

Transportation Strategic Policy Committee Meeting – 25th November 2014

Present

Cllr. John Walsh (Presiding)

Cllr. Mike Cubbard

Cllr. Anna Marley

Cllr. Noel Larkin

Cllr. Frank Fahy

Mr. Derrick Hambleton, Environment/Conservation Sector

Mr. Pat Hardiman, Trade Union Sector

Mr. Richard Manton, Community/Voluntary Sector

In attendance

Mr. Joe O'Neill, Director of Services

Ms. Sharon Connolly, Senior Engineer

Ms. Helena Martyn, Administrative Officer

Ms. Elaine Walsh, Clerical Officer

Apologies

Cllr. Catherine Connolly

Cllr. Pearse Flannery

Report by Richard Manton

Checked by Derrick Hambleton

Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. The SPC
3. Draft Work Programme for the SPC
4. Amendments to Non-motorised Passenger Transporter Bye-laws (documentation available)
5. AOB

Minutes and matters arising

This is not applicable as this was the first SPC meeting of the new Council.

1. Welcome and introductions

Cllr. John Walsh welcomed those present, who subsequently introduced themselves.

2. The SPC

Mr. Joe O'Neill introduced members to the functions of the Strategic Policy Committee. These include the formulation, monitoring and review of Galway City Council policy. Galway City Council transportation policy comprises three elements:

1. Maintain and upgrade current infrastructure
2. Manage and optimise traffic flow (including vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians) in a safe manner
3. Improve sustainability

These policies exist within a national policy landscape which includes government, National Transport Authority, National Roads Authority, Road Safety Authority etc. SPC standing orders can be found in the Galway City Council Standing Orders, however, it is expected that these will be revised to account for the expanded membership of the City Council.

3. Draft Work Programme for the SPC

The draft work programme for the SPC for 2014-15 was circulated in advance of the SPC meeting (below, in no particular order) and was outlined by Mr. Joe O'Neill; this was followed by a discussion.

Smarter Travel 2015 - modal shift and behaviour change

Mr. Joe O'Neill stated that Mr. Jim Molloy (GTU) will attend future SPC meetings and will present the Smarter Travel programme at the next SPC meeting. Cllr. Anna Marley requested further details and specific targets.

Non-motorised passenger transporter bye-laws

Discussed in detail below.

Cllr. Noel Larkin called on Galway City Council to tackle sulky use on roads and footpaths. Mr. Derrick Hambleton said that a pro-active approach to this issue would be to discuss the possibility of providing off-road facilities for sulkies, perhaps at the racecourse in Ballybrit. Mr. Joe O'Neill responded that national laws and best practice must be considered and agreed that this should be added to the SPC work programme.

Removal of Kirwan Roundabout

Cllrs. Frank Fahy, Mike Cubbard and Noel Larkin took issue with the inclusion of the Kirwan Roundabout in the work programme, stating that councillors had rejected the removal of the roundabout. Mr. Joe O'Neill stated that hard evidence is required to assess traffic flow in the area. Cllr. Mike Cubbard asked for an update on the Browne Roundabout; Mr. Joe O'Neill replied that as the Browne Roundabout will not be worked upon in 2015, it has not been included in this year's SPC work programme.

Review of parking control bye-laws

There is an issue with the number of residents' permits in the City. Galway City Council is considering restricting the number of permits and introducing pricing zones with parking in the city centre to be more expensive. Mr. Derrick Hambleton pointed out that the Council previously had a policy of encouraging people to move back into the City and that while there is underground parking for some apartments, residents will always need

access to parking, particularly in older areas. Mr. Joe O'Neill responded that residential car parking is consuming too much space – not enough room is left for shoppers and business users. Galway City Council is also investigating the introduction of parking by text. Cllr. Mike Cubbard requested information on parking permits for small businesses. Mr. Richard Manton raised the issue of parking on footpaths and in spaces for parking for people with mobility impairments. Mr. Joe O'Neill said that greater enforcement of parking laws is required.

Proposed river crossing close to Salmon Weir Bridge

Galway City Council is considering a river crossing close to the Salmon Weir Bridge to improve traffic safety in the area. However, significant attention must be given to environmental impact and several options are currently under consideration. Mr. Derrick Hambleton pointed out issues relating to the loss of visual amenity given the heritage aspects of the current bridge and called on the Council to consider a light rail bridge as part of a public discussion of options.

Walking & cycling strategy implementation

Discussion relating to walking and cycling strategy implementation is included under other headings.

Control of vehicle speeds in housing estates

This item of the work programme will include enforcement, signage and reporting to government. Ms. Sharon Connolly stated that speed control is not just about speed ramps, that other infrastructural and enforcement measures must be considered. Mr. Richard Manton said that speed is a significant issue across the city and not just in housing estates, adding that Galway City Council is obliged under national and city policy to follow the Hierarchy of Solutions, which prioritises the reduction of traffic speeds and volumes before other solutions.

Road safety

Discussion relating to road safety is included under other headings.

Input into the review of the City Development Plan

The review of the City Development Plan will begin next year.

Other items

Cllr. Frank Fahy pointed out that there is no mention of water-based transportation, which he believes has great potential in Galway city. Cllr. Anna Marley raised the issue of responsibility for various waterways, with the Eglinton Canal under the management of Corrib Navigation Trustees and other water bodies under the remit of the OPW. Mr. Joe O'Neill stated that Galway City Council can investigate water-based transportation, but that the main issue is demand.

Cllr. Anna Marley asked that the remit of the Urban Traffic Management Centre be broadened, including input from Galway Bay FM and third level students. Mr. Joe O'Neill and Ms. Sharon Connolly pointed out that there are strict access controls in place for the UTMC and that there is currently successful collaboration with Galway Bay FM. Mr. Richard Manton said that there is currently collaboration between the GTU and NUI Galway on traffic volume analysis, that this should continue and should include traffic speed analysis.

Mr. Derrick Hambleton referenced GCCF:PPN policy, stating that all road users should be treated with dignity and respect and should be facilitated in going about their lawful daily business regardless of their chosen form of transport.

Mr. Richard Manton raised the removal of cycle parking for the bike share scheme and asked about the bus network plan. Ms. Sharon Connolly replied that the cycle parking stands removed from Eyre Square and Mainguard Street will be replaced and extra cycle parking will be installed in other locations. The bus network plan was commissioned by the NTA and has yet to be completed. The Leap Card has been introduced in Galway City and can be used for the bike share scheme.

Additions to the work programme will be circulated in advance of the next meeting.

4. Amendments to Non-motorised Passenger Transporter Bye-laws

The Non-motorised Passenger Transporter Bye-laws were introduced to regulate the use of rickshaws in the city and also relate to (horse-drawn) hackney carriages. An amendment to the bye-laws was circulated to SPC members and proposes to give authority to An Garda Síochána to enforce fines and seizure. As this involves seizure of property, Galway City Council will seek legal advice before public consultation. Cllr. Frank Fahy claimed that rickshaws are still operating, including using Shop Street, and sought clarification on seizures.

Hackney carriages will be relocated from the north of Eyre Square. Mr. Derrick Hambleton said that this must be a public road and not a pedestrian area. The road outside the Skeffington Arms Hotel will be considered. Cllr. Frank Fahy called for the restriction of hackney carriage licences and for the bye-law amendment to be completed before the start of summer.

5. Any Other Business

It was agreed to hold meetings every three months, generally on the last Tuesday of that period, at 2.30pm. The following dates for 2015 were agreed:

24th February

26th May

21st July

27th October

The next meeting of the Transportation SPC will take place at 2.30pm on 24th February 2015.
