



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THURLES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT WHICH WAS HELD IN THURLES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OFFICES, CASTLE AVENUE, THURLES ON 4th DECEMBER 2024

Present: Councillor Michael Smith, Cathaoirleach, presided.

Councillors Kay Cahill Skehan, William Kennedy, Shane Lee, Micheál Lowry, Eddie Moran, Jim Ryan, Peggy Ryan and Seán Ryan.

<u>Also Present:</u>	Mark Connolly	Director of Services
	Kieran Malone	Senior Engineer
	Thomas Duffy	District Engineer
	Jonathon Flood	A/ Senior Executive Planner
	Jim Ryan	Executive Engineer
	Enda Walsh	Executive Engineer
	Orla McDonnell	Staff Officer

1.1 Disclosures / Conflicts of Interest.

There were no Disclosures / Conflicts of Interest raised at the Meeting.

2.1 Consider Chief Executive's Report PT 8TT136 on Part 8 Development – Phase 2 Liberty Square Public Realm Scheme.

Following an item on the Agenda of the November Monthly Meeting to 'Consider Chief Executive's Report PT 8TT136 on Part 8 Development – Phase 2 Liberty Square Public Realm Scheme', it was agreed that this item be deferred and considered at a special meeting of the MD on 4th December @ 4 p.m.

The District Engineer explained that in the intervening two-week period since the 'In Committee' Meeting on 18th November 2024, there have been meetings, talks, re-trials of the lane closure, telephone calls, clarifications, assurances and concessions.

Consultants, Aecom, who were the same designers for Phase 1, have delivered a plan for Thurles in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets. While not all parties share the vision, the MD firmly believes that the plan turns the streets from corridors for traffic to a place in which people want to live and spend time and money. He stated that it is now the decision of the Members, as elected representatives and leaders, to translate that vision into reality

Jonathon explained how the Part 8 system works, i.e. the Members have a 6-week period to consider the Report and they may, during that time, pass a resolution to vary/modify the Report, they might not proceed at all, or they can accept the Report as it is.



If the Members decide to modify the report, then the Resolution must state the reasons why.

The Cathaoirleach explained to the Members that the issue was previously discussed at the 'In Committee' Meeting on 18th November and any questions posed at this meeting must be in relation to clarification of the process only.

The Members raised the following queries: -

- Can the Members propose an amendment to retain parking spaces in the centre of the Square that would otherwise be lost under the proposed scheme?
- The initial proposal was to remove all parking from the centre of the Square and the Members successfully got a concession from the TII to retain some of the spaces. If the Members now decide that they want to keep all the spaces in the centre of the Square, will the TII then revert to the original proposal of no parking?
- If the Part 8 Report is approved, can minor amendments be made to it?
- There is an inference that this Scheme is happening almost immediately?
- Will a Part 8 approval lapse, similar to planning permission?
- The traders are afraid of the effects that loss of parking will have on their business.
- The town needs to be examined as a whole, there is now a window available to examine traffic flows and the inner relief road. All junctions need to be looked at along with the possibility of one-way systems.
- Do the Members need to put in additional wording into the Scheme in order for the MD to examine traffic flows, junctions, etc, throughout the entire town?
- Do the MD have funding available for the provision of extra parking spaces in the town?

Replies to queries raised were as follows: -

- It is futile for the Members to propose an amendment that the parking in the centre of the Square be retained as the TII, having control of the design as the main stakeholder, are opposed to such an amendment and the Scheme will consequently not qualify for funding.



- While the Members do have the option to amend/vary the Scheme, there are consequences to doing so; funding may become an issue.
- While TCC cannot answer directly for TII, the correct solution is to remove all parking from the centre of the Square. It is on a national route and access is not safe for pedestrians. There has to be some compromise from the Members, as the TII have done.
- Minor amendments can be made if the Part 8 is approved such as adjustments to kerb lines and green areas on O'Donovan Rossa Street, as detailed in the reports.
- Road improvement works on the N75 will commence in the 1st Quarter of 2025, then road improvement and enhancement works on Slievenamon Road, subject to funding, before the works on Liberty Square will take place. Realistically a timeframe of 2027-2028 is likely subject to TII and URDF funding.
- Unlike planning permission, a Part 8 will last indefinitely.
- The Scheme will not only affect traders but pedestrians, school children etc are also part of this Scheme and need to be considered. Additional spaces at the Bank of Ireland will be available from Monday and should offset the loss of some of the parking spaces.
- TCC have a Transport Plan and items such as traffic flows, junctions, etc of the entire town will need to be looked at in tandem with the Liberty Square Phase 2 Scheme.
- The MD should be in a position to deliver 40+ parking spaces in advance of the Liberty Square Scheme.

The Cathaoirleach asked if there were any other clarifications and as there were none, he informed the Members that they had 3 options before them and a decision must be made today.

Councillor J. Ryan asked that it be noted that he is not happy with losing the parking spaces at the centre of the Square.

It was proposed by Councillor P. Ryan, seconded by Councillor S. Ryan and resolved:-

"The Part VIII Chief Executive's Report PT8TT136 dated 24th October 2024 on Phase 2 Liberty Square Public Realm Scheme be and is hereby adopted."



That concluded the official business of the Special Meeting.

SIGNED: 
CATHAOIRLEACH

DATE: 17th. February 2025.

SIGNED: 
MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR

DATE: 17th. February 2025.