

Committee on Transport, Tourism and Sport - Discussion on Julianstown Bypass

Wednesday 25 September 2019 at 10.30 am in Committee Room 4,
Leinster House

Meath County Council Opening Statement

Meath County Council welcomes the opportunity to appear before the Committee today to discuss traffic issues in Julianstown.

Our vision for Julianstown as set out in our County Development Plan is to consolidate and strengthen the village through the provision of a well-defined village centre area and to support a range of land-uses that will benefit the residential population. The Council is committed to playing its part to improve the quality of the built and natural environment of the village while catering for the needs of the local community and ensuring that the village develops in a sustainable manner.

In terms of traffic, on an average day more than 20,000 vehicles pass through the village on the R132. This is despite the opening of the Drogheda Bypass section of the M1 motorway in 2003. The high traffic volumes create a situation which is incompatible with the Council's long-term vision for Julianstown and which is likely to worsen as Drogheda and East Meath develop further. We therefore believe that the provision of a traffic solution for the village is central to realising the aspirations for Julianstown.

The Council raised the matter of the traffic situation in Julianstown directly with the Minister of Transport at a meeting in January 2017. Subsequently in March 2017, the Director of Services for Transportation communicated with both the Department of Transport Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) requesting them to engage in discussions about advancing a solution to the transport situation. In December 2018, the Council also submitted a draft Preliminary Business Case to DTTAS which concluded that there is a *prima facie* case for 'doing something' to address the traffic volumes in Julianstown. Furthermore, the initial analysis showed that a bypass of Julianstown emerged as the preferred option in both the multi-criteria analysis and preliminary cost benefit analysis that were undertaken.

The Committee will appreciate that it is beyond the resources of Meath County Council to deliver the scale of intervention that is potentially required in Julianstown without capital grant support from central government. If this is forthcoming the Council would prioritise the process to identify and progress the optimum solution.

In the meantime, the Council has made provision of €800,000 in its Capital Investment Programme 2019 -2021 for traffic management measures for the village. Environmental studies are currently being undertaken in relation to the proposed interim traffic management measures in preparation for an application to An Bord Pleanála for approval.