

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Report of Oranmore Area Committee Meeting held at Áras an Chontae on the Thursday 10th November 2011

I LATHAIR:-

- Baill:** Cllr. M. Noone (Chairperson)
Cllr. J. Cuddy
Cllr. L. Carroll
Cllr. J. McDonagh
- Oifigh:** Mr. E. Molloy, Senior Engineer, Roads & Transportation Unit
Mr. J. Leahy, Senior Executive Engineer, Tuam/Oranmore Area
Mr. F. McEvoy, Senior Executive Engineer, Roads & Transportation Unit
Mr. S. Breathnach, Senior Executive Engineer, Roads & Transportation Unit
Ms. Liadhan Keady, Assistant Staff Officer, Planning & Sustainable Development Unit
- Apologies:** Mr. A. Comer, Senior Executive Officer, Planning & Sustainable Development Unit
Mr. E. Gallagher, Executive Engineer, Tuam/Oranmore, Area
Mr. J. Coyle, Executive Engineer, Oranmore Area
- RPS Consultants:** Mr. Gerry Carty
Mr. Cian McGuinness

1. Minutes of Meeting dated 26th September 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on the 26th September 2011 were proposed for adoption by Cllr. McDonagh and seconded by Cllr. Cuddy.

Matters Arising:

Cllr. Cuddy requested an update regarding the future of the Oranmore Area Office. In response, Mr. Molloy stated that it was hoped to keep it open until the end of April 2012. Cllr. Cuddy asked as to why the office was being closed. In reply, Mr. Molloy stated that the Area Office was not being closed the activity was simply being moved to County Hall as a survey showed a very low footfall passing through the office and while there was a Clerical Officer based in the office, when that person was on leave no work was taking place and by moving the activity to County Hall this would no longer be an issue. Cllr. Cuddy expressed concern

over the high levels of staff loss in the Oranmore Area. In response, Mr. Molloy stated that have reduced due to the retirement of staff and the embargo not allowing them to be replaced however the area had been amalgamated with the Tuam area which allowed for the responsibility to be given to other staff members namely, John Leahy SEE and Enda Gallagher EE. Mr. Molloy added that going forward to ensure works are completed more works would have to be privatized which in the current climate was a financially good option. Cllr. Carroll enquired as to whether we would have to go through the Tendering process, which was often bureaucratic and caused huge delays, when privatizing such works. In response, Mr. Leahy stated that under Government Legislation we had no choice but to follow Procurement Policies however within the Tuam Area the Tendering process has been carried out at the beginning of the year and no issues had occurred. Mr. Leahy added that at the meeting serious concerns were put forward regarding the real need for crews in the Oranmore Area and he stated that they are aware of these and are working to address them. In response to this, he stated that an extra crew had been mobilized to Oranmore, and would weather permitting, spend the coming months patching problem areas. Cllr. Cuddy asked where the crew had come from, and Mr. Leahy stated Connemara. Cllr. Cuddy expressed concern that this would deprive that area and in response Mr. Molloy stated that we could no longer think of the County with regard to areas, it had to be the whole County and therefore staff would go where the need is greatest. He further added that it is the intention of the Dept to fund the Maintenance programme properly to such a stage where we can get past just patching potholes. Mr. Leahy added that it is his intention when preparing funding for Roads Restoration works in the New Year that bad sections would be treated by the use of Bound Products such as DBM.

Cllr. Cuddy enquired as to whether Galway County Council had sought additional funding. In response, Mr. Molloy stated it had been sought wherever the opportunity arose.

Cllr. McDonagh proposed that each member should be allowed to nominate a road for priority works within the Annual Roads Programme; this was seconded by Cllr. Cuddy.

Mr. Molloy stated that every year the Area Engineer puts together the programme for their areas knowing that they must be approved by the representatives. Mr. Leahy added that the only reason a road maybe left out is due to the fact that those roads with the greatest traffic will always win out over those with less.

2. Presentation by RPS Consulting Engineers on the Preferred Route Corridor for the N17 Baile Chláir Inner Relief Road

Mr. Carty informed the meeting that **Traffic Volume Counts** carried out for 2011 around Claregalway showed the following:

- North of Claregalway - 21,000 vehicles per day
- N18 South of Claregalway – 9,000 vehicles per day
- N17 South of Claregalway – 17,000 vehicles per day
- Cregmore Bridge – 3,000 vehicles per day.

Mr. Carty stated that the **Progress to-date** is as follows:

- The Claregalway Local Area Plan showed a reserved line for the by-pass to the South & East of Claregalway.
- 4 Routes had been looked at; Blue/Red, close to the line reserved in the LAP and Orange/Green, North and West of Claregalway.

The factors taken into consideration regarding the routes included:

- Habitats Directive – Limestone Pavement found along the Red Line
- Lough Corrib SAC
- Flooding experience in 2009
- Impact on Archaeological issues around the Cemetery and Abbey ruins.

1st Public Consultation has taken place and the following was evident:

- Very strong support for a route
- Strong preference for the Red/Blue route
- Opposition to the Orange/Green route.

RPS Conclusion

Blue Route is the best option available for the following reasons:

- Strong public support
- Minimal impacts on the SAC
- Avoids the Annex 1 Habitat i.e. Limestone Pavement
- Generally avoids the areas flooded in 2009
- No impact on the Cathedral and Abbey ruins
- It best deals with N18 Traffic.

Steps going forward:

- 2nd Public Consultation – hoped to take place week of 21st November 2011 in the Claregalway Hotel
- Route Selection Report
- Preliminary Design
- Alignment, Junctions, Drainage

- Visit to each Landowner
- Accommodation Works i.e. Access to land for landowners
- Consultation with the NPWS re new Bridge over the Clare River
- Finalisation of Business Case – request funding
- EIS
- Prepare CPO.

Mr. Carty opened the floor to questions.

Cllr. Carroll asked what the actual timescale to CPO stage would be. In response Mr. Carty stated that if all things go ahead it would be expected in the 3rd – 4th quarter of 2012. Cllr. Carroll expressed concerns that considering the current economic climate it was very important to give the public a realistic view on how long it could actually take to complete this project. In response Mr. Molloy stated that it was very important at this stage to decide on a route, which would allow for the following steps to be carried out so that once funding was available the work could progress. Mr. McEvoy added that once a route was selected the current planning restrictions in place on the other 3 proposed routes could be lifted which was important for the people of Claregalway.

The Chairperson agreed with Cllr. Carroll in that it is very important to manage expectations of the public with regard to this project.

Cllr. McDonagh enquired how long it would take to build the Inner Relief Road. Mr. Carty stated that it would be approximately a 3 year cycle from tendering process to completion.

The Chairperson expressed concern regarding the areas east of the proposed bridge which flooded in 2009. In response Mr. Carty stated that the upgrading of Crusheeny Bridge should eliminate this possibility.

Cllr. Cuddy enquired as to the exact length and cost of the proposed route. He also enquired whether the route would have lighting and footpaths. Mr. Carty stated it would be a 4km single lane stretch, similar to the Loughrea By-Pass, with a typical land take width of 25m. He added that the exact cost would not be known until the Business Case was carried out at which point it must be proved that the benefits are worthy and value for money will be received. He stated that it is worthy to note that the cost of building such projects would be 30% less than previous years. He informed the meeting that the route would have a hard shoulder with public lighting at the 3 proposed roundabouts along the route.

Cllr. Cuddy enquired as to what monies had been spent on the project to date. In response Mr. McEvoy stated that €140,000 had been spent to date with RPS fee to take the project to CPO stage being €170,000 which included an Oral Hearing if necessary. He added that we have received a commitment from the Department to get the project to this stage but no allocations for 2012 had been provided yet.

Cllr. Carroll commented that it was a very important piece of work for the future and forward planning was a very positive step.

Mr. Carty stated that the route is designed to take residual traffic, presuming the M17 is built, the Inner Relief Route would reduced traffic through Claregalway by 7,000/8,000 vehicles per day which an approximate 60% reduction.

Cllr. Cuddy enquired whether the route could be adjusted slightly to deal with certain concerns of landowners/homeowners. Mr. Carty stated that yes once talking to individual landowners regarding junctions small adjustments could be looked at. The Chairperson asked whether it would be a case whereby certain homeowners would have to be bought out. In response Mr. Breathnach stated this was often the case and proved the cheaper option. Mr. Molloy added that realistically a 4km stretch of road was going to affect people but that these people are protected by the law to get compensation for their inconvenience.

3. AOB

The Chairperson expressed concern over the available sightlines at the junction to Church View/Slí Bhreadáin Estates across from Claregalway National School and requested that this be looked at. He enquired whether a flashing light system, similar to that on the Milltown Road, Tuam could be installed at this location. In response, Mr. Molly and Mr. Leahy said they would investigate same.

Cllr. Cuddy stated that NOM monies had been allocated to the Cregmore School and Car park and enquired what the procedure was for the school to access this funding. Mr. Molloy stated he would enquire and refer back to him.

Cllr. Carroll had a similar query regarding the Lackagh Playground. Cllr. McDonagh stated that Mr. Frank Gilmore had expressed an issue with NOM monies being given for playgrounds. Mr. Molloy stated he would look into it and refer back.

Cllr. Carroll requested that the Traffic Management Plan for Oranmore be placed high on the agenda list for the next Council meeting. He also requested that the drains on Main Street, Oranmore and at Fahy's

Garage be looked at. Mr. Leahy stated he would look into this but advised that the crew placed there today was dedicated to patching.

The Chairperson raised the issue of the flooding that occurred at the Claregalway Church as there was a separator but no silt trap and requested this be looked into. Cllr. Cuddy commented that it was his understanding that a pipe would be brought from the car-park to the river to deal with this issue. Mr. Molloy stated he would look at the issue.

Cllr. Cuddy stated that hedge cutting had not taken place on the Cloon Road for the past 2 years. In response, Mr. Molloy stated that due to current economic climate hedge cutting was well down the priority list but that he would assess the need for it on this road.

Criochnaigh an Chruinniu Ansin