

Transport Strategic Policy Committee

Tuesday, 9th May 2023 9.30am – 11.30 am.

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. Noel Larkin Councillor GCC	Mr. Shane Foran Community Network
Mr. Pat Hardiman ICTU	Mr. Paul O'Donnell Community Network		

In Attendance:

Mr. Patrick Greene Director of Services	Mr. Uinsinn Finn A/Director of Services	Ms. Fiona Holland Senior Engineer	Mr. Martin Kenny Administrative Officer
Ms. Joan Higgins Administrative Officer	Ms. Carol Heneghan Assistant Staff Officer		

Apologies:

Cllr. Clodagh Higgins Mayor of City of Galway			
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Item:

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. Apologies were extended for the delay in starting the meeting due to technical issues. Cllr. Fahy extended welcome to Fiona Holland, Senior Engineer, Transport Department and Joan Higgins, Administrative Officer with NTA Projects Team.

1. Minutes of meeting 7th February 2023.

The minutes of the Transport SPC meeting held on the 7th February 2023 were proposed by Cllr. Murphy and seconded by Shane Foran.

2. Matters arising

The following matters were raised by SPC Members:

- A List of Projects scheduled for 2023 was requested from the Transport Department.
- Query raised in relation to Maintenance of Lights – speed radar signs are continuously out of order.
- Update sought in relation to decarbonisation zone.
- Update requested in relation to Park and Ride Sites. Could plans be sent on to members.
- Update in relation to the city - wide development of Pedestrian Crossings. Raven Terrace and Bonham Quay were referenced.
- Update in relation to removal of gates at South Park.
- Request for update on provision of new charging points by Local Authorities in relation to taxi and PSV drivers.
- Request for report on the financial implications on overrun on budget in relation to the Martin Junction.

Responses:

- Uinsinn Finn noted that projects are listed in the Annual Service Delivery Plan and are also covered at main council meetings.
- Patrick Greene confirmed that he will follow up on query raised in relation to speed radar signs.
- UF noted that decarbonisation would fall mostly under the remit of the Environment SPC. There is not an update at this meeting but there may be one at the next meeting.
- UF stated that the NTA are progressing Park and Ride. We can ask the NTA to give an update on this.
- UF noted that a presentation on Pedestrian crossings was given to SPC members approximately a year ago. Additional crossings have been installed in the intervening period. There are further crossings planned for design and delivery. This falls under the Safety Plan.
- PG stated that we are looking at options in relation to South Park Gates. We need to ensure that it is done correctly.
- In relation to EV Charging, PG noted that we are using Arups to map out charging points in the city. Where is the best place to put them. We also need to address the issue of people who cannot charge their vehicles at home. This would include people living in apartment blocks and housing estates with no driveways.
- Financial implications on overrun on budget in relation to the Martin Junction was circulated to all Councillors approximately a month ago.

It was agreed to send reports to all members including non-councillors.

3. Presentation on Speed Limits given by Fiona Holland.

SPC Members welcomed Fiona Holland, Senior Engineer to the Transportation Department.

Regarding the presentation on speed limits including the guidelines for managing and setting speed limits, Shane Foran and Cllr. Murphy stated they had seen the content of this previously and that there was no point in going through it again.

Discussion followed which included the following points:

- UF outlined the reason for the presentation. Speed Limits adopted on National roads were based on TII speed limit review. The introduction of 30 km/h inner city speed limit zone was also included by Galway City Council. The presentation on speed limits gives a background on the requirements in conducting a review and plans for going forward.
- Cllr. Fahy confirmed that he asked for a discussion around signage at today's SPC meeting. This is to allow for successful implementation of the changes made to ensure it is done correctly. Would like to see the original report and TII report that was compiled. Pat Hardman agreed with Cllr. Fahy in relation to his point about the signage.
- Cllr. C. Connolly asked what is our role on the SPC. We do want the SPC to have a role on speed limits.
- Fiona Holland suggested progressing to the end of the presentation where signage and road makings are included.

Presentation given by Fiona Holland, Senior Engineer:

- The current proposed special speed limits bye laws 2023 were presented in a map to clarify the location of the speed limits signs and allowed for a discussion on road markings. It was asked if this could be sent to all members. PG noted that this was part of public consultation. Cllr. Fahy stated that in future all members should get all documents but also noted that this map was previously circulated.
- By way of background FH noted that a full review should be undertaken every five years. There was a review in 2020 that was not adopted. For now, the first step is to implement the new bye laws which come into force on the 28th August 2023. Inventory of signage is being conducted now for the 30 km/h zones and other changes on TII roads. Locations for speed limit road markings are being examined. It was noted that regulatory signs are the important ones as they are legally required.
- FH displayed pictures and map and went through where the 30 km/h speed limit signs should be placed and that it was proposed to mark the entry points to the 30km/hr.

A discussion on a City-wide speed limit review including Housing estates followed.

FH gave an outline of what areas currently have and will have a 30km/hr speed limit. There are approximately thirty-seven schools in the city, nine of which are included in the 30km/h speed limit

zone specified in the 2023 bye laws. There are already 5 no. schools which have 30km/h speed limits arising from the Special speed limit bye laws (housing estates) 2017. There will be fourteen schools from 28th August 2023 that are in a 30 km/hr zone. The next speed limit review may consider the inclusion of additional schools in a 30 km/hr speed limit zone if appropriate and provided this is in line with the guidelines.

- Cllr. Fahy proposed that the next speed limit review proposals could be brought to the Electoral Area Meetings and then to the SPC.
- Cllr. Murphy agreed with suggestion to go to the Electoral Area Meetings. Questioned if the process is the same as in 2020. Are we going to be presented with the same proposals/changes. A lot of consultation needs to be non-statutory. Is there going to be a full review.

Responses:

- FH stated that the intention was to conduct a full speed limit review in the future. FH stated in response to question raised that a review may result in the recommendation of speed limit changes including 30 km/h speed limits at additional schools and specific housing estates as per legislation. Also noted that records exist of previous public submissions made by members of the public.
- PG noted that the priority is to implement the 2023 Bye Laws with effect from 28th August 2023.
- UF noted that 40 km/h speed limit is included in the Traffic Signs Manual and is also included in the speed limit guidelines with regard to link roads. The next review will consider the introduction of 40 km/h speed limits.
- Shane Foran stated that this is very welcome.
- SPC Members request that all SPC Members get relevant policies/documents/reports.
- UF asked if the SPC has an expectation that we undertake a speed assessment of all roads in the city as part of the review.
- Cllr. Fahy stated that his understanding is that we would conduct a full review with emphasis on the front of schools.
- UF noted that public consultation was done, and information is public but will seek to circulate material to all SPC members when relevant.
- Cllr. Fahy proposed to come back to SPC for November 2023 SPC.
- FH proposed that Transport bring the next stage of draft proposed speed changes in a map to the local area committee meetings for discussion. This map would show the existing speed limits

including the August 2023 bye laws and would also include proposals examined for changes of some roads to 40km/hr and examination of extending 30km/hr where feasible/appropriate and suitable housing estates not already included.

4. Bus Network

Information in relation to the Galway BusConnects Network Review was given to the SPC and details of the online public consultation underway. A link to the public consultation was provided to members with the Agenda.

The review is focused on providing a more efficient and reliable service on a redesigned bus network, implementing a state of the art ticketing system, with contactless payment system and a simpler fare structure.

There are a series of events scheduled for the 16th, 17th, and 18th May from 12pm to 7pm.

A Video on Bus Connects from the public consultation website was played for members.

Redesigned bus network is the first step. 2025 is the date of the proposed implementation.

- Cllr. Murphy noted that he attended the event in the Dean Hotel last week as he was keen to hear about the process. Also, interested to hear if we managed to get a turning circle in to the Ballymoneen Road. There is a large percent of people who are over 400 m from a bus stop. There is a huge benefit in terms of permeability and opening access to Housing estates for example. Ballymoneen Road was referenced here.
- UF noted that (in relation to Ballymoneen Road) that changing a route is subject to a licence issued by the NTA. GCC looked to see if a turning circle would work. Network operator must be in place also. There must be a turning circle, licence, and an operator in place.

UF noted that part of the bus programme is to improve priority for buses. Agrees with point on permeability.

- An interactive map was opened and shared with members. Shows where you can get to in 30 mins in Galway City on the bus.
- Cllr. Murphy queried the status of the licence on Ballymoneen Rd. UF will follow up on this and will share with the full SPC.

Shane Foran made the following points:

- Galway City Council has had applications for Social Housing refused because of lack of bus services/public transport.
- Questioned whether holding consultation events in venues such as hotels which are not well

served by Public Transport is a good idea. Suggested alternative venues such as shopping centres for people using public transport.

- Pat Hardiman stated that there is a need for bus lanes to be increased for this to be effective.
- It was suggested there is a need for a bus lane from Parkmore to Leaders on the Tuam Road.

Responses:

- UF noted that GCC would have been involved with the NTA from the start. Would have considered developments that are going ahead. Ballymoneen was considered. What was going to happen in the next 5 years was considered.
- Hotels are set up for these consultation events.
- UF noted that Claregalway Bus Lanes are on pause now. Cost was €10m approximately 7 years ago. This did not include land costs. If we had a bus service coming in on the Tuam Road, this would have been helpful. There is not a vast network of buses using that road.

5. Study Tour

UF reported on his experiences following a visit to Utrecht and Zwolle as part of an International Cycling Study Tour in May 2023. Cllr. Fahy, Cllr. Murphy, and Cllr. Martina O'Connor and six Galway City Council Staff were in attendance on the Tour.

Discussion ensued with the following observations:

- Cllr. Fahy was impressed by how the cyclists have priority. Great Infrastructure and design were in place to facilitate the cyclists. Good Road etiquette and discipline on the roads. Scarcity of cars evident. Impressed with width of cycle lanes. It was also possible to borrow wheelchairs in Parks.

Suggested that we could improve maintenance on Cycle Lanes. We should look more at Netherlands model.

- Cllr. Murphy noted that they voted against having a motorway in Utrecht. Also noted that the impression was that businesses were booming.
- UF made the following observations:

Utrecht has a population of approximately 361,742 and would see themselves as leaders in terms of cycling. Helmets or high visibility clothes are not widely worn. Bicycles are cheap with an uncomplicated design. They are not anti-car. Over 50 % of houses have three bikes yet their car ownership is very high. They choose to cycle in the City Centre. It was possible to cycle two ways around the roundabout. Is it possible that we overengineering things here.

- Cllr. Cubbard noted that this all seems positive. Driver behaviour is a big issue here compared to Utrecht. Enquired if UF thinks we can roll out some of this before Cross City Links. Are we going to hit problems with costs if we go forward. What concerns did they have at the outset. We all must come together as one group. Bring Emergency Services on board from the outset.

Response:

- Cllr. Fahy noted that they were willing to try it in Utrecht to see if it worked and it did work. There is a big emphasis on quality of design. They were asked to bring other Councillors to visit in the future to have a look at how things are done there.

It was also noted that a course is needed to go out on the road. We need to work on education on both sides.

- UF noted that the Netherlands have been cycling focused since the seventies. Their Transport strategy and ours are similar. It was noted that there is little in terms of bus priority. Pedestrians get priority after 12 o'clock in the city centre pedestrian/cycle area. Where there is a cycle lane you must use it. It is not about us and them in the Netherlands. The focus on the cyclist over there.
- UF and Cllr. Murphy to circulate presentation and link after the meeting.
- PH suggested that other non-councillors could go next time.

6. Agenda for the next Meeting & Work Programme Update

A discussion took place in relation to a number of areas of interest to be included on the **Agenda** as follows:

- Traffic Calming policy.
- Plan or conversation around issue of residential parking in the City Centre – Woodquay & Bohermore referenced.
- Commuter parking in Housing Estates -Shantalla.
- Request for a discussion on linkages between Transportation Policy and Housing Development Policy with a view to reducing car dependency and the infrastructure required to achieve this.

Work Programme Update

- PG stated that e-scooter legislation is close to being finalised. It can then be looked at from a local point of view.
- Smart Mobility – New vehicles are due very shortly.
- Public Lighting Retrofit: Majority of this work is now complete. Maintenance will be ongoing.
- Footpaths: Areas identified in Development plan for upgrades. Picked up around six. Tenders gone out to get a team in. Circular Road at brief stage now. FH stated that we will start with those mentioned in the Development Plan.
- GTS: Currently with the NTA.

- Toilet Facilities for Drivers: Pat Hardiman asked for a copy of letter that was sent by the Transport Department to the NTA in relation to this issue.

7. AOB

- Cllr. C. Connolly asked Executive for pedestrian crossings at Merchants Road as a matter of urgency.

Next meeting: Tuesday, 12th September 2023 at 9.30 a.m.

Signed:

Councillor Frank Fahy
Chair Transport SPC