

**Minutes of Meeting of Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee  
held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021 via Zoom**

**PRESENT:** Cllr. Jim Ryan (Chair)  
Cllr. Michael O'Meara  
Cllr. Michael Fitzgerald  
Cllr. Micheál Anglim  
Cllr. Hughie McGrath  
Cllr. David Dunne  
Cllr. Declan Burgess  
Cllr. Kevin O'Meara  
Cllr. Mark Fitzgerald  
Ms. Michelle Aylward (CEO County Tipperary Chamber)  
Mr. Gerard Shanahan, PPN (Social Inclusion)  
Mr. Liam Brett, Senior Engineer, Roads Operational  
Mr. Marcus O'Connor, Director of Services, Roads, Transportation  
and Infrastructure  
Ms. Michèle Maher, Administrative Officer, Roads  
Ms. Mary Murphy, Assistant Staff Officer, Roads (Minutes)  
Mr. Paddy Crowley, A/Senior Engineer, Active Travel, Roads  
Ms Gillian Flynn, A/Senior Executive Engineer, Active Travel, Roads

**APOLOGIES:** None

**1. Minutes of Meeting held on 6 September 2021 and Matters Arising**

Cllr Jim Ryan welcomed everybody to the meeting. The Minutes of the meeting of 6 September 2021 were proposed by Cllr. Michael O'Meara and seconded by Ms. Michelle Aylward. There were no matters arising.

**2. Active Travel Programme – Presentation by Gillian Flynn, A/Senior Executive Engineer**

Ms. Gillian Flynn gave a presentation on the Active Travel Programme which commenced in 2021. The presentation was circulated to members of the SPC.

Liam Brett said that the Active Travel Scheme represents a success story, the budget of €4.6 million was one of the largest across rural counties and that all of the budget has been spent.

Cllr. Michael Fitzgerald thanked Ms. Flynn for her presentation and welcomed the programme. He said that he would like to see the footpath scheme extended to rural schools on national roads. He also wished Paddy Crowley well as he leaves the Tipperary Cahir Cashel Municipal District and moves to the Active Travel Programme.

Cllr. David Dunne said that there is a lot of positive elements in the programme but that a lot depends on personal habits and parental responsibility regarding Active Travel. He enquired if there would be facilities in schools for children to dry off on a wet day. He felt that not having such facilities would put people off walking or cycling to school.

Cllr. Hughie McGrath raised the issue of e-scooters using the footpaths and the impact it might have on children walking to school. He also wished to support Cllr. Michael Fitzgerald in his comments. He said that the installation of a footpath in Kilruane changed the mindset of people coming to school. He also felt that the provision of footpaths would help to slow down traffic outside schools.

Cllr. Michael O'Meara thanked Ms. Flynn for her presentation. He said there is tremendous work being done including on the walkway in Nenagh, but that rural villages should not be forgotten. He also noted that electric cars seem to have quite a large carbon footprint.

Cllr. Jim Ryan thanked Ms. Flynn and noted the good work being done. He enquired if Active Travel funding can be made available for projects on national roads. He also enquired if Active Travel funding could be used outside the 50 km/h speed limit, for example, on the road to a GAA club which falls outside the 50 km/h zone. He expressed disappointment that the proposed Greenway along the old railway track from Thurles to Clonmel wasn't included in proposals submitted for that Scheme.

Ms. Flynn replied that the Safe Routes to School Scheme is available to all schools including those on National Roads. In relation to facilities in schools, she said that An Taisce liaises with parents and teachers and works with each school individually. She said that the Active Travel Programme is only available within the 50 km/h speed limit. She said that justification would have to be given for any scheme outside that limit. In relation to the Greenway from Thurles to Clonmel she replied that if the recently commissioned feasibility study was in favour of the scheme it could be considered for further discussion with TII and possible inclusion in a future programme.

Cllr. Michael O'Meara said that it was important to ensure that rural schools were not forgotten about. Ms. Flynn said that they are currently working with a number of rural schools but that if any Councillor was aware of schools in their area which would be interested in participating in the Scheme they should send her a list.

Mr. Marcus O'Connor said that the Active Travel Programme has been extremely successful having begun from a standing start in June 2021. He said that traditionally the Council did not have money for footpaths but is now making a huge investment, not just in towns, but in rural villages also. In relation to street lights he said that the Policy had been adopted by the SPC and noted that the Council has to meet carbon emission reduction targets which has to be borne in mind when considering the

installation of new lights. Regarding the proposed Greenway mentioned by Cllr. Ryan he noted that most of the land is not in public ownership and that many of the landowners are against the scheme.

Mr. Paddy Crowley thanked Cllr. Fitzgerald for his kind comments. He said that the Active Travel Scheme is being delivered on a countywide basis including in rural villages. He said that it is an extremely good funding stream for Tipperary County Council allowing things to be done that could not be done in the past.

### **3. E-scooters**

Ms. Mary Murphy gave a presentation on Part 12 of the Road Traffic and Roads Bill (e-scooters) currently going through the Oireachtas (the presentation was circulated to members of the SPC).

Cllr. Hughie McGrath said that he was delighted to hear that e-scooters would be banned from footpaths. He said that in recent months cars had crashed into e-scooters on dark nights, the rider had no helmet and probably would have been seen if they had reflective clothing. He said that e-scooters would be a danger to older people and people coming out of shops. He noted that towns have different layouts and there are places where the road is too narrow to allow for cycleways. He said that national government had not given the matter enough thought and that pedestrians need to be protected.

Mr. Gerard Shanahan said that like Cllr. McGrath he was pleased to hear that e-scooters wouldn't be allowed on footpaths, although riders seem to prefer to use footpaths.

Cllr. Jim Ryan said that it was very concerning that people over 18 would not need to wear a helmet. He also expressed concern that e-scooters have a light on the front but not on the back. He felt that e-scooters should have to be registered and insured, querying what would happen if one was involved in an accident with an old age pensioner. He also enquired if there was any provision against holding onto an animal while riding an e-scooter.

Mr. Ger Shanahan noted that there have been instances of the scooter battery exploding and felt that the batteries themselves can pose a danger. He also told the meeting that rental companies in London are not maintaining the e-scooters and this was another issue for concern.

Cllr. David Dunne said that most of the concerns raised can relate to bicycles also. He said that it is down to personal responsibility but that the Gardaí were not being given the powers they would need. He said there is a difference between having the right law and enforcing the law. He felt that e-scooters go against the Active Travel policy as they are partially battery operated.

Mr. Liam Brett commented that lights are not mandated and expressed concern for the safety of the users. He noted that safety of others is a particular concern as there is no noise from e-scooters. He said that they did however allow people to travel further in a carbon neutral way. Mr. Marcus O'Connor endorsed Mr. Brett's comments.

**4. Correspondence**

There were no items of correspondence to be considered.

**5. AOB**

There was no other business raised.

**6. Dates for Meetings in 2022**

Meetings for 2022 will take place on the following dates:

- Monday 28 February 2022
- Monday 30 May 2022
- Monday 5 September 2022
- Monday 5 December 2022

All meetings will take place at 10.00 a.m. and will take place via Zoom unless otherwise advised.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Cllr. Jim Ryan**  
**Cathaoirleach**