

**MINUTES OF THE TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ONLINE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
ON MONDAY 29th MARCH AT 12.00 p.m.**

I Láthair:

Baill: Cllr. Peter Roche (Cathaoirleach)
Cllr. Geraldine Donohue
Cllr. Jim Cuddy
Cllr. Gerry King
Cllr. Albert Dolan
Mr. Diarmaid Kelly

Oifigi: Mr. Jim Cullen, Director of Services, Infrastructure and Operations Unit
Mr. Damien Mitchell, Senior Engineer, Infrastructure and Operations Unit
Ms. Eibhlin Curran, Administrative Officer, Infrastructure and Operations Unit
Mr. Enda Gallagher, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. Kurt Lydon, Senior Executive Technician
Ms. Sajil Elwood, Assistant Staff Officer
Ms. Noirin Rabbitte, Clerical Officer

Apologies: Comh. Tomás Ó Curraoin
Cllr. Pat Hynes

Absent: Mr. Tom Madden
Mr. Martin Gibbons
Mr. Kenny Deery

**ITEM NO. 1 - MINUTES OF MEETING OF TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE SPC HELD ON
17th DECEMBER 2020**

On the **Proposal** of Cllr. Albert Dolan and **Seconded** by Cllr. Geraldine Donohue, the minutes of the meeting of the Transportation & Infrastructure Strategic Policy committee held on 17th December 2020 were agreed and adopted.

Matters arising from the minutes:

Cllr. Cuddy referred to page 2 of the minutes and looked for an update on the progress of the bilingual signage on the motorways. He raised a query with regard to roads that are repaired under L.I.S. and asked what the procedure in order for the Council to take these roads in charge.

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Mr. Cullen replied that no further progress had taken place in relation to the bilingual signage, that there were legislative issues with regard to the official language act. With regards to roads repaired under L.I.S. the terms of the scheme are for upgrading of private roads. He advised that roads are taken in charge on a case by case basis.

Cllr. Roche referred to the issue that all North Galway are disadvantaged by the lack of signage coming of the N17 motorway.

Mr. Cullen replied that this issue is still in progress and needs to be followed up with the T.I.I.

Cllr. Roche referred to Mountbellew, Moylough and Ballygar villages and that are heavily populated and there were not chosen to receive signage. He asked Mr. Cullen to pursue this issue.

ITEM NO. 2 – GORT LOWLANDS & SOUTH GALWAY FLOOD RELIEF SCHEME UPDATE.

Mr. Enda Gallagher presented and outlined the presentation to the members of the SPC.

Matters arising:

Cllr. Roche thanked Mr. Gallagher for a very comprehensive report that he presented.

Cllr. Donohue referred to the submission deadline, and that it was to be extended. She outlined that landowners are very concerned, and they would like a representative from Ryan Hanley to meet with them on the ground. She advised she is encouraging them to make their submissions.

Mr. D. Kelly outlined that he was disappointed with the whole catchment approach taken in relation to the Slieve Aughty area. He advised that he noted the recommendation made in the feasibility study. Mr. Kelly made reference to submissions that were made. He noted that the feasibility report referenced the American Oyster, he outlined that he feels the concerns in relation to the impact on the Oyster are not being taken seriously. He said that Galway Bay area is a complex area and asked will it be included in Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). Based on the feedback he was receiving from the public, he queried in relation to the channel works - what is the plan for the land post development and will there be restrictions.

Cllr. Donohue referred to the issue of raising the road and will this impact on landowners. She asked will the channel works be taking a lot of farmers area aid?

Cllr. Roche referred to the 16km of channel works and would they be cutting through landowner's land and has same be directed to willing landowners to allow drainage scheme.

Mr. Gallagher referred to Cllr. Donohue's comments and advised that once Covid restrictions have been lifted they would assess if it was suitable to send staff out to meet landowners on the ground. He advised it is proposed to come back to the Elected Members and SPC Committee to identify which landowners wish to meet with them. He advised that at present 10 landowners have been in contact. With regard to the issue of raising the road, it hasn't been an issue so far, it only occurred in one area Caherbroder and he advised they spoke with the landowner in advance to any works being done. He advised when dealing

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with major schemes, there will be detailed plans made available and they will liaise landowners. In relation to impact on farmers entitlements, he advised that it is proposed to have an Agronomist on the ground and that they be preparing a FAQ also.

In reply to Mr. Kelly's comments he advised that there is a link in the report which deals with catchment and slow the flow proposal. In relation to lowland flooding, there have been minor issues. With regard to the TCD Report on the Slieve Aughty Mountains, he advised that this report is outside of the Council's power. With regard to the public consultation period, he advised they have carried out a lot of detailed design and that they are in position to provide this information to the landowners. They have asked the farmers to inform the Council what they need and they will reply to them. If there are specific queries, they will be dealt with through Mott MacDonald Environmental Consultants. He advised the Council would be delighted to receive feedback on biodiversity for Galway Bay area. Galway Bay will be looked at in terms of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report. With regard to restrictions on lands and will they be fenced off, he advised that these lands will be fenced off and they will be looking at reinstating the land back to agricultural lands.

In reply to Cllr. Roche's comments, he advised that ideally, they would welcome buy-in from landowners, so that is why the submission period is extended. He advised there won't be much widespread flooding, and that they have been very open in relation to this issue and that is why there is a public consultation. He advised that where possible they will look at amending existing proposal. He advised that any area that they are looking at to put in channels, they are on flood flow routes. He advised that the process will be, that they will be seeking Ministerial permission and that the process will not be called a CPO but effectively it will be. He is aware that not everybody will be happy to see the Council go through their lands and that they will be engaging with around 130 landowners.

Cllr. Cuddy asked for clarity on the difference between a Flood Relief and Drainage Scheme.

Mr. Gallagher advised that he would circulate the presentation and asked Mr. D. Kelly to contact him directly and he will advise him on his concerns/issues raised.

ITEM NO. 3 – CONAMARA GREENWAY UPDATE

Mr. Kurt Lydon presented and outlined the presentation to the members of the SPC.

Matters arising:

Cllr. Roche thanked Mr. Lydon for a very comprehensive report that he presented.

Cllr. G. King looked for an update in relation to Derrygimlagh/Marconi Greenway. Mr. K. Lydon advised that it was gone to tender and that they are waiting on the Department to sign off on same and appoint consultants.

Cllr. P. Roche enquired as to whether they had opposition from rail enthusiasts. Mr. Lydon replied that they didn't encounter any issues.

ITEM NO. 4 – RENVILLE PIER RISK ASSESSMENT REVIEW

Cllr. Donohue advised she put forward this item for the agenda, so that the members and committee could learn from this risk assessment review. She outlined how she feels Renville Pier is the jewel in the crown and that clarity needs to be sought on the issue of ownership. Swimming has become very popular at present and it needs to be teased out the issues that are arising and that she hopes they can learn from this risk assessment review.

Cllr. Cuddy outlined how Renville Pier has great potential and that the Council need to be looking at the possibility of making it a designated bathing area.

Mr. Kelly advised that Cuan Beo carried out a survey in March in relation to sea swimmers, a total of 337 people took part. Renville Pier and Traught Beach are the most popular areas. He outlined that the following works are needed at these locations: improved access; handrails; clean algae free water; clear access; carparking and a tap. He asked is there a policy in place with regards to swimmers using the Pier. He noted that there is no swimming signage in place and questioned if this could be legally enforced or is simply an advisory notice.

Mr. Cullen replied that there are many popular areas in the county for swimming, some busier than others. He advised that the signage currently in place is advisory only and swimming there is at the individuals own risk. He also stated that Galway County Council cannot make every place a designated bathing area. In order to be a designated bathing area there is a process that needs to be taken which includes water sampling over a number of years and it falls under the remit of the Environment Section. He outlined that Renville Pier is a very busy area and it was, in that context, that is not designated as safe. He advised that there are currently 250 piers, 100 of which are taking in charge. He advised that maintenance and improvement works is required in Renville. He referred to the Risk Assessment and how it was quite conclusive and that it makes it clear that Renville is not safe for swimming.

Cllr. Donohue commented that she feels there is room for improvement, more needs to be done and that the Renville Pier Users Group have highlighted they have concerns regarding boats that are been docked at pier and left to rot.

Cllr. Roche advised Cllr. Donohue to liaise with Mr. Damien Mitchell in relation to these issues.

Cllr. Cuddy highlighted that Renville Pier is used by professional swimmers, and that it may be a good idea to engage with the swimmers.

Mr. Kelly commented that he is aware that the area is not designated for swimming but that the Council needs to be mindful as they have responsibility for piers. He advised that he forward a copy of the survey to Mr. Cullen.

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ITEM NO. 5 – NOTICE OF MOTION REFERRAL FROM PLENARY COUNCIL

Cllr. Roche advised that this Notice of Motion regarding public lighting was referred to the SPC from the March Plenary meeting.

'The last 12 months has seen increased walking activity in our towns and villages, a very welcome development and once which we hope will continue. The lack of public lighting on some of our footpaths on the outskirts of towns and villages has been one cause of concern with respect to safety. Currently there is no public funding under the Roads Program for the provision of new Public Lights.

This motion requests that for 2021 and 2022, that the current limit of funding be each Councillor through NOM for 1 Public Light per year, be increased to a max of 3 per year to address this issued and let it be one Covid legacy to our communities from local public representatives'.

Cllr. Cuddy advised that he supports this NOM and that they need to be encouraging to walk and they need to be able to so safely.

Cllr. King said how this issue has been raised before and asked can they get a clear answer as soon as possible. He asked to know what types of funding are available and the amount of lights per annum that can be allocated and funded.

Mr. Kelly commented that the PPN is very supportive on this issue.

Cllr. Dolan looked for more clarity in relation to this item in relation to costs, is it a set cost.

Mr. Mitchell replied to the issues raised and advised that the costs are those that were adopted under the 2017 policy, and that costs depend more on the location of the light. Civil works costs are very expensive. He clarified that €3,000 is the maximum allocation. He advised that there is a facility there for a number of Councillors to come together to create a scheme and that this NOM is to give an individual Councillor the option.

Mr. Cullen outlined that this €3,000 from NOM is monies that are used towards payroll etc. So he advised that the more that is spend on lighting, than there is less money available for road maintenance. He advised that this NOM can be accommodated based on the additional funding received under Active Travel.

Mr. Mitchell referred to Cllr. Kings comments and confirmed that this is funded from the maintenance budget.

Cllr. Roche commented that he thought the policy was in place until all public lights are at a standard, there would be no new lighting provided.

Mr. Mitchell replied to Cllr. Roche and advised that he was not aware of the policy he referred too.

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Cllr. Roche asked for clarity on what was the situation were there was public lights in use, that are no longer required. Mr. Mitchell asked Cllr. Roche to advise him of the area that this was an issue and it could be arranged to have the public light disconnected.

On the **Proposal** of Cllr. Albert Dolan and **Seconded** by Diarmaid Kelly this Motion as proposed was agreed.

Cllr. Cuddy looked for clarity on what was the procedure once the SPC had agreed this NOM.

Mr. Cullen advised that the following was the procedure:

- This NOM was referred to the SPC from the March Plenary meeting
- SPC has now considered the NOM and is in agreement with the proposal
- The NOM will now appear as a NOM on the April Agenda for the plenary meeting
- Reply will be submitted by Mr. Cullen to this NOM and it will include that the Roads SPC are recommending the NOM.

ITEM NO. 6 – CORRESPONDENCE

E. Curran advised that Cllr. Donohue had submitted correspondence to be circulated to the SPC Committee.

Cllr. Donohue outlined that she was aware that a lot of the members had received a copy of this correspondence in relation to the issue of buses/coaches have no toilet facilities available to them for stop offs, as hotels etc. are closed due to Covid restrictions.

Cllr. Roche advised that this item needs greater discussion and that it will be put on as an item on the next agenda for the Roads SPC.

ITEM NO. 7 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr. Roche raised the issue of 20 Minute Hill and looked for clarity was there an issue. Mr. Cullen replied that there is an issue with the tender documents submitted and that they are going to have to re-tender.

Cllr. Roche looked for an update in relation to N63 Scheme, and for an update on the allocation for Flood Relief Scheme in Bullaun and Ardskeamore.

Mr. Mitchell advised that he get Fergal Fahy to update Cllr. Roche on these issues raised. He said that he is aware that funding was allocated, but that it was not sufficient.

Mr. Cullen replied that there is an emerging preferred route and that he is finalising environmental issues and the application will then be submitted to An Bord Pleanala, hopefully in the next second quarter.

Cllr. King looked to know what the procedure is for apply for a bus shelter funding. Mr. Mitchell replied that you can apply under the Active Travel funding recently announced. He outlined that the criteria is the problem as the department are only considering areas with high volumes, which in County Galway, there is just two towns. He advised the NTA are revisiting the scheme. He advised Cllr. King to forward his query to him.

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Cllr. Cuddy looked for an update on traffic calming in relation to the bus corridor. Mr. Mitchell advised that Galway City Council was dealing with this matter and that they will soon be starting the Part 8 process. He advised that he is aware that funding is in place and that he will request an update from the City Council.

Cllr. Roche, Cathaoirleach thanked the committee members for their attendance and the staff of the Roads Section for all their help in arranging the SPC meeting and concluded the meeting.

Criochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Signed &

Approved by:



Cllr. Peter Roche

Cathaoirleach

Transportation & Infrastructure S.P.C.

Date:

9/8/21

