

**Minutes of Meeting of Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee
held on 1st March 2021 via Zoom**

PRESENT: Cllr. Jim Ryan (Chair)
Cllr. Michael O'Meara
Cllr. Declan Burgess
Cllr. Kevin O'Meara
Mr. Gerard Shanahan (PPN)
Mr. Brian Pope (PPN)
Ms. Michelle Aylward (CEO County Tipperary Chamber)
Mr. Marcus O'Connor, Director of Services, Roads
Mr. Liam Brett, Senior Engineer, Roads Operational
Mr. James Murray, A/Senior Engineer, Roads Operational
Mr. John Nolan, Senior Engineer, Roads Capital
Mr. Thomas Duffy, District Engineer, Thurles Municipal District
Ms. Michèle Maher, Administrative Officer, Roads
Ms. Mary Murphy, Assistant Staff Officer, Roads (Minutes)

APOLOGIES: None

1. Minutes of Meeting held on 7 December 2020 and Matters Arising

Cllr Jim Ryan welcomed everybody to the meeting. The Minutes of the meeting of 7 December 2020 were proposed by Michelle Aylward and seconded by Cllr. Jim Ryan. There were no matters arising.

2. Tipperary County Council Roads Capital Schemes

Mr. John Nolan SE, gave a presentation to the meeting on Roads Capital Schemes in County Tipperary. He noted that there are approximately 40 Capital Schemes ongoing and Tipperary County Council is engaging with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) in relation to their next three-year programme. Regarding the N24 Major Project, he advised the meeting that the estimated cost of the Cahir to Limerick Junction section is €1.2 billion; the R498 Latteragh Scheme will cost approximately €15 million; the Ballina/Killaloe Scheme €50/€60 million; the Thurles Link Road €10 million and the N74 works at Ballyhusty will cost €5 million.

Tipperary County Council are the lead authority on the N24 Cahir to Limerick Junction scheme and Arup have been appointed as design consultants. The study area is 7 km wide and 35km in length. Phase 1 is complete and Phase 2, Options Selection, has started. Phase 3 of the scheme, Design and Environmental Evaluation will go to An Bord Pleanála (ABP).

Kilkenny County Council is the lead authority on the Waterford to Cahir element of the N24 Scheme with Tipperary County Council a partner. This element of the Scheme is six months behind the Cahir/Limerick Junction section. Phase 1 has been completed and a request to move to Phase 2 is currently with TII. Websites regarding both sections have been launched. There is a similar study area for the Waterford to Cahir scheme, although it is considerably longer at 60km.

Regarding the R498 Latteragh Realignment scheme, an Oral Hearing in relation to the Compulsory Purchase Order was held by ABP in December 2020. This scheme involves road widening and bend removal and a decision on the CPO is due in April 2021. Tender briefs for consultants are being prepared and it is hoped to get to detailed design stage this year.

Killaloe Bypass/Shannon Bridge Crossing/R494 Improvement Scheme is led by Clare County Council with Tipperary County Council as part of the Project Team. It will cost €50/€60 million and the Tender for construction has commenced. It is expected to take three years to complete.

The N52 works at Borrisokane have been completed and cost around €4 million. The Carrick on Suir Scheme is progressing towards tender and will involve improvement to 3.5km of the N24. Oliver Tierney, SEE, Clonmel Office, is engaging with Tramore House Regional Design Office in relation to this scheme which received Part 8 Planning in 2020.

The N74 Ballyhusty Realignment Scheme north of Tipperary Town is similar to the Latteragh Scheme but smaller. The Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) approval was received in 2020. It is hoped to issue a works contract in 2021.

The Thurles Link Road will cost circa €10 million and will cover 1.1km. Lidl have commenced construction of a section of the road for access to a new store. Funding needs to be secured to deliver the road and finalise land acquisition.

Cllr. Jim Ryan said that he would like to compliment Tipperary County Council for their work and the range of capital projects which are providing very important infrastructure for Tipperary. He asked (i) if there is any update on the Thurles Bypass and requested that, while it is not in the National Development Plan (NDP), that it be kept alive as it is vital for Thurles; (ii) Would work on the N62 destroy the historic "Double Ditch" Famine age walking path?; (iii) What did the €10 million for Link Road include and (iv) Would the proposed traffic lights at Clongour, Thurles be activated before the completion of the Link road?

In reply Mr. John Nolan advised that (i), as the Thurles Bypass is not in the NDP there is no funding for it currently, but that the reservation corridor is there and it is a priority for Tipperary County Council. He noted that it will require a government decision for funding to be provided. (ii) Marcus O'Connor noted that a full

Archaeological and Historic Assessment was carried out when plans were being drawn up for the Thurles Link road. He also advised that independent approval was received from ABP. Access will still be available to the historic walkway from the Mill Road and the intersection with the Famine Walkway has still to be designed. (iii) John Nolan said that the €10 million is not an exact figure and that the contribution from Lidl is significant and represents value for money. (iv) The traffic lights at Clongour will be activated once Lidl is operational.

Cllr. Ryan said that he felt a roundabout at this location would be better as it is a very busy road and further delays for motorists could not be justified. Mr. O'Connor said that there should not be any significant delays as the lights would be timed to give priority to the N62 and that consideration also had to be given to cars exiting Lidl and to pedestrians, as accidents might occur if the lights were not operational. Mr Ger Shanahan said that the new traffic lights might also encourage motorists to slow down further out as they approach Thurles. Cllr. Jim Ryan enquired what might happen on busy match days; Mr. O'Connor replied that the lights would likely be turned off and the Gardaí would control the flow of traffic throughout the town as normally occurs on those days.

Cllr. Michael O'Meara said that he wished to compliment everybody involved on the Borrisokane Streets Improvement Scheme, noting that great work was carried out. He said that he would advise communities not to be afraid of this kind of improvement project and that, while it did cause difficulties during construction, it has improved both the aesthetics and the economy of the town for the better. He asked if works on Tower Hill which are outstanding could be prioritised. Mr. John Nolan thanked him for his remarks in relation to the Borrisokane Scheme. He advised that approval is expected for the carry over of funding for Tower Hill works, which will commence as soon as possible.

3. Policy Discussion – Draft Policy for Disabled Parking Bays in Residential Areas

The Draft Policy for Disabled Parking Bays was presented to the members by Mr. Thomas Duffy, District Engineer, Thurles Municipal District. Points noted included:

- Introduction: The Purpose of the Policy;
- Outline of Criteria;
- Application and Appeals Process;
- Data Protection and Other Information.

Mr. Liam Brett noted that Mr. Duffy had done a lot of research in preparing the draft policy, e.g. reviewing the legislation and liaising with other local authorities when formulating the policy, noting that he had tried to strike a balance between the needs of the blue badge holder and other residents. Mr. Duffy had also consulted Citizens Information. There are four local authorities who have formulated a policy in this area

and Tipperary would be the first rural Council to adopt such a policy. The draft policy as presented is to be circulated to the members.

Cllr. Jim Ryan thanked Mr. Thomas Duffy and Mr. Liam Brett for their work on the draft policy and discussion on the content then ensued. Cllr. Ryan felt that the proposed Applicant contribution of €250 was too high and enquired how long someone could park in a disabled parking space. Cllr. Kevin O'Meara said that €250 could represent a week's income for someone on Disability Income. Mr. Liam Brett said that this contribution represented 1/8 of the cost of providing the space which could cost the Council €2,000 to provide. He advised that stage payments could be considered. The fee would be refundable if permission for the space was not granted.

Mr. Thomas Duffy said that there would be no time limit on parking in the residential area but that anyone who had a blue badge could park in the designated space. Unauthorised parking i.e. without a blue badge would be enforceable by the Traffic Warden and the Gardaí. Cllr. Jim Ryan was concerned that where there were several blue badge holders living in an estate that one might pay to have the space and others would then use that space to the detriment of the person who paid the application fee. Mr. Gerard Shanahan suggested that Mr. Duffy consult with the Disabled Drivers Association of Ireland (DDAI) in Claremorris, Co. Mayo to see if they had any experience of this issue. Cllr. Jim Ryan also enquired if this policy could have an impact on the allocation of housing and Mr. Marcus O'Connor said that it would not. Mr. Duffy said that each application would be assessed individually by the engineer.

Mr. Marcus O'Connor, Director of Services, noted that he feels it is a good policy and that it could be tweaked if issues arose following its adoption. It was agreed that the Draft Policy be recommended to the April Plenary Council meeting and that any amendments following consultation with DDAI be notified to Cllr. Jim Ryan (Chair) in advance of the Council meeting. This was proposed by Cllr. Kevin O'Meara and seconded by Mr. Brian Pope.

4. Correspondence

There was no correspondence to be considered.

5. To Note Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Infrastructure SPC will be held on Tuesday 1 June 2021.

6. AOB

Mr. Brian Pope noted that the ban on hedge cutting was just commencing and enquired if it was being properly policed. Mr. Marcus O'Connor replied that this is national legislation and a function of the National Parks and Wildlife Service and not

Tipperary County Council to police it. He noted that the Council trims verges where road safety is an issue during the closed season.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____

Cllr. Jim Ryan
Cathaoirleach