

Minutes of the Roads and Transportation, Strategic Policy Committee meeting held on 6th April 2016 in the Loughrea Municipal District Offices, Loughrea Co Galway.

I Láthair:

Baill: Cllr Michael Maher

Cllr Michael Connolly

Comh Seosamh Ó Cualáin

Cllr Peter Roche

Cllr Martina Kinane

Cllr Joe Byrne

Mr Mark Coffey

Michael Healy

Oifigí: Mr Liam Gavin, Director of Services, Roads, Transportation, Marine and General Services Unit

Mr Adrian Headd, A/Senior Executive Engineer, Roads, Transportation, Marine and General Services Unit

Ms Rose Gaughran, Senior Officer, Roads, Transportation, Marine and General Services Unit

1. Minutes of meeting of Roads SPC 15th March 2016

On the proposal of Cllr Byrne and ,and seconded by Cllr Connolly, the minutes of the meeting of the Roads Strategic Policy Committee held on the 15th March 2016 were agreed and adopted.

Matters arising from the minutes

Cllr Roche stated that the provision of a pedestrian and cycle track at Annaghill (from 2nd roundabout back to the motorway overbridge) which was promised following the realignment of the N63, has not been provided. Liam Gavin agreed to investigate this matter.

Mr. Healy highlighted the number of accidents which have occurred at Moylough.

He requested that the junction at the entrance to the village be examined to see if any measures can be carried out in improve safety at this location.

Cllr Connolly suggested that this work could be carried out under a Community Involvement Scheme.

It was highlighted by the Chairman that the closing date for C.I.Schemes for 2016 is this Friday the 8th April.

2. Pay Parking

Mr. Headd updated the meeting regarding the 'Interim review of Paid Parking Charges' report which was originally presented to the committee at the meeting on the 15th March last.

Cllr Roche stated that he does not agree with changing the charging for parking. These proposals will result in a loss of income for the Council and will cause traffic congestion in the towns. He proposed that the parking charges remain as they are.

Cllrs Connolly and Ó'Cuailín agreed that the parking charges should remain as they are, with the allowance for free parking at Christmas.

Cllr Kinnane stated that there is some merit in the proposals presented as they would support rural businesses. However, as the cost will have to come from the roads programme, we should examine other ways of funding the loss of income. She proposed that a request be made to the Enterprise and Economic Development S.P.C. for an allocation of €89,508 to the Roads and Transportation Section, which would allow the implementation of 2 hours free parking in the towns across the county i.e. option 1 in the report. This would be a measure to support local businesses, without any loss of revenue to the roads maintenance budget.

For now she supported the proposal that parking charges remain as they are.

Cllr Byrne stated that following the earlier decision of the full council, there is an expectation out there, that 2 hours free parking would be implemented. He felt that taking this money out of road maintenance budget would not create a real problem and it may result in extra rates revenue.

Cllr Maher emphasised that a clear and definite proposal should go back to the full council from this meeting.

Cllr Connolly pointed out that other counties do not have parking fees and this draws business away from Galway towns e.g. Roscommon. Overall government funding for roads maintenance is the real issue here.

Mr. Gavin clarified that there are 2 options set out for consideration in the report. Other proposals were not considered at this time.

He does not believe that parking charges are a major issue for businesses.

Payment of parking fees also serves to regulate traffic and parking in the towns.

Payment of rates is a completely separate issue.

Galway County council would need €1m extra in funding to maintain the roads properly.

He also said that there should be a consistent approach across the county and that the same parking arrangements should apply in all Municipal Districts.

Cllr Roche asked that this matter be dealt with responsibly today and that a universal plan be agreed for the county. He does not agree that money should be taken from the roads budget.

Mr. Healy said that more funds should be allocated from central funds to make up the shortfall for free parking.

Cllr Kinane emphasised once again that funding be sought from the Enterprise and Economic Development S.P.C.

Cllr O'Cuailín pointed out that not all towns in Conamara have pay & display parking, but business is still down in these locations. We should go back to the government for extra funding as they now have extra income from VRT in 2016.

Cllr Byrne said that meetings had taken place with Minister O'Donoghue in previous years, which resulted in an extra allocation of €1.6m for road maintenance being approved in 2015. It is hoped that a similar allocation may be made available in 2016.

It was proposed by Cllr Roche and seconded by Cllr Kinnane that parking charges remain as they are, with free parking from 11.00 o clock each day for the month of December. Also funding be sought from the Enterprise and Economic Development S.P.C. as outlined previously.

Cllr Byrne proposed that free parking be allowed from 9.00am to 11.00 am each day (option 1 of the report).

As there was no seconder for Cllr Byrnes' proposal, the first proposal was carried.

Cllr Connolly and Mr. Headd left the meeting at this point.

3. Roads Funding Model

A report prepared by Mr. Gavin on the Apportionment of Roads Funding was circulated to the meeting. It proposes the redistribution of 10% from any additional funding allocated to non-national roads during the year. This funding would be taken off the top of the allocation and redistributed to regional and local roads maintenance in an area, within 25km of Galway City – outlined in red on the attached map.

Cllr Roche stated that he is vehemently opposed to the reapportionment of additional roads funding as proposed in this report. This will allow extra funding to areas around Galway City, which are well served at present and have the benefit of a motorway. It reduces funds for roads outside the area outlined on the map, where roads are in a very poor condition. The method of distribution used at present works very well and should not be changed.

Cllr Kinnane took up this issue to get fairness in relation to the distribution of funding for roads maintenance across the county. The population, volume and weight of traffic within the 25km circle outlined on the map, are much higher and therefore causing much more damage to roads in this area. This has to be acknowledged and the distribution of 10% of any additional funding would be a measure to address this problem. If this redistribution does not happen, the Athenry Oranmore Area would be better off being amalgamated with Galway City.

We need to show that we are considering the county as a whole. She suggested that, if there is a new Minister for Rural Development appointed in the new Government, a request should be made to this Minister for a meeting with Galway County Council

Cllr Maher stated that he is in agreement with the proposal for the redistribution of 10% of additional funding only. This does not apply to the original allocation of funds each year under the roads programme. This is an opportunity for change.

Cllr Byrne felt that it is a major issue to ask Councillors to agree to lose funding from their respective areas. If there is any expectation that the Athenry Oranmore MD will be amalgamated with the city, this redistribution of funds should not be agreed.

Mr. Gavin stated that surveys show traffic is heavier and doing more damage within the 25 km zone outlined on the map. This redistribution will only come into effect if additional funding is received during

the year. Additional funding has been received in four out of the last ten years. This report shows the reduction of funds from each area. Ballinasloe MD will be the worst affected as it will not receive any of the redistributed 10% of funding. All other areas will benefit from the redistribution. The report circulated does not identify the method of dividing out the 10% of funds.

Cllr O' Cualain stated that a lot of roads outside the 25 km zone will be neglected as a result of this proposal. This is particularly true in the Conamara area where the terrain is very difficult and maintenance works cost more and don't last as long. He has no problem in allowing the report to go forward to the full council meeting for discussion.

Cllr Maher proposed that discussion of this item be postponed to the next meeting of the SPC to allow for more detailed figures in relation to the redistribution of funds to the roads around the city. This was agreed by the meeting.

4. Any Other Business

Mr. Healy requested that a reflector be provided at Collerans corner Moylough.

Liam Gavin agreed to look into this.

The Community in Moylough are seeking to extend the cemetery. At present there is a very narrow footpath from the church to the cemetery which is in a 100km speed limit zone. The speed limit needs to be brought out past the bad bend at this location.

Galway Co Co should support the community by providing a car park for the graveyard.

Mr. Gavin replied that the matters relating to the graveyard are a matter for the Environment section.

The proposal regarding the speed limit extension can be considered as part of the current review of speed limits.

Cllr O'Cualain enquired if there is a budget for safety barriers in 2016.

There is a safety issue on the R336 where safety barriers are required.

Mr. Gavin confirmed that the T.I.I. provided funding for safety barriers on National routes only. The location(s) concerned can be considered for funding under the low cost safety accident scheme in 2017.

Cllr Byrne asked if NOM money can be allocated to the provision of warning/speeding signs.

He also enquired if he can still make submission a submission regarding review of speed limits.

Mr. Gavin confirmed that NOM money cannot be allocated to the provision of speeding/warning/flashing signs etc. If excessive speeding is happening on particular roads, then details should be given to him and traffic/speed counts can be considered at these locations. If excessive speeding is recorded, then the matter can be passed on to the Gardai for follow up action under the road traffic acts.

Submissions for consideration under the current review of speed limits should be sent directly to him as soon as possible.

It was agreed that a meeting of the Roads and Transportation SPC will be held on Wednesday 8th June at 10.00am in Aras an Chontae.

Críochnagh an cruinniú ansin.

Approved by: _____

Cllr. Michael Maher

Cathaoirleach

Roads & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee

Date: _____