

Minutes of the Roads and Transportation, Strategic Policy Committee meeting
held on 15th May 2017 in Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway

Minutes of the Roads and Transportation, Strategic Policy Committee meeting held on 15th May 2017 at 11.00 a.m. in the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway.

I Láthair:

Baill: Cllr Michael Finnerty

Cllr James Charity

Cllr Des Joyce

Cllr Martina Kinane

Cllr Michael Maher

Comh Seosamh Ó Cualáin

Mr Mark Coffey

Mr Bryan Egan

Mr Michael Healy

Oifigí: Mr Michael Timmins, Acting Director of Services, Roads, Transportation, Marine and General Services Unit

Mr Damien Mitchell, Senior Engineer, Roads, Transportation, Marine and General Services Unit

Ms Máire Ní Chionna, Senior Engineer, Roads, Transportation, Marine and General Services Unit

Mr Enda Mulryan, A/Senior Executive Engineer, Roads, Transportation, Marine and General Services Unit

Ms Nuala Heffernan, Administrative Officer, Roads, Transportation, Marine and General Services Unit

A vote of sympathy was passed on behalf of the members of the Roads and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee on the untimely passing of Liam Gavin, Director of Services, Roads, Transportation, Marine and General Services Unit.

1. Minutes of meeting of Roads SPC held on 08th June 2016

On the proposal of Cllr Maher and seconded by Comh Ó Cualáin, the minutes of the meeting of the Roads Strategic Policy Committee held on the 08th June 2016 were agreed and adopted.

Matters arising from the minutes

Cllr Kinane referred to the options previously considered regarding the distribution of any additional annual roads funding received for Non-National Roads. She referred to the most recent report which examined the consequences, by Municipal District, of reallocating 10% of such additional funding to locations within 25km of Galway City. She proposed that this method of

reallocation of the funding be brought to the plenary Council by the Strategic Policy Committee for their consideration. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Charity. He said that he would support any report that would address the funding imbalance. He suggested that consideration should be given to redistribution of 10% of any additional funding to areas in the County with high volumes of traffic such as major towns. Mr Timmins advised that the current method of distribution of funding on a km basis for each Municipal District basis was a long established method of allocation of funding. He stated that no Municipal District would agree to a reduction in their funding to benefit others. He said that there are many contributing factors to the deterioration of roads including but not limited to traffic volumes, in particular HGV traffic, effects of climate and the type of underlying land. He said the priority should be to source additional funding. He advised that there is currently no indication from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport that any additional roads funding would be made available in 2017. Cllr Maher said that this proposal will not be supported by the vast majority of the Councillors. Cllr Finnerty suggested that Cllr Kinane prepare a Notice of Motion for putting forward to the plenary Council.

Cllr Kinane submitted the following motion, seconded by Cllr Charity:

“I wish to propose that the motion: Seeking 10% of any additional road funding allocated from central government be allocated to roads within 25km of Galway City be placed on the agenda of the next plenary meeting”. Ms Heffernan advised that the motion would not be within the required timeframe of 10 days notification for the May 2017 plenary Council meeting but would be forwarded for inclusion in the June 2017 plenary Council meeting.

2. Public Lighting Policy - Draft

A draft public lighting policy on the provision of public lighting funded from Councillors Notice of Motion allocations was presented by Mr Mulryan. He said that the purpose of compiling a policy was to ensure consistency regarding the provision of such lighting across the Municipal Districts. Cllr Maher noted that he had proposed at the Council budget meeting that each Councillor have the facility to allocate €3,000 from their Notice of Motion funding of €18,500 towards the provision of public lighting. He said that the proposal to only allow public lighting to be provided within an area zoned 60kph would not allow for lighting to be provided at many churches or community centres. Mr Mulryan said that lighting at churches were only of use for 2 to 3 hours per week. He advised that the annual running cost of a public light is approximately €75. In reference to the proposal not to allow public lighting to be provided on timber poles, he advised that the ESB has issued an instruction that no additional public lighting can be provided on timber poles on the network. He explained that the ESB are rolling out a programme of testing on the quality and suitability of their poles, and until such time as those tests are complete they will not allow further additions to the network. Comh Ó Cualáin expressed the opinion that there was an excess of public lighting in some areas while some areas have a deficit of lighting, such as outside shops and hotels whose owners are ratepayers in the County. He suggested that lights

could be turned off at certain times to reduce running costs. Cllr Charity said that any Councillor who represents an area outside of an urban centre will find it hard to support this policy, as

presented. He said that he would not support to reserict the provision of public lighting to areas within 60kph zones. He also said that unless seven Councillors got together to allocate funding for the provision of public lighting in a rural area under this policy, it would be unworkable and impossible to provide additional public lighting in such places. He said that the proposal not to allow any additional public lighting on timber poles should state that they could only be provided on such poles with the prior approval of the ESB. In response to a query from Mr Healy, Mr Mulryan reiterated that the ESB has placed a restriction on the provision of further public lighting on timber poles until their testing programme has been rolled out and completed. Mr Healy said there is a requirement for a public light near the grotto in Moylough due to the number of accidents on this stretch of road in recent times. Mr Mitchell said that if there are several accidents in an area, it is necessary to assess the location to establish what the issues are, that the provision of public lighting alone might not be a solution. He stated that there is a distinction between rural and urban living, in that the same services are not available in rural areas. He advised that the Council has a policy of upgrading its public lighting on a phased basis to a higher standard. Cllr Charity said that those who build houses in rural areas make planning contributions towards public lighting and footpaths and should be provided with them. Mr Egan expressed an opinion that limiting additional public lighting to 60kph zones would exclude its provision in areas outside this zone where it could be necessary. He also suggested that the policy should include a reference to the type of public lighting that is provided. Cllr Charity proposed that; 1) the proposal to limit the provision of lighting in zones of 60kph be amended to 80kph, 2) the proposal to give priority to joint Councillor funding of public lighting schemes be removed, 3) that the embargo on the provision of public lighting on timber poles be amended to state that it would be considered on a case by case basis. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Kinane. Cllr Maher said that he was in favour of including a facility for joint funding by Councillors for a public lighting scheme. Ms Ní Chionna advised that grants are available to upgrade groups of public lights and that this funding could require Councillors to allocate additional funding for such works. Cllr Finnerty suggested that the policy should contain a provision for local communities to provide a contribution towards the provision of additional public lighting. He requested that correspondence issue to the ESB asking them to progress the testing of poles as soon as possible. In response to a query from Cllr Charity, Mr Mulryan confirmed that the maximum cost for the provision of a new public light would be €4,000. He noted that it would be necessary to purchase a new pole for each additional public light as the ESB would not allow any lights to be added to the poles currently in place. Cllr Kinane agreed that communities should be given the option to contribute towards the provision of new public lighting. Cllr Maher said that he is not in favour of including this in the policy. The Cathaoirleach requested that the following motion proceed to a vote:

“that the following be added to the public lighting policy – option would be made available to communities to make a contribution towards the provision of a public light.”

The result of the vote was as follows:

FOR:

Cllr Charity

Cllr Michael Finnerty

Cllr Kinane

(3)

AGAINST:

Cllr Joyce Cllr Maher Comh Ó Cualáin Mr Egan Mr Healy
Mr Coffey

(6)

The result of the vote was noted and the Cathaoirleach declared the vote defeated.

It was agreed that the following amendments would be made to the draft public lighting policy, for presentation at the next meeting of the plenary Council:

1. that the area where public lighting could be considered be increased to areas within **80kph**.
2. that the proposal to give priority to joint Councillor funding of schemes be amended to include **may** give priority.
3. that the proposal that no public lights could be provided on timber ESB poles be amended to include **will be considered on a case by case basis only**.

3. Invasive Species

Leaflets regarding the various invasive species prevalent in County Galway were circulated. Cllr Finnerty said that there had been presentations at meetings of each Municipal District regarding invasive species and the control of them. Ms Ní Chionna advised that there was a control programme in relation to invasive species on National Roads. She said that there were now plans to introduce a programme of control on Non-National Roads.

4. Speed Limits Review – Progress

Mr Timmins outlined the process for the review of speed limits which initially involves input from Transport Infrastructure Ireland in relation to National Roads and from the Council in relation to Non-National Roads. He said that ultimately a document outlining all the speed limits in the County would be produced for public consultation and that he wanted to agree a realistic timeframe with the members for its completion. Ms Ní Chionna advised that in advance of the formal process of public consultation a final draft will be brought to each Municipal District meeting. She said that the draft speed limits for National Roads will be brought before each Municipal District by July 2017 and would then proceed to public consultation. She also confirmed that there would be consultation with the Garda Commissioner as part of the process.

5. Any Other Business

Mr Timmins advised that it was necessary to hold a minimum of 4 meetings of the Strategic Policy Committee each year. It was agreed that the next meeting would be on 19th June 2017 at 11.00a.m. It was further agreed to schedule a meeting in September 2017 at the June 2017 meeting.

Comh Ó Cualáin referred to the inconsistency of the quality of roadworks and works on piers from year to year. He said that the Council should ensure that there is a consistent high quality of work each year on all projects. He said that closer monitoring of the work of sub-contractors by Council staff is required.

Críochnagh an cruinniú ansin.

Approved by: _____

Cllr Michael Finnerty

Cathaoirleach

Roads & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee

Date: _____