

Minutes of the Roads and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 15th March 2016 in Room G01, Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway.

I Láthair:

Baill: Cllr Michael Maher
Cllr James Charity
Cllr Michael Connolly
Cllr Des Joyce
Comh Seosamh Ó Cualáin
Cllr Peter Roche
Cllr Martina Kinane
Cllr Joe Byrne
Mr Mark Coffey
Mr Tom Madden

Oifigí: Mr Liam Gavin, Director of Services, Roads, Transportation, Marine and General Services Unit
Mr Michael Timmins, Senior Engineer, National Roads Project Office
Mr John Leahy, A/Senior Engineer, Roads, Transportation, Marine and General Services Unit
Mr Adrian Headd, A/Senior Executive Engineer, Roads, Transportation, Marine and General Services Unit
Mr Tony Collins, Project Engineer, National Roads Project Office
Ms Nuala Heffernan, Administrative Officer, Roads, Transportation, Marine and General Services Unit
Ms Anne Monaghan, Staff Officer, Roads, Transportation, Marine and General Services Unit

1. Minutes of meeting of Roads SPC 20th January 2016

On the proposal of Comh Ó Cualáin, seconded by Cllr Byrne, the minutes of the meeting of the Roads Strategic Policy Committee were agreed and adopted.

2. Update on Roads reclassification

Mr Gavin circulated copies of 2 reports with maps attached:

1. Report prepared by engineering staff of Transport Infrastructure Ireland on the proposed reclassification of National Roads in the vicinity of Motorway, for implementation when the Motorway comes into use in 2018. The report includes the recommendations of the TII with regards to the reclassification of current National Roads to Regional Roads and has been submitted to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for their consideration.
2. Report prepared by Tony Collins, NRPO, Galway County Council, with the recommendations of the Council in relation to the reclassification of roads. Mr Gavin confirmed that this report has also been submitted to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for their consideration.

Mr Gavin outlined the main details of each report and advised, that if the recommendations included in the report prepared by the TII were implemented there would be no National Route coming into Galway City. It is proposed to reclassify the N17 into Galway City, the N63 from Annagh Hill to Loughgeorge and the N67 from Kilcolgan to Galway as Regional Roads. He advised that there would be a significant reduction in funding if these roads were reclassified as the funding for Regional Roads is inadequate and much less than the funding provided for National Roads. He confirmed that the final decision regarding the reclassification lies with the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport.

Cllr Byrne referred to the road between Kiltarnan and Kilcolgan and said that it should be an extension of the N67 rather than a Regional Road as traffic will exit on to it from the Motorway for Kinvara. In response to a query from Cllr Charity, Mr Gavin advised that once the decision was made regarding reclassification, it would become effective immediately. He also said that in the submission made by Galway County Council to the Department, that a request had been made for the provision of funding , over a period of four to five year, to overlay roads which are reclassified as Regional Roads. He advised that no such funding was provided for the R446 when it was reclassified. He stated that the report advised the Department that there was no significant reduction in traffic expected on these routes near the City. He said that there was additional costs to maintaining these roads as they have hard shoulders. Cllr Kinane and Joyce expressed astonishment at the potential for the reduction in maintenance funding for these roads. Cllr Connolly said that he doesn't envisage the Motorway being extended beyond Tuam, due to the reduction in traffic levels at this point.

3. Update on Progress of Motorway

Mr Collins, Project Engineer for the M17/M18 Motorway, gave a progress report on the development of the Motorway. He said that it will give connectivity from Knock to Shannon airports and will benefit the development of towns such as Clarinbridge, Gort and Oranmore, allowing them to prosper and focus on local needs. He confirmed that he does not see it extending beyond Tuam,

but that suitable roads will be developed beyond the town. He said that the construction of the Motorway commenced in 2015 and is on target to be completed in late 2017.

Cllr Maher thanked Mr Collins and welcomed the update on the project. Cllr Byrne referred to local concerns regarding potential for caravans to take up residence on access roads near roundabout in Gort. He said that controlled access should be provided to these roads for the local landowners only. Cllr Connolly said that there was some concern in Ballyglunin about some schools being cut off. Mr Collins said that two bridges were being provided at Brookagh and that the schools would not be cut off. In response to a query from Cllr Connolly, Mr Collins confirmed that the Annagh Hill railway bridge scheme was separate from the development of the Motorway. Following concerns about potential flooding expressed by Cllr Maher, Mr Collins advised that four flood relief culverts are being provided at Raheen. He said that consultation would take place with the Office of Public Works regarding the size and specific location of these. He said that the flooding situation would not be improved by this development but would also not be disimproved. Mr Collins said that there is a 24 helpline available for complaints and there is also a liaison committee in place to deal with concerns raised. Cllr Byrne confirmed that Kiltarnan school have been advised that works near the school will be done during school holidays. Mr Collins said that it is anticipated that funding will be provided when the works are completed to repair routes which are being used as specified haulage routes. He advised that the Council would work with local landowners with a view to handing back some excess lands, when works are completed, with the landowners responsible for refencing costs. He confirmed the schedule for the overbridges as – R446 to be completed in May 2016, N18 to be completed in June 2016 and at Caherpeak at the end of 2016. Cllr Maher suggested that a presentation is made to the plenary Council regarding the progress of the Motorway project.

4. Pay Parking

Mr Headd presented a detailed report on the current status of pay parking charges in County Galway and the effect of two options for change as requested by Councillors at plenary Council – the provision of 2 hours free parking from 9 to 11 daily or the provision of 2 hours free parking anytime during the day, in addition to the amount of parking paid for, e.g. 20c allows for 12 paid minutes plus 2 hours free.

Cllr Maher thanked Mr Headd for his comprehensive report. He said that there had been extensive discussion previously regarding pay parking options and this report clearly laid out the implications of the proposed changes. He said that the members of the SPC needed to be clear in what was being proposed to the plenary Council. Cllr Kinane said that the figures provided evidence that the Municipal District of Athenry/Oranmore was bringing in the most income but was not benefitting from it. Cllr Charity said that option two is not feasible due to the financial implications. He said that he would struggle to support any proposal to reduce the income of the Council for road repairs. In response to a query from Cllr Joyce, Mr Gavin advised that the plenary Council had sent back the issue of changes to pay parking to the Roads and Transportation SPC for consideration and recommendation. He said that each Municipal District can make the decision for their District but that it would be more favourable to have consistency across the County. Comh Ó Cualáin said that there were no complaints in Conamara regarding the current pay parking system and that he was not in favour of reducing road repairs income. Cllr Connolly suggested that there could be a decision to increase the minimum charge to 50 cent. Mr Headd said that this would be a significant change

and increase on the current minimum of 20 cent. Cllr Maher said that the members would take away the report, discuss it with their colleagues and prepare a proposal for the plenary Council. Cllr Byrne proposed that the final proposal go to the plenary Council in April.

5. Roads Funding Model

Mr Gavin advised that some members of the Roads and Transportation SPC had asked that consideration be given to reapportionment of 10% of any additional roads funding provided annually with an emphasis on expenditure on roads within 25km of Galway City. He said that there was not unanimous agreement at the SPC to this proposal. He said that the Chairman of the SPC could make a proposal at the plenary Council, but as part of this proposal, could advise that there was not universal agreement to it. It was decided that a summary of the proposal would be prepared and presented at the next Roads and Transportation SPC with the final proposal presented to the plenary Council in April. Mr Gavin confirmed that the norm would be that decisions of the SPC are agreed and presented as such to the plenary Council but that this is not the case in this instance.

6. Any Other Business

Cllr Byrne complimented the Council on the work done on the Dunkellin flood relief planning application and the decision today by An Bord Pleanála to grant the application was a significant one for South Galway. In response to a query regarding the progress of the planning application for flood relief works from Kiltarnan to Brandy Harbour, Mr Gavin said that environmental reports have to be reviewed.

It was decided to schedule a Roads and Transportation SPC for Wednesday 06th April 2016 to agree the submissions to the plenary Council on pay parking proposals and the roads funding model.

Críochnagh an cruinniú ansin.

Approved by: _____

Cllr. Michael Maher

Cathaoirleach

Roads & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee

Date: _____