduction.

Mr. Pender replied that it is fundamentally a speed limit, but the enforcement of same is the issue. Speed vans seem to work as a deterrent. To receive funding for traffic calming there is a criteria set down.

Cllr. King queried in relation to the issue of invasive species, is there an eradication programme in place.

Mr. Pender replied that the TII have a technical guidance publication for the management of invasive species along national routes only.

Mr. Mitchell replied that a small amount of funding may be available in relation to invasive species along local roads, they are currently compiling a programme of works. There is no specific funding given for this issue.

Cllr. Cuddy commented on the recent resurfacing works that have taken place in his area, advising it was a quality job and gave credit to the staff at MD and headquarters for a job well done.

Cllr. Roche referred to the issue of verge trimming/hedge cutting and queried is there a sufficient budget in place.

Mr. Mitchell replied there is a huge cost involved in carrying out these works for County Galway. There is a lack of funding and he is aware that the Elected Members donate their Notice of Motion monies towards carrying out these works in their respective MD areas. Priority is given to areas where there are health and safety issues. This year it is to be part of the budgetary process to allocate monies for these works.

Cllr. King queried could the verge trimming begin in September, could the start date be brought forward to 1st September.

Mr. Mitchell replied that getting contractors would be an issue, they are still heavily involved in the Roads Programme works at that time of year.

Cllr. Dolan proposed that it be considered to commence with the local roads before moving onto the national roads.

Mr. Mitchell advised that they are two separate contracts, the TII are responsible for national roads. He advised that the work is prioritised on the basis of busiest/heavily trafficked roads.

Comh. Ó Curraoin looked for clarity as to who is responsible for hedge growth over hanging from inside walls.

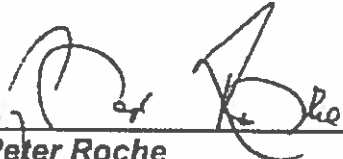
Mr. Mitchell replied there is legislation in place, stating the landowner is responsible for inside the wall. The procedure is that Area Offices normally approach the landowners in question.

It was agreed that the next Transportation and Infrastructure meeting would take place on Wednesday, 8th December 2021 at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae.

Cllr. Roche, Cathaoirleach thanked the committee members for their attendance and concluded the meeting.

Críochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

**Signed &
Approved by:**



Cllr. Peter Roche
Cathaoirleach
Transportation & Infrastructure S.P.C.

Date: 8/12/2021

