

**Minutes of Meeting of Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee,
held on 8th July 2020
in Thurles Municipal District Offices**

PRESENT: Cllr. Jim Ryan (Chair)
Cllr. Hughie McGrath
Cllr. Declan Burgess
Cllr. Michael O'Meara
Cllr. Michéal Anglim
Cllr. Michael Fitzgerald
Mr. Gerard Shanahan (PPN)
Mr. Seán Reidy (Development Construction)
Mr. Brian Pope (An Taisce)
Mr. Marcus O'Connor, Director of Services, Roads
Mr. Liam Brett, Senior Engineer, Roads Operational
Mr. James Murray, A/Senior Engineer, Roads Operational
Ms. Michèle Maher, Administrative Officer, Roads (minutes)
Mr. Denis Holland, Senior Engineer, Water Services
Mr. James Swords, A/Senior Executive Engineer, FRMP

APOLOGIES: Cllr. Kevin O'Meara

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 Declan Burgess and seconded by Cllr Hughie McGrath.

2. Introduction to the Water Services Department by Mr. Denis Holland, Senior Engineer

Mr. Denis Holland, Senior Engineer made a presentation to members on Water Services in County Tipperary, including the background to the establishment of Irish Water and its Service Level Agreement with Tipperary County Council.

The presentation covered –

- Functions of Irish Water
- Functions of Tipperary County Council as agent of Irish Water
- 12 year Service Level Agreement with Irish Water
- Irish Water/Tipperary County Council Annual Service Plan
- Public Water Supply Services
- Public Waste Water Services

- Operations and maintenance
- Rural water programme for Group Water Supply Schemes and Group Sewerage Schemes, grants for same
- Objectives of Water Services
- Councillor Engagement by TCC, and with Irish Water.

Cllr Ryan thanked Mr. Holland for his comprehensive presentation and invited questions or comment from the members.

Cllr Michael Fitzgerald commented that there were issues with Irish Water and particularly with water quality, with boil water notices in place for considerable lengths of time, in several areas of the county. He referenced an EPA report recently published on the quality of water. Cllr Fitzgerald noted that Group Water Schemes are dealt with by the Council and issues are dealt with immediately. Brian Pope mentioned the SLA with Irish Water and asked whether TCC can request additional funding to deal with issues such as boil water notices.

Denis Holland advised that TCC proposes technical solutions to deal with identified issues, to Irish Water, and requests the necessary budget to progress those solutions.

Marcus O'Connor, Director of Services, noted that Cllr Fitzgerald made valid points raising issues regarding Irish Water and noted that three (3) schemes in Tipperary at Clonmel, Nenagh and Ballina, are delayed and are hindering development in the County.

Cllr Ryan raised the issue of pumping stations in some housing estates taken over by NAMA in Thurles area, where planning was granted by the Council and development levies paid, asking that they be designated for improvement works. Cllr Anglim noted that there were similar issues in his area, commenting that the Council should hold developers to account for poor quality sewerage schemes provided in housing estates which are not working as they should.

Mr. Holland replied that traditionally on-site treatment plants were taken in charge, however since the introduction of Irish Water the plants must be working satisfactorily before Irish Water will take them over as part of the taking in charge process. Marcus O'Connor noted that TCC would now be reluctant to grant permission for developments where direct connection to water and waste water systems is not available.

Brian Pope mentioned lands at Stereame, Nenagh and delays to development proposed there, which included leisure and amenity areas. Marcus O'Connor advised that such developments would be phased in order to allow a developer to complete houses and sell them, to finance further phases of development and the provision of amenities.

Cllr Burgess asked whether the Irish Water contact line could be made available to Councillors on a 7 day week basis. The members agreed to recommend this to the full Council in order that a letter would issue to Irish Water from Tipperary County Council.

Cllr McGrath asked whether a recommendation could be made to the Planning SPC that housing estates be developed in phases from the back out, rather than the other way, which could lead to the earlier provision of leisure and amenity areas. The members agreed to make a recommendation to the Planning SPC for consideration.

Cllr O'Meara raised the issue of rural houses that can't be serviced by Irish Water or Group Water Schemes, and are not eligible for the rural water grant scheme for which applicants have to be seven (7) years in a house. Mr. Holland advised that this grant was never intended for a new house. The members agreed to make a recommendation to the full Council to ask the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, who administer the grant scheme, to amend the criteria in order to make the rural water grant available to new rural housing.

3. Catchment Flood Risk Assessment & Management (CFRAM) Programme Presentation on Tipperary Flood Relief Minor Projects (FRMP)

Mr. James Swords, A/Senior Executive Engineer, gave a presentation to Members on the background to the National Flood Policy with the Office of Public Works as lead agency.

The presentation covered –

- Development of the CFRAM programme
- Strategy for management of flood risk in Ireland
- Review process completed by the OPW
- Intent for 118 schemes in 10 years involving 95% of properties at risk
- Flood Risk Management Plans – Suir FRMP and Shannon Lower FRMP
- Proposals to manage flood risk in the area
- Detailed assessment and design, statutory planning required
- Tipperary County Council is one of 19 LA's to get a proportion of funding, allocated €2.6m out of €14m current national funding
- The Tipperary project, schemes costing under €1m each are:
 - Golden €970,000
 - Holycross €300,000
 - Knocklofty €400,000
 - Nenagh €610,000
 - Ballina/Killaloe €310,000
- Two schemes in the Shannon area, three in the Suir area, seven areas of further assessment in Tipperary for future projects
- Project management by TCC and OPW, key stakeholders
- Project status and timelines outlined.

Cllr Ryan thanked Mr. Swords for his comprehensive presentation and noted that Thurles is designated as an area of further assessment. Cllr Fitzgerald welcomed the inclusion of Golden, and noting that a local Angling Association would be a key stakeholder, he asked if there would be any further consultation. Mr. Swords advised that the final on-site plans would involve consultation. Cllr O'Meara noted that many bridges are hundreds of years old and queried how works could be done in these areas. James Swords outlined some of the proposals to be considered.

4. Consideration of correspondence from PPN Representative to the Strategic Policy Committee

Mr. Gerard Shanahan, PPN Representative, submitted an item of correspondence re accessibility measures:

'Can the infrastructure or associated Departments commit to sending the PPN its proposals or plans at the conception/infrastructure stage, so that they can be shared with its Social Inclusion Pillar members?'

Mr. Shanahan expanded on his question and related it to certain developments such as Liberty Square, Thurles and Market Square, Roscrea developments, shared public spaces, issues with tactile paving etc. It was noted that he had received a written response to the correspondence from the Roads Department together with TII guidelines which are followed.

Marcus O'Connor, Director of Services, responded to Mr. Shanahan's query, outlining how the Design Manual for Urban Streets (DMURS) is followed for developments, being a guidance document which was developed involving Disability representative groups. The aim is to slow down traffic in urban areas by narrowing the carriageway and introducing non controlled crossings. Mr. O'Connor noted that the local District Engineer had met with a wheelchair user and assessed parts of the town to review and decide on areas where additional measures could be implemented. He advised that a further meeting could be arranged with the District Engineer in Thurles to commence a review of practical issues and make progress improving same.

Liam Brett, Senior Engineer noted that the Council is more than willing to become involved and deal with any accessibility issues that are brought to the Council's attention. He also advised that 'DMURS' is constantly being improved regarding accessibility issues.

Following further discussion the members recommended that Mr. Shanahan liaise with representative groups such as NCBI, IWA and others, and revert to the Council regarding an audit of towns with the relevant District Engineer. This recommendation was proposed by Cllr Jim Ryan (Chair) and seconded by Cllr Michéal Anglim.

9. AOB

The presentations made to the members by Denis Holland, Senior Engineer, and James Swords, A/Senior Executive Engineer, to be circulated to the members.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 29th September, 2020 in Thurles Municipal District Offices.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____

Cllr. Jim Ryan
Cathaoirleach