The Galway City Council Mobility Team (GCCMT) held two meetings again this week. Progress for the week ending 19th June 2020 is summarised below.

**Implementation Plan**

Initiatives are progressing per last week’s update from the GCCMT:

- Cones have been installed on Eglinton Street and Forster Street (17th June 2020), to facilitate additional space for social distancing for pedestrians. Pencil Bollards are on order, and will be installed once received. Signage in relation to loading bays and parking will be removed and updated where required.
- Restrictions to private cars entering Eglinton Street and Francis St. will be implemented in the coming days. Only buses, taxies and cyclist can turn right at the Court House when approaching from the Salmon Weir Bridge.
- The pedestrianisation of Cross St. is to commence from next week, with bollards to be installed. Hours of operation are under review, and will be publicised when agreed.
- As per the weekly update for w/c 12.06.2020, the Transport section continues to progress a design for a temporary cycleway along the promenade in Salthill, with consultation with An Garda Síochana undertaken.

GCCMT propose to host a virtual meeting with Elected Members to discuss proposed schemes, with details to follow w/c 22.06.2020.

**Delivery Times in Pedestrianised Areas of the City centre**

The Galway City Council Mobility Team, in consultation with An Garda Síochana, is working to support social distancing (currently a minimum of 2 metres) in public areas in the city.

As retailers on the street reopen and employees return to their workplaces on a regular basis, social distancing in the pedestrianised areas of Galway City Centre may become particularly challenging, with narrow medieval streets and limited road space. To date a number of public amenities have been closed at the request of An Garda Siochana, due to social distancing concerns, including Blackrock diving tower, Spanish Arch, Claddagh Basin and St Nicholas Market.

Footfall monitors showed 150,030 people in the city centre for the week commencing 7th June. This is an increase of 41,793 from the previous week, and is likely to continue to increase as more businesses and restaurants re-open.

The GCCMT recognises the impact that re-opening of restaurants and bars on June 29th will have on the levels of footfall and interactions between pedestrians on the City streets. As an increasing number of queues begin to form outside of businesses, social distancing in the pedestrianised areas of Galway City Centre may become particularly challenging.

In order to ensure social distancing and safe passage of pedestrians in the pedestrianised areas of the City Centre, the GCCMT is amending delivery times for this area. The earlier delivery hours, and the introduction of the automated bollards, are intended to ensure that pedestrians using the street can safely social distance while walking, or while queuing to access businesses, without having to avoid conflict with delivery trucks operating three abreast on the street.
In addition, operation of the barriers will prevent vehicles using the pedestrian streets as a rat run, or for parking while running errands – a practice which currently takes place, and presents challenges for delivery vehicles as well as pedestrians. The bollards are in operation as of this week, with statutory signage advising of delivery times from 06.00am to 9.00am. Initially in practice, operating hours for deliveries will be from 06.00am – 10.00am.

As the schools return, it is proposed that access for deliveries will cease at 08.00am, to allow children to safely access schools in the city centre. Public transport capacity is severely impacted by the requirement for social distancing, so walking and cycling will play a crucial role in keeping the city moving as school children, workplaces, tourists and shoppers resume ‘normal life’ again.

All measures introduced as part of the Mobility Plan are dynamic and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, in consultation with stakeholders.

**Tables and Chairs Licencing**

GCCMT have noted that Galway City Council’s current position is informed by the national legislation, which has not changed, and local guidance, which restricts tables and chairs to pubs or restaurants with ground floor operations serving food.

GCC awaits updates from the DPHLG regarding changes to legislation in relation to fees for tables and chairs.

**Guidelines for Queuing**

The GCCMT Guidelines for Queuing were issued to business representative groups in the city this week, and are available on the Galway City Council website. These guidelines will assist businesses to plan for safe queuing on public paths, and are available at: www.galwaycity.ie/mobilityteam

**St. Nicholas’ Market**

The St. Nicholas Market will operate again this weekend, on both Saturday and Sunday, with the measures from the previous weekend remaining in place.

A significant body of work has been carried out by the Environment Section to facilitate the market to continue, and to accommodate all licenced market traders to resume trading. The current arrangements, which encompass St Pat’s Boys’ NS and St Nicholas Church grounds, allow for approximately half of all licenced traders to operate.

Galway City Council would like to acknowledge the tremendous support of St Pats and St Nicholas Church in facilitating market operations over the past number of weeks.

The current arrangement is time-limited, with Environment undertaking surveys of other potential locations, with a focus on having an alternative in place for when these arrangements end.

Having ruled out a number of locations for operational reasons, Environment will meet with the Traders Committee this week, to discuss potential options to get the market back to full capacity. An agreed proposal is desirable in the short term, to ensure the continuation of a high quality, popular market and tourism attraction in our city.
Social Distancing at Galway City Council Amenities

Further to ongoing consultation with An Garda Síochána in respect of Phase 2 re-opening and Galway City Council ‘Local Roadmap for Reopening Society & Business’ and a ‘Temporary City Mobility Framework Plan’ please note the following measures to enhance social distancing at Galway City amenities:

- **Silverstrand**: The road access to Silverstrand is to remain closed for the upcoming weekend. Emergency Services access is available by removing the crowd control barrier section. Galway City Council is developing a ‘Park and Stride’ initiative whereby members of the public can park in car parks within walking distance of Silverstrand (e.g. Hunters, Cappagh Park), and continue on foot to the beach.
- **Salthill**: The cones/barriers temporarily removing parking along the prom are to remain in place. Toft car park and Salthill beach car park have now re-opened.
- **Spanish Arch/ Claddagh Basin**: The Spanish Arch and Claddagh basin are to re-open from Thursday, 18th June.
- **Ballyloughane**: Ballyloughane car park is also to reopen from Thursday 18th June.
- **Public conveniences** – all GCC public toilets are now reopened.

The GCCMT will review access to amenities in conjunction with An Garda Síochána on an-going basis.

Engaging with Businesses

Further to the issue of the business recovery forum being raised at the Ordinary Meeting on Wednesday 10th of June, a meeting with Galway Chamber took place on Friday 12th June, with his Worship the Mayor of Galway City Council, Councillor Mike Cubbard, Chief Executive Brendan McGrath and Ruairí Lehmann, Tourism Officer, participating on behalf of Galway City Council.

As a result of this, the Mayor was invited by Galway Chamber to take part in the first section of Phase 2 of the Business Recovery Forum, which involved a Zoom call on Tuesday the 16th June. The meeting was well attended, with approximately 85 business representatives joining the meeting on Zoom, from various sectors across Galway.

Attendees indicated their support for forthcoming changes to delivery times on the pedestrian streets in the city, with 52% agreeing that a cut off time for deliveries of 08.00am was workable. 31% indicated that this was not applicable to them, with 17% not in favour of the changed time.

Another poll indicated that 42% of businesses on the call were happy with the measures they have in place for trading, and 76% of businesses believe they can viably open their business based on the 2 metre restriction.

The Galway Chamber is preparing a full report and list of questions from the call for the City Council which will be directly responded to by the City Mobility Team. If individual follow up is required that will be arranged.

Galway City Council continue to encourage all the businesses to engage with Galway Chamber and the Business Recovery Forum. The measures being suggested will be given high priority by the City Mobility team. It should be noted that all measures will have benefits, and impacts, but all are adaptable, and the City Mobility Team is willing to make changes and trial new measures as required.
Public Submissions

Over 1,100 responses were received to Phase 1 of online submissions to GCCMT.

This is a very significant piece of input and feedback from the people of Galway. In addition, submissions have been received from business representative groups, Elected Members, and other stakeholder groups.

Updates on online submissions will be published on an on-going basis, on the online map, see https://arcg.is/0nSTzn for current updates.

All submissions have been reviewed with consideration for:

- **National Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business**
- **Policy** - The Galway Transport Strategy, the Galway City Development Plan, the Galway City Council Public Realm Strategy, and national guidance, including the National Cycle Manual, Design Manual for Urban Streets, and conditions of funding for interventions proposed e.g. NTA Project Management Guidance.
- **Planning** – requirements for measures to secure planning permission or licences.
- **Geography** - Initial geographic focus of the GCCMT, based on footfall and need for social distancing. This is the City Centre and Salthill as of June 2020. The requirements of schools and other areas will be examined in due course.
- **An Garda Síochána** - Agreement with An Garda Síochána on the appropriateness of measures.
- **Time** - The short term remit of the GCCMT, initially proposed to be September 2020, is subject to review based on the roadmap for reopening. Measures which cannot be progressed in the short term have been referred to core operations for examination, and inclusion in future work programmes, funding dependent. Measures implemented through the GCCMT will be temporary and dynamic in nature, responding to the need to support social distancing. They will be reviewed on an on-going basis, and removed in due course.
- **Existing Schemes** – A number of on-going transport projects will provide solutions for many issues flagged via the online form e.g. Cross City Link, Salmon Weir Pedestrian and Cycling Bridge, Dublin Road Public Transport scheme. These schemes are currently at various stages of the design and planning processes and will be progressed and implemented as funding is secured.
- **Funding** - In light of the current Covid-19 pandemic, and its significant impact on the local authority budget, the City Council is reviewing its budget lines on an on-going basis to ensure prudent management of resources during these extremely challenging times. As of March 27th, any discretionary budget lines have been deferred until the impact of the current national emergency on the overall finances of the local authority and the maintenance of core essential services can be assessed over the coming months. The Chief Executive continues to provide regular updates to the Elected Members on the overall financial position of the local authority. In the event that the City Council is not in a position to fund requests directly, proposals will be reviewed to establish if they would qualify for funding through the National Transport Authority Covid-19 funded temporary measures.
- **Pilots** – where possible, GCCMT will progress pilot schemes to support social distancing and to trial measures in the city e.g. parklets.
- **Resources** – Galway City Council continues to implement government and health recommendations with regard to working procedures and protocols for its staff, which will have an impact on the number of staff working together at the same time. Essential services continue to be prioritised and a significant additional workload associated with COVID-19 such as the work of the City Mobility Team on temporary interventions has to be managed within the current available workforce.
- **Implementation Team Audits** – a technical team from GCC is undertaking on-street audits, with a view to proposing temporary solutions which will resolve many of the issues raised in
submissions. A phased approach to implementation will be progressed, with updates to Elected Members, stakeholder groups, and the media on an ongoing basis.

- **Competing demands** – balancing the needs and input from competing demands for road space and public areas, including for example, deliveries, street cleaning, amenity, waste management, cycling, walking, public transport, parking, emergency services and the needs of mobility impaired persons.

The measures that will arise as a result of this process will be temporary and dynamic, based on the requirement to facilitate social distancing to support Galway to return to the vibrant, busy city it is. Measures will be monitored, and amended where required. In time, measures can be removed as the threat of Covid-19 lessens.

For measures which have a statutory process, e.g. requests for speed limit reductions or amendments, these processes have statutory consultation prescribed, and will proceed in line with the legislation. These processes require consultation with An Garda Síochána and the public, and will then be put on the agenda of the Ordinary Council Meeting to consider for adoption.

Other significant interventions that are proposed and are not aligned with current adopted policy of Galway City Council will also come before Elected Members, in line with the reserved function of the Council Members.

Changes in government restrictions and phasing will impact on the activities and focus of the GCCMT. The pandemic by its nature is changing and evolving as is the government’s roadmap for a phased re-opening of business and society. Already elements of this have been brought forward ahead of schedule with minimal notice and the local authority has to position itself to react to impact of this.

The online submission form will reopen when all Phase 1 submissions have been reviewed. Please check the map to see if your submission is already represented on the map. If it is, please revisit the map to check updates. The public are kindly requested not to submit duplicate submissions, in order to facilitate a speedy review and response on the online map.

Elected Members can continue to make submissions to Councillor Liaisons. Business representative groups can continue to engage with Economic Development staff in relation to their needs.

Urgent requests should be reported at the time of the incident to An Garda Síochána, or to Customer Services, Galway City Council at 091 536 400 or customerservice@galwaycity.ie

*Ends*