

## ***Miontuairiscí/Meeting Minutes***

### ***Transportation Strategic Policy Committee 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018, Swift Room, Room 057, Buvinda House, Navan***

**Attendees – (Councillors):** Cllr Paddy Meade (Chair), Cllr Sean Drew, Cllr Enda Flynn, Cllr Jim Holloway, Cllr. Johnny Guirke, Cllr Gerry o'Connor

**Apologies:** Cllr Sean Smith, Cllr Bryan Reilly, Cllr Eugene Cassidy, Cllr David Gilroy,

**Attendees – (Sectoral Representatives):** **N/A**  
**Apologies:** **N/A**

**(Officials):** Des Foley, John McGrath, Dara McGowan, Majella Farrell, Michael Finnegan.

Item	Discussion / Action
1.0	<b><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u></b> The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 <sup>th</sup> April 2018 were approved. Proposed by Cllr J Guirke and seconded by Cllr E Flynn.
2.0	<b><u>Matters Arising from Minutes</u></b> There were no matters arising
3.0	<b><u>Road Safety Policy – School Wardens</u></b>  John McGrath made a presentation on various guidance and policy documents and relevant legislation relating to the use of School Wardens versus other traffic control measures. <b>The following points were covered :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are 16 sites currently covered by a school warden employed by MCC. There is a high rate of absenteeism.</li><li>• Costs of School Warden Service versus Light Controlled Crossings were discussed</li><li>• Safety considerations in relation to the various options were discussed</li></ul> <b>It was noted that the following proposals and recommendations were being made:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Maintain existing locations in Meath where school wardens are appointed. These locations could be reviewed on an individual basis as the sites become vacant in the future through retirements or staff resigning voluntarily from the posts.</li><li>- Any requests for appointment of a school warden at a new location to be dealt with following an agreed procedure.</li><li>- Items for inclusion in a policy document were highlighted</li></ul> <b>Following the presentation the following issues were raised by the Members</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- There is a strong case for the signal controlled crossings</li><li>- There are issues where schools operate their own warden service, where lights are in place</li><li>- Schools should not be left responsible where there is absenteeism with the</li></ul>

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	<p>wardens. A process should be put in place where parents are informed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some liaison should take place with the Department of Education to establish what their opinion is in relation to wardens</li> </ul> <p><b>The following responses were made</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parents are responsible for the safety of their children getting into school whether or not a warden service is provided</li> <li>- Guidance documents recommend that services should not be duplicated at locations</li> <li>- Junior Warden service at certain locations was very good but had to be abandoned due to safety risks and abuse</li> <li>- All approaches to a school have to be considered in any plans being developed</li> <li>- Where wardens have been replaced by signaled crossings, no incidents have been recorded.</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that the recommendations above be endorsed and that a policy document should be developed which specifically sets out the criteria to be assessed when considering a new location and the roles and responsibilities of all parties. A draft policy document to be prepared for the next Transportation SPC</p>
4.0	<p><b><u>Pothole Repairs</u></b></p> <p>John McGrath gave a presentation on the types of works carried out, the manner in which the works are done and the different materials that are used in the process of pothole repairs.</p> <p>Summary of the items covered by the presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Different types of construction</li> <li>- Variable weather conditions and the impact</li> <li>- Sourcing/availability of materials</li> <li>- Storage of materials (bitumen)</li> <li>- Condition of road network</li> <li>- Extent of road network</li> <li>- Other services – emergency response and winter gritting</li> <li>- Funding – Repair- V- Restoration</li> <li>- Data supporting Asset Management</li> </ul> <p><b>Following the presentation the following issues were raised by the Members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The detail in the presentation was welcomed by those present.</li> <li>- A question was raised about what impact purchasing new machinery might have on the efficiency or the progress of the pothole repairs, would this reduce the costs of filling potholes, and/or ensure that more ground is covered?</li> <li>- Pleased to note that MCC are moving away from using Clause 804 with surface dressing wearing course as the work on the roads should last longer</li> <li>- Has there been any update on the funding claims made to the Departments following the harsh winter and in particular damage caused</li> </ul>

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	<p>by Storm Emma?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A request was made that once the PSCI is completed this year, that a rough estimate be made on what it would take to bring the full network in Meath to a decent standard</li> <li>- Consideration to be given to the provision of an additional one or two crews in the Kells area during the winter season next year</li> </ul> <p><b>The following responses were made</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The restoration works are based on a 3 year programme, derived from the ratings of all roads on MapRoad.</li> <li>- It is difficult to quantify costs of filling potholes as there are many variables involved, depending on location, access to materials, road type &amp; condition etc</li> <li>- The ideal scenario would be where we spend money on restoration rather than pothole maintenance</li> <li>- An extended fleet would be beneficial as it would mean that there would be fewer requirements for double jobbing with the Winter Maintenance service. Costs for patching units and trucks were outlined However this needed to be examined in the overall demand on capital funding.</li> <li>- Moving away from tar and chip will cost more per km but will be more durable</li> <li>- The claim for approximately €800,000 for the emergency response costs for Storm Emma is believed to be imminent. There is no further update in the 2nd claim for approx €3m for the long term impact on the road network</li> <li>- It was confirmed that the Department dictate how much must be spent on restoration and therefore we are limited on budgets for potholing, meaning that we cannot deal with all complaints immediately but prioritise works</li> <li>- An estimated figure for the improvement of the entire network can be taken from the system, once the PSCI survey results have been fully uploaded and checked. The figure would give an indicative cost of restoring the network. The exact cost would depend on actual contract prices and engineering assessment of each road.</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that a reminder would be sent to the Departments with regard to the two claims for additional funding</p>
	<p><b><u>Notices of Motion</u></b></p> <p><b><u>9.2 Submitted by Cllr Maria Murphy to May full Council meeting dated 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018</u></b></p> <p><i>“We call on Meath County Council to employ a horticulturist/arborist who will develop and manage a policy for our trees &amp; hedgerows.”</i></p> <p><b>Supporting Information subject to the motion being proposed, seconded and considered.</b></p> <p>Meath County Council’s staffing complement is informed by a workforce planning</p>

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process. The aim of this process is to ensure that the Council is appropriately staffed so as to deliver required services. The appointment of a horticulturist/arborist has not been included in the workforce planning process to date. This is in part due to the availability of trained and skilled staff in the Council's Transportation Department. The Council also utilises a framework of contractors in relation to the hedge-cutting programme. The Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 sets out a number of policies and objectives in relation to hedgerows and trees (NH POL 13, NH POL 14, NH POL 15, NH POL 16, NH POL 17, NH POL 18, NH POL 19, NH OBJ 5, NH OBJ 6, and NH OBJ 7). The *County Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2015-2020* sets out a number of objectives and actions in relation to promoting awareness and understanding of county's biodiversity (including hedgerows). Meath County Council organises educational/training events to promote best practice in biodiversity management (e.g. Boyne Valley Natural History Field Club and Community Biodiversity Plans). It is noted that the national staffing approval requirements remain in place across the local government sector in terms of the creation of new positions. The Council must adhere to this as well as overall budgetary implications.

The motion was proposed by **Councillor Maria Murphy** and seconded by **Councillor Enda Flynn**. A lengthy debate took place on the motion, and it was agreed that the matter would be included in the 2019 budgetary discussions. The motion was adopted on that basis, and it was also agreed that it would be brought to the Transportation SPC for discussion.

*A short discussion followed on the proposal. Des Foley confirmed that the current system of using consultants as they are needed, is working well. It was confirmed that the Council has other priorities with regards to recruitment. It was agreed that the Council would continue on the current basis for the moment but keep the situation under review and not rule out employing an arborist in the future.*

*It was noted that MCC should be reviewing the condition of the trees in all estates that are being taken in charge.*

*It was also noted that MCC needs to be more proactive on the issuing of notices to landowners regarding hedge-cutting.*

### **7.3 Submitted by Councillor Alan Tobin to Ashbourne Municipal District meeting dated 21<sup>st</sup> May 2018.**

The following motion was adopted and it was agreed to refer it to the Transportation SPC for consideration:

"Regarding winter gritting routes and in light of this year's adverse weather, can the relevant authorities, Meath County Council, Fingal County Council and the National Transport Authority, ensure that County Meath's gritting routes match up and align with Fingal's Priority 1 and Priority 2 gritting routes."

*It was noted that there are currently 4 routes which Fingal County Council are gritting, that we don't match up with. These were outlined and 2 are on regional roads and 2 are on local roads. It was noted that as it is, there is approximately*

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	<p><i>101km of regional roads that we are not gritting. MCC has already identified it's own priorities for additional strategic routes, which we would include in our plan, should resources become available. This SPC has already agreed that including the remainder of the Regional Roads on our route is the main priority.</i></p> <p><i>It was agreed that while neighbouring winter gritting plans should be reviewed, the key is to focus on our own prioritized areas and manage our resources efficiently.</i></p>
<b>6.0</b>	<p><b><u>AOB</u></b></p> <p>The following items were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Request for progress on the CIS and LIS schemes</li> <li>- What was the take up on the Roundabout Sponsorship Scheme</li> <li>- What is the policy for footpaths in rural areas</li> <li>- What is the policy in relation to ramps in housing estates</li> <li>- Funding for MCC roads</li> </ul> <p>The following responses were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contractors are working away on the LIS and CIS schemes for 2018, in line with the roadworks programme contracts</li> <li>- Currently there are 13 roundabouts sponsored under the scheme with some sponsorship arrangements still to be finalised. The requirement for footpaths in rural areas needs to be assessed based on the balance of need and costs, with new stretches considered justified if accessing a school etc. Additional footpaths require additional public lighting which if employed extensively may not be appropriate in a rural area.</li> <li>- An update on Speed control in housing estates would be considered for the agenda for the next meeting</li> </ul> <p>Next meeting Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2018.</p>
	<p><b><u>Recommendations from SPC Committee to Corporate Policy Group and to Full Council.</u></b></p> <p><b>1) School Wardens</b> A policy and procedure document covering the appointment of School Wardens at new locations and the process for dealing with communication with schools and parents, would be developed</p> <p><b>2) Issue a reminder to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government for the claim made for recoupment for Exceptional Costs as a result of Storm Emma</b></p> <p><b>3) Issue a reminder to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for the claim made for repair of road damage following severe weather during winter season 2017 – 2018</b></p>