

Transport Strategic Policy Committee

Tuesday, 7th February 2023 @ 2pm – 4pm

Minutes of blended meeting held on the Zoom platform and in the Council Chamber,
City Hall, Galway.

Present:			
Cllr. Frank Fahy Chairman SPC	Cllr. Alan Cheevers Councillor GCC	Cllr. Colette Connolly Councillor GCC	Cllr. Mike Cubbard Councillor GCC
Cllr. Peter Keane Councillor GCC	Cllr. Niall Murphy Councillor GCC	Cllr. Clodagh Higgins Mayor of City of Galway	Mr. Shane Foran Community Network
Mr. Pat Hardiman ICTU	Mr. Kenny Deery Galway Chamber of Commerce		
In Attendance:			
Mr. Patrick Greene Director of Services	Mr. Uinsinn Finn Senior Engineer	Mr. David Greally Executive Engineer	Mr. Colm Shaughnessy Executive Engineer
Mr. Fran McEvoy Senior Executive Engineer	Mr. Martin Kenny Administrative Officer	Ms. Carol Heneghan Assistant Staff Officer	Mr. John McCarthy ARUP
Guest: Mr. Joey Harkin			
Apologies:			
Cllr. Noel Larkin	Mr. Paul O'Donnell		
Item:			
<p>Chairman Cllr. Frank Fahy welcomed the Transport SPC members and Council Officials to the meeting, which was held in City Hall Council Chamber and on the Zoom platform. Cllr Fahy extended welcome to Kenny Deery who is a temporary replacement for Elaine Brick, Galway Chamber of Commerce and also to Martin Kenny who has replaced Anne Ruane as Administrative Officer in the Transport Department.</p>			
1. Minutes of meeting 8th November 2022.			
<p>The minutes of the Transport SPC meeting held on the 8th November 2022 were proposed by Cllr. Cheevers and seconded by Cllr. Murphy.</p>			

2. Matters arising

The following matters were raised by SPC Members:

- Clarification sought on points raised in previous SPC meeting in relation to kissing gates at Southpark and Terryland Forest Park and whether it will be Parks or Transportation removing the gates at these locations.
- The issue of the delivery of infrastructure was raised with reference to Letteragh Road and Circular Road in light of ABP refusal of housing development on the Ballymoneen Road.
- A list of projects scheduled for 2023 was requested. What is going to be achieved by the end of 2023.
- An update was requested on the contract in place in relation to maintenance of lights in the City. It was advised that this query may be dealt with under AOB.
- Shane Foran stated that his recommendation of forwarding Access Control Points report to an Taisce/Green Schools for feedback regarding safe Routes to school was not included in Minutes of SPC meeting held on the 8th November 2022. Cllr Fahy noted that he recalled an agreement reached where this report was to be shared.

Responses:

- Uinsinn Finn, Senior Engineer noted that many gates are access points to playgrounds and are therefore under the remit of Recreation & Amenity Department. The NTA could provide assistance in terms of sourcing funding for works in some locations.
- Patrick Greene, Director of Services stated that it was agreed at the Recreation & Amenity SPC that they would be reviewed. A full review is taking place in terms of removal of gates at agreed locations across the City. It was noted that these gates have not yet been removed.
- PG advised regarding infrastructure projects that a Senior Executive Engineer has been appointed in the Transportation Department. The first step is a review to ascertain what infrastructure is required. Then a schedule of works can be determined.
- PG stated that a review needs to be done. From that, we can establish how many schemes this will involve. This information will be passed on to Members once it is available.
- UF noted that updates on Work Programme could be given at Ward Meetings and under Quarterly Reports at Council Meetings.
- It was agreed to include previous recommendation to forward Access Control Points report to an Taisce/Green Schools for feedback regarding safe routes to school, in the Minutes of this SPC held on the 7th February 2023.

3. Report re: Pedestrian Overpasses – David Greally

Presentation given by David Greally, Executive Engineer, NTA Team.

Members unanimously thanked David for the report and the following issues were raised:

- Cllr Keane stated that he proposed this report and brought it forward in the context of GTS which he said has not been progressed since its adoption. Highlighted the need for innovative solutions.
- Cllr Cheevers agreed with Cllr Keane's comments. Raised concerns about the potential loss of economic investment in Galway if the traffic situation is not alleviated. Also queried if an overpass was considered as part of the Martin Junction Project.

- Cllr Connolly queried costings around such measures. Concerned that pedestrians are not given priority and requested that GCC address the shortage of pedestrian crossings in the City.
- Cllr Murphy queried if we are trying to match the desire line to people in wheelchairs/able bodied and if we are not going to consider overpasses for future junctions.
- Cllr Fahy agreed with Cllr Keane's comment and expressed concerns about congestion due to existing crossings being in wrong locations to allow for traffic flow.

Responses:

- UF stated that Costings were not considered as part of this particular report.
- UF noted that the upgrade of the Martin Junction was to improve Public Transport and Cycling Facilities into Ardaun. UF also stated that an underpass is planned as part of wider scope of works at the Martin Junction to enhance school connection/safety access. The proposed signal controlled junction will also assist.
- DG confirmed that if the Ramp is on the desire line, then steps are not required. The ramp for wheelchair users and the desire line of the ramp is for these users.
- DG confirmed that we are doing a Pedestrian Crossing at Jury's with Wolfe Tone Bridge.
- UF referred to Cllr Keane's comments in relation to a balanced approach. It was noted that we cannot contravene our development plan or ignore plans or policies as voted for by members which includes DMURS. It was noted that this report was more of a high level overview.
- In response to Cllr. Keane, PG commented that a number of projects are progressing which will go some way to alleviating City Centre Traffic problems referencing Salmon Weir Bridge, Cycling Routes, Cross City Links, Dublin Road, and Kirwan Junction.
- Cllr Fahy stated that we need to make better use of what we have. Highlighted areas around Jury's as particularly congested and poor crossing at ATU.
- Shane Foran stated that the reason for traffic problems is because we have prioritised traffic over pedestrians.
- Shane Foran noted that the Community Network have reviewed the document and do not believe that the locations proposed are appropriate for the Pedestrian Overpasses.

4. Galway City Council Strategy on echarging – Colm O'Shaughnessy and John McCarthy from Arups.

Presentation given by Colm Shaughnessy and Dr. John McCarthy of ARUP Consulting Engineers, introduced by Colm Shaughnessy, Executive Engineer, Transportation Department.

Dr McCarthy mentioned several key points which framed the context of his presentation:

- Decarbonisation of transportation both nationally and internationally.
- Fitfor55 – aim to reduce 55% of carbon emissions.
- Govt. target of having EV charge points every 60kms on motorway network.
- 2035 ban on new sales of vehicles with combustion engines i.e., petrol/diesel models.
- Inclusion of 20% of population with no access to charge points.
- Provision of EV Charge Points reflects conversations at a National and International Level.
- National Level Strategy was released in January 2023.

Dr McCarthy thanked by all in attendance for presentation. The following issues were raised:

- Cllr Murphy noted that a Presentation was given to the Council in November 2021 and asked if that plan was revisited. Queried if there is a Budget in 2023/2024 for charging points. Highlighted need for Galway City to provide adequate infrastructure for current/future needs.
- Cllr Connolly asked if we have looked at negotiating with commercial partnerships with regard to the delivery of EV points.
- Cllr Fahy queried if there should be a proviso to include the provision of new charge points in new Planning Applications submitted to Local Authorities. Noted issues regarding cost of charging EVs especially in PSV/Taxi scenarios.

Responses:

- Uinsinn Finn, Senior Engineer, welcomed the comments thus far from the SPC as GCC are the beginning of the process in relation to developing a policy on this.
It was noted that Funds were allocated in the Draft budget in 2022 but were removed as savings were required. GCC need to consider what level of subsidy will be allocated to provision of infrastructure and there is an expected market response also to enhancing EV infrastructure as demand and usage increases.
- Colm Shaughnessy noted in response to Cllr Murphy that no budget provision exists at present but will be sought in future. He advised that there are plans to develop GCC policy in relation to enhancements to infrastructure. He advised works must be flagged with ESB as main providers of electrical infrastructure in the state. On cabling, solutions being examined under pathways as preference to over, for safety reasons.
- In response to Cllr Connolly, we do not have confirmed locations for these chargers.
We have not discussed with private companies. We do not envisage ourselves in competition with private companies. We would prefer to work with them.
- In response to Cllr Fahy, we welcome comments in relation to Taxi Drivers.
- UF advised that capital costs involved in installation of fast charge points are €35K+ so economic viability will have to be taken into consideration. Potential partnerships with third parties will be looked at in context of sharing/subsidising costs.
- Shane Foran queried if we need to rethink where we are putting lamp posts and could charging points be incorporated.
- Kenny Deery expressed surprise at the low Number of charging points currently in the City and the need to ramp up to meet targets. Queried if there is scope for funding within GCC budgets or if funding should be sought from Central Government, especially for the fast charge points.
- It was noted that there are thirty-seven charge points in the city not including Private Houses.
- PG noted that GCC will not be providing all the charging points and reiterated UF's point on the expected market response. GCC will look at what can be facilitated within new developments such as housing estates where scope may exist for multi-point charging bays. Requirement for third party partners to identify where they will provide points in response to demand also.
- John McCarthy commented on the scenario whereby 80% of charging vehicles will be done by persons who have capacity to do so at home. There is a requirement for locations such as sports clubs and visitor centres to install charging points also to serve wider communities.
- Colm Shaughnessy advises that lamppost charging was looked at in 2021 and will be examined again if deemed to be a viable option for charging points.

5. Agenda for the next Meeting & Work Programme Update

A discussion took place in relation to a number of areas of interest to the SPC as follows:

- The Galway City Ring Road and its referral back to An Bord Pleanála.
- The review of the Galway Transport Strategy.
- The Development of Park and Ride.
- The City wide development of Pedestrian Crossings.
- Free School Transport.
- A Report on the Financial Implications to this Local Authority in relation to the Martin Junction and cost overrun on the budget.

6. AOB

- Cllr Keane queried what are the key points of the Traffic Signals Contract especially in relation to Bank Holiday repairs. UF stated that we have priority 1 & 2 junctions and Newcastle is not a priority 1A. Response time in the contract is 2 days and the lights here were repaired within that time frame. Tweet which was released on Friday 3rd February incorrectly advised that issue would be repaired on the following Tuesday. UF noted that there was a traffic management plan in place. In response to a query from Cllr Cheevers, UF noted that using mobile lights when traffic lights are out of order would cause a lot of delays and would not address safety issues for pedestrians.
- Cllr Fahy raised issue in relation to traffic lights at Tuam Road in that there does not appear to be any room to overtake a cyclist without going over the white line. Vehicles are required to move to other side of Road to overtake a cyclist. UF stated that over a short section, you cannot overtake a Cyclist.

Next meeting: Tuesday 9th May 2023 at 9.30 am.

Signed:

Councillor Frank Fahy
Chair Transport SPC