

4SPC For Transport

Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 19th February 2025 10am. MCC Chamber Mtek I & Microsoft Teams.

Present:

Cllr Raymond Aughey (Chair)	Monaghan County Council
Cllr Noel Keelan	Monaghan County Council
Cllr Sean Conlon	Monaghan County Council
Cllr Pauric Clerkin	Monaghan County Council
Cllr Alan Johnston	Monaghan County Council
Emily Treanor	PPN – Business/Commercial
Gordan Read	PPN – Business/Commercial
Conan Connolly	PPN - Environmental
Samantha Farrell (Online)	PPN – Trade Union
Fergal McMahon (Online)	PPN – Social Inclusion

In attendance from Monaghan County Council:

Gareth McMahon	A/Director of Services – Transportation and Community
Kevin West	A/Senior Engineer – Roads
Bernadette McArdle	SEE Active Travel
Brian Braniff	SEE National Roads
Roisín Moore	SEE National Roads (N2 Major Projects)
Seamie Mc Mahon	Administrative Officer – Roads
Kevin Murray	Clerical Officer - Roads

Apologies Cllr Bronagh McAree MCC

Absent John Connolly PPN-Community

1. Welcome & Introduction

Chairman Cllr. Raymond Aughey welcomed the members to the meeting and congratulated them on their nominations to the Transport Strategic Policy Committee (SPC).

2. Priorities and Strategic Objectives of Strategic Policy Committee

Gareth McMahon, A/Director of Services gave a presentation to the meeting giving a brief outline of the proposed topics and meetings of the SPC for the year. Schedule of meetings was agreed for remainder of the year.

Schedule of Meetings as follows: February, May, September, November. (Request for two additional meetings in June & October)

3. Road Maintenance Strategy

Kevin West, Senior Engineer & Roisín Moore, SEE delivered a presentation on the proposed Road Maintenance Strategy for Regional & Local Roads for 2025-2030. Presentation outlined the process currently in place for road maintenance, current state of the roads and identifying new ways of working and improving the process. A proposed Pilot Strategy was presented for 2025-2030 to improve better efficiency and outcomes, carbon reductions and with the potential to secure additional resources.

The members welcomed this presentation and thanked the executive for their in depth presentation.

Questions following Presentation:

Conan Connolly noted that the plan was very car centric, enquired about modal shift and possibility of introducing weight restrictions also local roads to improve durability. Also enquired about the possibility of streamlining resources/staff out of the MDs and into a central base.

Kevin West gave an overview of the Reclaimed asphalt used on a Greenway project in Cork and the carbon benefits. And that the staff allocations for the MD's were up for review.

Gareth further added that the plan was not car centric but was road centric, he talked about the quiet road concept from Scotstown to Ballinode and how this gives priority to cycle/walking traffic. Also talked about integration strategy for sustainable transport to get people out of cars into other modes of transport.

Cllr Alan Johnston queried slides showing a projection that the state of roads will be in by 2030.

Roisín Moore responded that this is a projection of what state the roads will be in if nothing changes from the current way maintenance is being carried out. This will change depending on agreed interventions such as funding and allocation.

Cllr Noel Keelan raised the point that funding is not keeping up with inflation and current needs. Said that spending priorities need to be assessed and make the most of initiatives like RAP and climate initiatives. More needs to be done on Active Travel and Local Link services also.

Cllr Alan Johnston asked if the plan was realistic/deliverable, given the current shortfall could additional funding be secured.

Kevin West responded that something must change. That the use of IAPDM could be maximised to provide better value for money. Investment from own resources could also be considered to increase. Pilot Pavement Maintenance Plan is to be proposed to DOT, which could potentially increase funding as could provide benefits at a national level.

Cllr Sean Conlon asked was there any provision made for potholes & verge slippage in the current year similar to last year. He also asked about green procurement and if there was a matrix to score local suppliers higher than those traveling from a significant distance. He raised concerns over the talk of increasing the use of own resources as part of funding.

Kevin advised that there was not a specific budget for potholes as there was in the prior year. And that there was a scoring matrix in place for tenders. Noted that for certain schemes eg the CIS the contribution could be increased by a small % to increase the number of projects that could be completed.

Gordon Read suggested that the app being used to track emissions as part of the road maintenance should be made available to business also. He queried where NOAC get their information from and raised concerns over the surface of the roads that were being reduced in speed limits that they would not received the same level of treatment due to the speed limit change.

Kevin informed Gordon of the process of how the data is recorded and submitted to NOAC. Gordon was assured that the reduction in speed limits would not result in the specific treatment that 80Km/h roads receive being removed as a result of the reduction.

Emily Treanor asked if the contribution from community business was made to improve roads, could they receive a reduced rates amount and how this would be achievable for agricultural business. She proposed more stops on the local link services that would service their business.

Cllr Clerkin said that requests can be made directly to the local link.

Feargal McMahon added his support to the proposed increase to the local link services

4. Clones Mobility Plan

Bernadette McArdle, SEE Active Travel delivered a presentation on the Clones Town Urban Mobility Plan. This provided an overview of the project, objectives and status of the plan, which is open for public consultation.

The members welcomed this initiative and thanked Bernadette for her presentation.

Conan Connolly asked was their support for the enforcement of traffic laws as part of the plan.

Gareth McMahon informed that there is a traffic warden in place in the Clones MD and that Monaghan County Council are hoping to recruit more traffic wardens.

Gordon Read asked if a traffic flow/people flow study had been carried out and where this information was gathered from, and if the potential for a Park&Ride system could be implemented from Clones to Monaghan as part of the Plan.

Bernadette McArdle advised that the information in the Mobility Plan was from a number of sources such as the Census, Schools & Local business. Also, that the Park&Ride would be addressed under the County Transport Plan.

5. AOB

Fergal McMahon raised a question around the build up of traffic at the traffic lights in Monaghan Town on the Coothill and Clones Roads. He also raised concerns of how the Aldi site would impact the level of traffic in the town centre.

Kevin West informed that a Traffic impact assessment had to be submitted by Aldi as part of their application. This assessment doesn't show that there will be a major impact on the traffic.

Cllr Raymond Aughey said that this was submitted 5 years ago and that traffic has got worse in this timeframe.

Kevin West informed that this Traffic assessment was re-done last year, showing minimal impact.

Cllr Alan Johnston raised a point regarding the disconnect between reports and the reality of the situation, stating that the new carpark, new pedestrian crossings and convent have all been a contributing factor in the traffic situation getting worse and that Aldi would also contribute to this.

Gareth McMahon noted that Aldi submitted that they have a steady flow of customers with no peak times. It was highlighted the benefits of this development economically would balance out the issues of congestion. There are plans in place to deal with the traffic issue from Margaret Skinnader Roundabout to Old Cross Square as part of the Monaghan Mobility Strategy.

Cllr Pauric Clerkin raised concerns around Bog roads, Particularly the road from Smithboro to Scotstown. The traffic has increased on this road and others as HGVs are trying to avoid the town centre, leading to deterioration in these roads. He also highlighted safety concerns around speeding in Villages, and used the example of Corcaghan and how this could be applied to other villages.

These topics are included in the outline and are to be discussed at later meetings.

Cllr Raymond Aughey highlighted the problems with National Roads coming into the town centre. He talked about the Tullybryan CPO and how this was a lengthy process and that a plan for a bypass of Monaghan needs to be developed.

Gordon Read asked if a traffic flow could be completed now and done again when Aldi opens so a comparison could be made.

Gareth replied that the traffic survey completed is an established traffic modelling process and that the current study has a 30 year projection. Brian Braniff noted that this does not take into account any modal shift, and therefore projects a worst case scenario.

Gordon also asked about possibility of cable being put underground.

Gareth responded that there are ongoing discussion and workshops but this was not at a local level. There was the opportunity to give feedback at a national level and that feedback has been submitted.

Cllr Noel Keelan asked who was responsible for keeping power/internet cable lines clear following the recent storm. He also asked about road openings and how these were managed. Gareth informed Noel that ESB/Eir were responsible for their own Network. Regarding Road openings there is a specific member of staff that has been employed to deal with the Road Openings, and that this information was feed into NOAC.

Cllr Raymond Aughey highlighted the importance that a situation like the Glen Road Culvert does not occur again.

Gareth informed that the issues regarding this were down the errors by the contractor at key moments of the project. Delays were not as a result of an oversight by Monaghan County Council. Contractors are due to be off site by 7th March. It was noted that the traffic lights in town would not revert to normal until Aldi had finished their works.

Next meeting was agreed to be held in May 2025.