The Galway City Council Mobility Team (GCCMT) met on Thursday 23rd July. Progress for the week ending 24th July 2020 is summarised below.

**Phase 2 Implementation**

- Dyke Road changes are progressing with sockets for bollards installed. A Variable Messaging Sign (VMS) is available to notify road users of changes. When statutory signage is received, the bollards will be installed.
- Red surfacing is due to be put on the bus lane at the Courthouse by the end of the week, to draw road users' attention to the 'no right turn' except for buses, cyclists and taxis.
- Messaging on the permanent VMS signs in the city has been updated to give advance notice to road users that Cross Street is closed.

Further detail will be made available as these plans/designs progress.

Please note all interventions due to their temporary nature will be under constant review and adjustments or changes may be required at short notice when required.

**Race Week Preparations**

Galway City Council convened further meetings this week with our Principal Emergency Response Agency partners, An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and the Fire Service, to discuss joint concerns for the safety of the public visiting the city centre during Race Week, during a public health pandemic. Although the Races this year are behind closed doors, it is anticipated that large numbers may visit Galway City and congregate in the city centre area. A meeting convened at 8:30am this morning (Friday 24th) and a further meeting is arranged for 11am on Tuesday 28th. The City Council and An Garda Síochána will continuously monitor the event over the week and respond dynamically to any issues that arise. An Garda Síochána will have additional resources on duty to police the area during Race Week and to enforce the drinking bye-laws and Galway City Council will have additional Community Wardens on duty. The area of the Spanish Arch and Claddagh Quays will remain open for now but will be continuously under review. The City Council will be on standby to close this area at short notice if requested to do so by An Garda Síochána.

**Return to Education**

The HSE COVID-19 Interim Recommendations for the reopening of schools and educational facilities makes recommendations for arrangements for dropping off/picking up children, in light of the return to school. These recommendations advise that walking/cycling to school should be encouraged as much as possible, and to avoid congregation of people at school gates, where physical distancing requirements are not respected.

The document proposes approaches including:

- Staggered drop off/pick up times where practical/feasible, so that not all children arrive onsite at one time.
- If the school has additional access points, consideration may be given to whether it would be beneficial to open these to reduce congestion.
For those arriving by car, parents may be encouraged to park further away from the school and then walk with their children to avoid congestion, or alternatively use active travel routes where feasible.

The relaunch of the Park and Stride scheme is being progressed, in anticipation of children returning to school in September. A ‘soft launch’ will publicise the scheme in August, to make parents aware of the Park and Stride locations, with a full launch in September, once schools are open and can receive leaflets/permit stickers for parents.

Following review of online submissions, resurfacing of cycle lanes will be scheduled in the period after Race Week, covering approximately 4km of cycle lanes from Ballybane Junction, to Kirwan, the junction at the shopping centre, over Quincentennary Bridge, to Browne Roundabout. These improvements will benefit the significant number of cyclists going to the University, as students and staff return.

Green-Schools Travel, funded by DTTAS through the NTA, have launched ‘Safe to School’ - An Ideas Document for Safe Access to School, in light of Covid-19. In the context of social distancing requirements, the document is designed to present ideas for school principals, boards of management, teachers, parents and students to consider implementing to address front of school vehicle congestion. Measures presented range from creative, temporary initiatives that schools can implement themselves, through to measures to permanently upgrade active travel infrastructure, which will require Local Authority involvement. All schools in Galway City are registered with the Green-Schools programme, and will receive the guide directly from Green-Schools.

**Tables and Chairs Licences**

Additional applications for Temporary Covid-19 Tables and Chairs Licences have been received this week, and are under review. Three licences have been granted as of w/e 24.07.2020.

Applications will be reviewed on a case by case basis, with the maximum duration to the end of September 2020.

Application forms remain available for any eligible businesses wishing to apply at: https://www.galwaycity.ie/mobilityteam

**Engaging with Businesses**

A meeting was held with representatives of the Westend Business Association to discuss proposals to facilitate local business operate while achieving social distancing requirements and in particular during the forthcoming race week. The city council will consider applications for tables and chairs on the parking area on Dominic Street to facilitate local restaurants and food outlets.

Whilst normal consultation processes are not possible during the COVID-19 pandemic, engagement with businesses and relevant stakeholders on specific interventions will continue through the various Implementation Teams on the ground, which vary from project to project.

**Speed Limit Review**

An update on the Special Speed Limits Review was presented at a meeting of Galway City Council this week.

A review of Speed Limits in the city is currently being undertaken in accordance with the ‘Guidelines for Setting & Managing Speed Limits in Ireland’ (March 2015) published by the Department of Transport Tourism & Sport. The Road Traffic Act of 2004 (Section 9) sets out the current legislative basis for the setting of speed limits. Draft Galway City Council Special Speed Limit Bye-Laws 2020 Schedule and Maps are being finalised.
The draft proposed changes include for a 30km/hr Speed Limit zone in the Inner City which includes Eyre Square, Bohermore, College Road, Section of Dyke Road, Section of Headford Road, Eglinton Street, University Road, Dominick Street, Henry Street and Sea Road.

30 km/hr Speed Limit Slow Zones are currently implemented in 120 no. housing estates in the City and a separate review is to be completed in regard to the inclusion of additional housing estates.

The next stages to be progressed include the following:

- Issue notice under Section 9(3) of the Road Traffic Act 2004 to the Garda Commissioner and consider any representations received in writing.
- Proceed with a statutory 30 day public consultation process in August in accordance with Section 9(4) of the Road Traffic Act 2004 and consider objections and submissions received.
- Present Report and Draft Galway City Council Special Speed Limit Bye-Laws 2020 to Elected Members to consider for adoption at ordinary monthly meeting (October).

**Accessibility and Equality for All Campaign**

Galway City Council, Galway Chamber and Galway City Partnership in association with Access for All, have this week launched a call for both businesses and members of the public to consider the challenges faced by people with disabilities, including those with visual impairment and those with mobility issues, as a result of the new social distancing regime we all now find ourselves having to adapt to.

The request comes following a meeting between members of the Galway City Council Mobility Team and Access for All to discuss issues people with disabled people can face on a daily basis due to necessary social distancing measures.

The details can be found at: https://www.galwaycity.ie/news/1693/59/

**St. Nicholas' Market**

The St Nicholas Market continues this week for food and nursery products stalls, with some craft traders now also returning. This Saturday, the Market will operate across two sites - the traditional market area adjacent to St Nicholas’ Church, and in the car park of St Pat’s NS.

An agreement has been reached this week with St Pat’s NS for a new larger portion of the car park which will be occupied by hot food traders and some craft traders this weekend. Going forward, this will allow for the return of all craft traders in the coming weeks. Traders will operate in the traditional market area on Sunday.

The Environment Department continue to engage with the Traders Committee on a regular basis.

**Park and Stride Approval**

Recreation and Amenity have received Ministerial approval through the NPWS to progress the Park and Stride proposal from Cappagh Park through Barna Woods, to encourage people to walk to Silverstrand. Works are anticipated to begin in September.

**GCCMT Meetings**

The meeting on Thursday 30th July is anticipated to be the final formal meeting of the Galway City Council Mobility Team. Initiatives will continue to progress, with meetings called as they are required. Cross departmental collaboration and communication will continue, as implementation measures progress.

**Ends**