

**Minutes of Meeting of Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee,
held on 29th September 2020
in Thurles Municipal District Offices**

PRESENT: Cllr. Jim Ryan (Chair)
Cllr. Micheál Anglim
Cllr. Hughie McGrath
Cllr. Kevin O'Meara
Cllr. Michael O'Meara
Mr. Gerard Shanahan (PPN)
Mr. Seán Reidy (Development Construction)
Mr. Marcus O'Connor, Director of Services, Roads, Transportation,
and Infrastructure
Mr. Liam Brett, Senior Engineer, Roads
Mr. James Murray, A/Senior Engineer, Roads
Ms. Michèle Maher, Administrative Officer, Roads
Ms. Patricia Fogarty, Senior Staff Officer, Roads (Minutes)
Mr. Anthony Moroney, Manager, Local Link Tipperary
Mr. Oliver Tierney, Senior Executive Engineer, Roads Capital

APOLOGIES: Cllr. Declan Burgess
Mr. Brian Pope (An Taisce)

Welcome

Cllr. Jim Ryan welcomed everybody to the meeting of the Infrastructure SPC.

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were considered and approved, proposed by Cllr Hughie McGrath and seconded by Mr. Gerard Shanahan.

2. Presentation by Local Link Tipperary (Transport Co-Ordination Unit - Mr. Anthony Moroney, Manager)

Mr. Moroney, Manager Local Link Tipperary made a presentation to members on Local Link Tipperary – Transport Co-ordination Unit.

The presentation covered –

- Background to the service and operational structure
- Facts about Tipperary Local Link, Establishment and Organisational Structure
- Details of Board Membership
- Tipperary Local Link objectives of the service including accessibility to transport for all citizens, reducing isolation, economic competitiveness, addressing unmet transport needs, interaction with other agencies and providers

- History of rural transport in Tipperary and nationally
- 2016 to 2019 - pre COVID Passenger Aggregated Statistics including gender, age, fare paying and number requiring assistance
- Passenger Statistics – 2019
- Overview of Local Link nationwide for future development of the service
- Local Link Branding nationwide – vehicles, advertising campaigns 2017-2020
- Tipperary Local Link – Aspirations and Challenges from 2020-2022
- GEO Tracker of all Local Link Bus Stops.

The Chair, Cllr. Ryan, thanked Mr. Moroney for his comprehensive presentation and congratulated Tipperary Local Link on the service that they are providing for citizens, he then invited questions or comments from the members.

Mr. Gerard Shanahan stated that there are a lot of bus stops across the national routes, NTA have control of them and the funding can be complicated to access. He wondered how they deal with that? Mr. Anthony Moroney responded that it is a complicated process which they have asked the NTA to simplify.

Mr. Liam Brett, Senior Engineer added that funding for bus stops is a challenge. Mr. Jim Ryan, Executive Engineer, has updated the NTA register of bus stops, and an application has been submitted to the NTA for funding for bus shelters for which the Council is awaiting approval. The county has new bus shelters in Bansha and in Tipperary Town, while new shelters in Carrick-on-Suir are pending in conjunction with road improvement works. Cllr. Jim Ryan, Chair commented that any work on bus shelters in Thurles should be done in conjunction with the Liberty Square project.

Cllr. McGrath added that Nenagh is looking for Bus Shelters and that pedestrians and our communities are priority. He is concerned with TII involvement in urban areas, as they are not connected to the local community, advising that the TII and NTA need to listen to what local citizens need. Cllr. Jim Ryan, Chair agreed with the sentiment of Cllr. McGrath.

Mr. Moroney responded that NTA are looking to use Local Link more, by putting in services by starting small and building on that. Rural bus stops are what they are focusing on. He requested that the Council liaise with Local Link if they are applying for any Village Renewal schemes, to determine if they could include provision of a bus stop.

Ms. Maher advised that the Local Link presentation will be circulated to the members after the meeting.

3. Proposed Policy discussion – Urban raised pedestrian crossings/Raised turntables at junctions within our Town and Villages

Cllr. Hughie McGrath had requested a discussion on this matter, regarding the provision of raised pedestrian crossings/raised turntables within towns and villages,

urban and rural. Cllr. McGrath commented that he feels they are successful, and a deterrent to speeding in towns, without being speed ramps. He thinks a policy regarding the provision of same in urban areas and on regional roads running through towns is required. They would be appropriate measures for pedestrians, and a signal to drivers that pedestrians have priority in urban areas. He requested that they be installed during Nenagh urban works.

Cllr. Kevin O'Meara agreed with Cllr. McGrath, particularly in relation to speeding in rural areas. He noted that the Council tries to do minor works with GMA funding each year, and a policy would be helpful to put a five-year programme in place.

Gerard Shanahan spoke about issues with uncontrolled crossing and raised tables noting that pedestrian crossings are safer than speed ramps.

Mr. Liam Brett, Senior Engineer responded saying that there is guidance and gave a background overview. He said that raised tables and speed ramps cause issues with cars, fire service, people with disabilities etc. but could be considered in some areas. The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) guidance is that in some urban environments they may be appropriate, but not in rural areas.

Mr. Oliver Tierney, Senior Executive Engineer, added that there is a need to be specific about purpose. The idea is to get traffic to slow down and create an environment that when a driver comes in to a town or village they know there are pedestrians. This is achieved through narrowing of the carriageway and landscaping, to give the impression that the pedestrian has the right of way. Using horizontal shifts to define parking spaces, creates the scene. It's a design process dependant on the location and the situation. There are lots of issues with raised crossing/turntables as they can cause problems where they are not maintained, they can also be damaged by HGV's.

Cllr. Mark Fitzgerald added that there is an issue in rural areas at school locations, R692 for example. He agrees that there are different issues between urban and rural areas. Cllr. Micheál Anglim agreed with Cllr. McGrath raising this issue and has a motion at local MD level. Cllr. McGrath added that he is not promoting ramps but raised tables. Cllr. Jim Ryan, Chair noted that there is a raised table at Clerihan on a regional road which he feels is appropriate and effective, and he would like to see a policy developed in this area by the Committee.

Mr. Oliver Tierney responded that Regional Roads do not come under TII, they come under the Department of Transport, DMURS guidelines apply with anything below 60kmh. Mr. Marcus O'Connor, Director of Services responded to the policy discussion by firstly advising that An Garda Síochána are the Road Traffic Authority. The Council is the Road Authority for the county and he advised that putting ramps everywhere is not the answer. Installation of vertical deflections is covered in the national guidelines which all local authorities have to follow. On Regional roads the

Department of Transport are very clear they do not want vertical deflections. He noted that the last SPC adopted a policy on traffic calming measures. The Council has to work with TII on all projects where national roads run through towns.

Cllr. McGrath feels that TII and the Department of Transport should be looking at taking on board guidance from local authorities on this matter having regard to their knowledge of local pedestrian and community issues. Cllr. Jim Ryan, Chair added that there is a need to be consistent with pedestrian crossings controlled by traffic lights.

Mr. Liam Brett, Senior Engineer noted that Safety Audits have been completed and the safety data indicates that controlled crossings give pedestrians a false sense of security, while they will take more care at uncontrolled crossings. Mr. O'Connor noted that the vertical deflections should not have been installed in Rosegreen and New Inn, and they have since had to be softened, they are not in accordance with policy.

Cllr. Michael O'Meara requested that the SPC keep the item on the Agenda. He mentioned issues at GAA centres where a lot of children may be crossing roads and perhaps raised tables should be piloted by Tipperary County Council.

Mr. Oliver Tierney, Senior Executive Engineer again reminded the committee members that there is a myriad of ways to slow down traffic by design, it all needs to be considered and install only what are appropriate measures in appropriate locations. Mr. O'Connor, Director of Services added that the over-arching policy on this matter is the National Policy which must be followed.

4. Policy discussion – Provision of disabled parking spaces on Public Street

Mr. Liam Brett, Senior Engineer advised the members that the provision of disabled parking spaces was raised by District Engineers, following local requests for public parking spaces to be marked as Disabled Parking Spaces. It is an area where policy can be developed and brought to the SPC for consideration.

Cllr. Hughie McGrath would be supportive of the consideration of a policy in this area for new requests from disabled persons or their nominated carer. Cllr. Jim Ryan asked about the national policy on disabled parking spaces, regarding the minimum or maximum number of disabled parking spaces to be provided.

Mr. Liam Brett, Senior Engineer responded that it is outside of the designated disabled parking spaces that the District Engineers are getting requests. Mr. Oliver Tierney, Senior Executive Engineer added that disabled parking spaces are not allocated to an individual person but are available to any user. Mr. Liam Brett, Senior Engineer advised the members that he will make a presentation at the next meeting of a draft policy for consideration.

5. Correspondence

Ms. Michèle Maher advised the members that the committee's recommendations from the June meeting were considered by the Plenary Council at their September meeting. The recommendations were endorsed by the Council and submitted to Irish Water and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government for consideration.

A response has been received from the Department and circulated to members, as outlined hereunder –

'Under the Housing (Private Water Supply Financial Assistance) Regulations 2020, the grant scheme to support improvement works for a private water supply has been revised. This revised scheme forms part of the funding investment under Measure 8 of the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2019-2021. The revisions, which followed an examination of the previous arrangements, consultation with stakeholders including local authorities, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Health Service Executive, and consideration of the matter by the Rural Water Working Group, brought into effect the following changes:

- *A maximum grant for rehabilitation works of €3,000;*
- *A maximum grant for a new well of €5,000 has been introduced, where the local authority agrees that the most appropriate solution is to provide a new well;*
- *Recognising the role of the grant in improving quality, the water quality treatment element (typically filtration and UV filtration) will qualify for 100% funding up to a maximum of €1,000.*
- *In addition, the maximum percentage of approved costs has been increased from 75% to 85%, subject to the total combined maximum costs of €3,000 for well rehabilitation or €5,000 for a new well.*

The qualifying age of a house before an application can be made remains at seven years. This has been a feature of the scheme for the past 20 years, and the main reasons for retaining this criterion are:

- *If a grant was given at the stage when the house was being built, then it is effectively a new house grant that is not available to householders in urban or group water scheme situations;*
- *Any material used in the construction of a well would be expected to have a useful life of at least seven years and, in general, should not need improvements;*
- *In areas supplied by the public (Irish Water) mains, householders seeking to connect their newly built once-off rural house or a new house purchased in an estate face Irish Water connection charges for a water supply, and wastewater connection, if the latter is required. It would be inequitable to these urban or near urban dwellers if a grant for a well was given to a new, or newer than seven years old house in such rural areas.*
- *In areas supplied by a group water scheme, householders seeking to connect their house must pay a connection fee for a water supply, and in the case of a new group water scheme they make a capital contribution of 15%. Again, it would be inequitable to these dwellers if a grant for a well in respect of a new, or newer than seven years old house were given in such rural areas.*

The revised changes to this scheme form part of the larger investment already being made through the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme, to support the communities and local economies of rural Ireland. The Government continues to work with local authorities to ensure that people living in rural Ireland have access to quality water services, equivalent to those living in urban communities. Note that in implementing the revised arrangements, this Department has undertaken to conduct a review of the grant scheme after one year of operation to ensure its alignment with policy objectives'.

9. **AOB**

Cllr. Hughie McGrath asked if there was a planned programme for renewal of line markings on roads and is there a policy or framework in place for maintenance, as there are issues on many roads with road marking fading over the years. Cllr. Michael O'Meara supported the point raised by Cllr. McGrath that line marking needs to be improved/renewed. Cllr. O'Meara also asked if the Council had any indication of roads funding for 2021 commenting that better-quality works and materials are evident in 2020, and could more roads be finished to a similar standard.

Mr. O'Connor responded that there is a lot of good work going on, he noted that a road needs to have been previously strengthened, to apply an asphalt or macadam finish. Regarding funding, he advised that the Council has no indication yet on funding for 2021. Additional funding was secured in 2020 for Active Travel works and Climate Change works, and from the TII for capital maintenance projects.

Cllr. Jim Ryan requested an Agenda item for the next or subsequent meeting regarding the use of 'sulkies' on public roads, in order to have a discussion on bye-laws or regulations. He noted that young people are using sulkies, holding up traffic, creating dangerous situations and asked if age restrictions can be imposed. Mr. Gerard Shanahan added that a person in charge of animal welfare can be cautioned where necessary.

Mr. O'Connor advised the members that in relation to the use of sulkies on roads, the Council cannot bring in bye-laws where there is national legislation, and there are road traffic laws and regulations in place. Mr. O'Connor undertook to look into the issue regarding the legal situation and to revert to next SPC meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Date of next meeting: Monday 7th December 2020, at 10.00 am.
Venue/arrangements to be circulated in due course.

Signed:

Cllr. Jim Ryan
Cathaoirleach