

**Minutes of Meeting of Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee
held on 6th September 2021 via Zoom**

PRESENT: Cllr. Jim Ryan (Chair)
Cllr. Michael O'Meara
Cllr. Declan Burgess
Cllr. Kevin O'Meara
Cllr. Michael Fitzgerald
Cllr. Micheál Anglim
Cllr. Hughie McGrath
Ms. Michelle Aylward (CEO County Tipperary Chamber)
Mr. Brian Pope, An Taisce
Mr. Liam Brett, Senior Engineer, Roads Operational
Mr. Denis Holland, Senior Engineer, Water Services
Mr. Oliver Tierney, Senior Executive Engineer, Roads
Ms. Michèle Maher, Administrative Officer, Roads
Ms. Mary Murphy, Assistant Staff Officer, Roads (Minutes)

APOLOGIES: Mr. Marcus O'Connor, Director of Services, Roads, Transportation and Infrastructure, TCC

1. Minutes of Meeting held on 1 June 2021 and Matters Arising

Cllr Jim Ryan welcomed everybody to the meeting. The Minutes of the meeting of 1 June 2021 were proposed by Cllr. Michael O'Meara and seconded by Cllr Michael Fitzgerald. There were no matters arising.

2. Rural Water Programme – Presentation by Mr. Denis Holland, Senior Engineer, Water Services

Mr. Denis Holland gave a presentation on the Rural Water Programme.

Cllr. Jim Ryan thanked Mr. Holland for his presentation and asked for more information on the Septic Tank Grant Scheme and also whether there were any plans to introduce a scheme similar to the 7 Villages Scheme which existed some years ago.

Mr. Holland replied that there was no grant for septic tanks for new houses. The septic tank must be in a designated high priority area or be giving difficulty. He said that a Notice would have had to been issued following inspection saying that the septic tank needed upgrading. In relation to the 7 Villages Scheme, Mr. Holland replied that there is a similar scheme in operation called the Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme which has identified 7 villages in the county where upgrades to wastewater treatment plants may be made - Golden, Cloughjordan, Holycross, Kilsheelan, Lisvernane, Silvermines and Newcastle.

Cllr Kevin O'Meara asked about the maintenance of local access routes by Irish Water on transfer of assets to them. Mr. Holland replied that, while this does not relate to the Rural Water Programme, when an asset is transferred to Irish Water the rights and responsibilities associated with it also transfer to them.

Cllr. Michael O'Meara asked how much the grant is for septic tanks and if it might be possible to install a pump on the reservoir at Portland to improve service. He also enquired about the recent advice to allow grey water into septic tanks. Mr. Holland said that the means test provision of the septic tank grant had been removed in 2020. He also noted that the grant available is 85% of the approved works or €5,000 whichever is the lower. He said that Water Services is negotiating with Irish Water to get funding to resolve the issue in Portland. In relation to allowing grey water into septic tanks, Mr. Holland said that the current guidance is that everything apart from rainwater should go into the septic tank.

Cllr. Michael Fitzgerald thanked Mr. Holland for his presentation and complimented Water Services on their work on rural water. He expressed the fear that Irish Water would take over rural water which he would not be in favour of.

3. Age Friendly Parking Spaces

Mr. Liam Brett provided information on the Age Friendly Parking for Older People scheme. He said that a trial had been conducted in Cork, Wicklow and Kilkenny. He noted that the scheme is different to disabled parking spaces in that it has no statutory footing behind it, similar to parent and child parking spaces introduced by some supermarkets and shopping centres. It is dependant on the goodwill of the public and there are no sanctions for their incorrect use. Normal fees apply to the parking spaces.

Mr. Brett advised that the spaces are slightly larger than normal parking spaces and there is a cost incurred in installing them, similar to that incurred providing disabled parking spaces. Other local authorities found that the success of the scheme was mixed as it is dependant on public buy-in. He noted that there is national signage for the scheme.

Cllr. Declan Burgess said that he had spoken to an engineer in Dún Laoghaire and acknowledged that the scheme had mixed success. He felt, however, that it would be appropriate for Tipperary County Council to develop a strategy in relation to them. He noted that they would need to be strategically located to ensure that older people feel connected and can get access to towns.

Cllr. Hughie McGrath said that their size needs to be considered and that there needs to be room for the doors to open fully on both sides of the car.

Mr. Liam Brett said that consideration could be given to locating spaces beside disabled parking spaces which already have more width.

Cllr. Michael Fitzgerald supports the Scheme but feels that it is too loose and needs to be more specific. He would recommend that something be shown on the car dashboard to prevent the scheme being abused.

Cllr. Jim Ryan supports the Scheme and said that it should be possible to include some spaces in the Thurles Regeneration Scheme. He said that it should be rolled out across the county and consider development of a policy at future SPC meetings.

Mr. Liam Brett suggested installing some spaces in the John's Lane car park, Nenagh, which is currently being upgraded, as a trial and reporting back on the trial to the March 2022 SPC meeting. This was agreed by the meeting.

Mr. Brian Pope said that the location of some on-street parking spaces for older people is also a concern as some elderly people find difficulty reversing and that a gap would be needed on both sides. Mr. Liam Brett is to take this on board.

4. Footpaths

Cllr. Jim Ryan raised the issue of the provision of footpaths beyond the 50 km/h speed limit sign. He noted that it is the policy of the Council not to provide such footpaths but that there are already five footpaths in Thurles which go beyond the 50 km/h signs. He said that it is difficult to explain this to constituents.

Mr. Liam Brett noted that there is a difference between what the Council is trying to do now and what was done historically. He said that national guidance is that the special speed limit, footpath and public lighting should all end at the same location. He said that the Council has a number of crews installing footpaths inside the 50 km/h speed limit in Newcastle, Castleiney, Loughmore, Carrick on Suir, Fethard and Mullinahone with up to €5 million being spent on these projects this year through Active Travel Schemes. He advised that a Road Safety Audit needs to be carried out for all schemes and consideration needs to be given to whether it is 'necessary walking' or 'walking for recreation'. He advised that the Active Travel team will give a presentation at the next SPC meeting in December.

Cllr. Jim Ryan expressed frustration that there is no discussion or debate on the matter and said that footpaths are needed outside Thurles GAA ground and also outside a factory. He said that the current policy needs to change while plenty of money is available for installing footpaths.

Cllr. Hughie McGrath supported Cllr. Ryan's views. He said that a footpath is needed in Nenagh on the Old Birr Road as far as the Pitch and Putt Club and the nursing

home. He said that there should be a policy for existing clubs to be connected to towns.

Cllr. Jim Ryan said that the road between Tipperary Town and Limerick Junction is an example of a footpath that goes further than the 50 km/h limit, that the policy should change and that these schemes should be looked on favourably by the Council.

Mr. Liam Brett said that the Council doesn't have a policy, but there is national guidance. He said that footpaths need to be provided in the 50km/hr areas first and that great progress is being made. He advised that putting in footpaths outside the 50km/hr zone will attract pedestrians who are then very close to traffic. Approval from TII would be needed on national roads.

Mr. Brett said that money is an issue and that the National Transport Authority (NTA) has to sign off on each individual project. He noted that finance will not be approved by the NTA on higher speed roads.

Mr. Oliver Tierney said that there might be some changes in legislation towards the end of the year. He said that land acquisitions of three metres all along the length of the footpath would be necessary to install footpaths on narrow roads and that the finance available could go on land acquisition rather than on the footpaths themselves.

5. Correspondence

There was no correspondence to be considered.

6. To Note Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Infrastructure SPC will be held on Monday, 6th December 2021.

7. AOB

There was no other business and the meeting concluded.

Signed: _____

Cllr. Jim Ryan
Cathaoirleach