

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MERCHANT'S QUAY, LIMERICK, ON TUESDAY, 18TH APRIL, 2017 AT 9.45 A.M.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor Michael Hourigan, Mayor.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Butler, Collins, Costelloe, Daly, Gilligan, Hogan, Hurley, Keller, Leddin, Lynch, McCreesh, Ó Ceallaigh, O'Hanlon, Pond, Prendiville, Secas and Sheahan.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director, Physical Development (Mr. K. Lehane), Meetings Administrator (Mr. C. O'Connor), Director, Customer Services and Culture (Ms. J. Cotter Coughlan), Senior Executive Officer (Mr. J. Delaney), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services (Mr. T. O'Callaghan), Arts and Culture Officer (Ms. S. Deegan), Assistant Arts Officer (Ms. A. Potter-Cogan), Senior Executive Engineer (Ms. A. Goggin), and Ms. Grainne Miller, GM Innovations.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for his inability to attend had been received from Councillor John Loftus.

At the outset the Mayor extended his condolences to the family and colleagues of the late Professor Michael Hayes, President of Mary Immaculate College and a native of Limerick. Members joined with the Mayor in extending their sympathy to Professor Hayes' family and spoke of the great interest he had in the development of Limerick and the lasting impact he had on Mary Immaculate College where he had overseen the incorporation of St. Patrick's College, Thurles, the development of the Limetree Theatre and John Henry Newman Campus and plans for extensive new library facilities. Members pointed out that the passing of Professor Hayes was a sad day for Limerick and a silence was observed in his memory.

1. Adoption of Minutes

Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick held on 20th March, 2017.

Councillor Prendiville expressed disappointment that the issues he had raised under item 18 in relation to environmental consultants had not been included in the minutes.

Proposed by Councillor Secas;

Seconded by Councillor Daly;

And Resolved:

"That the draft Minutes, as circulated, be taken as read and adopted and signed".

2. Taking in Charge of Estates – Declaration of Roads to be Public Roads

Circulated, Report of the A/Senior Planner, Planning and Environmental Services dated 6th April, 2017 setting out proposal to take in charge estates at Caisleann na hAbhann, Castletroy (Phase 1) and Woodhaven, Castletroy and seeking the Districts approval to same.

Proposed by Councillor Secas;
 Seconded by Councillor Sheahan;
 And Resolved:

“That the estates at Caisleann na hAbhann, Castletroy (Phase 1) and Woodhaven, Castletroy be taken in charge in accordance with Section 180 of the Planning and Development Act (2000-2015) and Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993”.

3. Customer Services Directorate – Arts & Culture Office

(a) GMA - Festival Funding 2017

Circulated, at the meeting, document entitled GMA Festival and Events Grant Scheme 2017 – Amendments made to the GMA Festivals and Grant Scheme Guidelines and Criteria and Document entitled GMA Festivals and Events Grant Scheme 2017 – Applicant Guidelines.

The Mayor welcomed Ms. Grainne Miller from GM Innovations to the meeting. Ms. Miller gave a presentation to the meeting, setting out the interim results and key findings, as of 13th April, 2017, of analysis carried out on behalf of the Council to assist in developing a framework for festivals and events, which included the following :

- A summary of the projects supported by the Arts Office.
- Research methodology and a profile of festivals and events in Limerick in 2016.
- Where Limerick sits on the national context, Fáilte Ireland’s priorities for 2017 and the key challenges faced by the Council in achieving its ambition to make Limerick a “must visit” destination for both domestic and international visitors.

The Deputy Mayor took the chair at this point in the meeting as the Mayor had to attend a function elsewhere.

The Director, Customer Services and Culture thanked Ms. Miller for her presentation and pointed out that, through the Arts Office, there would now be a single point of contact within the Council for those seeking to organise Festivals and Events. She noted the positive benefits that had occurred from the recent workshops held with the public and with Members of the Metropolitan District and recommended the following GMA allocations on foot of same :-

- €30,000 St. Patrick’s Day Festival
- €30,000 Riverfest
- €50,000 Irish / New York Festival

- €30,000 Richard Harris Film Festival (pending the submission of an approved business plan).

Members discussed the issue of Festivals and Grants and made the following points in relation to same :-

- The need to bring forward proposals of a suitable size and scale to attract significant funding from Fáilte Ireland and the Arts Council.
- The need to consider extending funding available under Strand 2.
- The importance of Elected Members from the District being on any evaluation committee that assesses projects for GMA support.
- The need to build on the Kate O'Brien literary festival, to investigate the potential for a drama festival and to develop and promote events for the city and county, as twin attractions.
- The need for local businesses that benefit from the increased footfall generated by festivals and events, to contribute to same.
- The potential of a wine producers element to be held as part of a Wild Geese Festival.
- The need to organise events around the October Bank Holiday and New Year's Eve.
- The need to explore the possibility of attracting European funding and the potential of partnering with UK Authorities, post Brexit.

The Director, Customer Services and Culture acknowledged the issues raised by Members and noted that the Council was building capacity and experience in this area. She noted the Members request for a presentation in relation to the proposed Ireland / New York Festival and pointed out the potential for the festival to go elsewhere, if the Council did not commit to same.

The following proposal in relation to the GMA Festivals and Events Grant Scheme Guidelines and Criteria and the related €238,000 GMA Allocation were proposed by Councillor Collins, seconded by Councillor Leddin, and agreed :

- That the limits set out in Strand 1 be accepted and Strand 2 be amended to an upper limit of €100,000, subject to District Members being on the Evaluation Committee that would assess any projects to be funded by the District's GMA.
- That €30,000 be allocated to St. Patrick's Day Festival.
- That €30,000 be allocated to Riverfest.
- That €30,000 provisionally be allocated to the Richard Harris Film Festival subject to submission of an approved business plan.
- That €50,000 be provisionally allocated to the Ireland / New York Festival, subject to receipt of further details in relation to same.

A number of Members expressed the view that the allocation to the Ireland / New York festival should be made if there was any danger that this festival would relocate.

(b) Culture and Creativity Plan

Circulated, Creative Ireland Programme 2017–2022 which set out details of this All Government Initiative to mainstream creativity in the life of the nation through a culture based programme designed to promote individual, community and national wellbeing. The Creative Ireland Programme, as circulated, was noted by Members.

4(a) Physical Development Directorate

Report on the Proposal to Publish the Draft Limerick City and County Council (Control of Horses) Bye-Laws 2017 to Regulate Sulky Racing on Public Roads in Limerick

Circulated, Report of the Director, Physical Development, dated 31st March, 2017 setting out the background to, and procedures involved in, amending the Control of Horses Bye-Laws to regulate sulky racing on public roads.

Members raised concerns in relation to the enforcement of the proposed bye-laws and discussed the need to regulate the general use of sulkys on public roads, many of which were driven by young children. Members also discussed the possibility of building a track to accommodate sulky racing.

The Director, Physical Development informed the Members that the current amendments proposed to the Control of Horses Bye-Laws had come about at the request of the Gardai in an effort to deal with a specific issue. He noted the limitations of the Control of Horses Act 1996 and the possibility of having a full debate on the issues raised, with a view to making recommendations to amend the legislation.

Proposed by Councillor Hurley;
Seconded by Councillor Collins;
And Resolved:

“That the Draft Limerick City and County Council (Control of Horses) Bye-Laws 2017 be put on public display in accordance with Section 199 and Schedule 14A Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

(b) Presentation on Smart Phone Invasive Plants App.

The Deputy Mayor welcomed Ms. Anne Goggin, Senior Executive Engineer to the meeting. Ms. Goggin presented the Members with details of a Smart Phone App. which assisted in identifying the location of invasive species such as Giant Hogweed, Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Winter Heliotrope. The information collected would assist in developing a strategy to control these plants, in conjunction with landowners.

Members welcomed the development and complimented Ms. Goggin on the work carried out in this area.

QUESTIONS

5. Question submitted by Councillor J. Costelloe

I will ask at the next Meeting what funding is currently allocated to the Council Mortgage Allowance Scheme for the current year.

REPLY: We do not provide a budget for this, as the National Local Authority Mortgage Allowance Scheme is claimed in full from the Department of the Environment on a bi-annual basis.

6. Question submitted by Cmhr. S. Ó Ceallaigh

I will ask at the next Meeting what is the current situation with regards the development of the Horizon Mall.

REPLY: All previous planning permissions on the Horizon Mall site at the Parkway, Dublin Road, Limerick have expired.

There are on-going discussions, since the Autumn 2016, with the promoters of the site to consider the possible re-uses of the site in keeping with the Limerick County Development Plan and the City Development Plan.

7. Question submitted by Cmhr. S. Ó Ceallaigh

I will ask at the next Meeting when is it envisaged that the road upgrade on the Bloodmill Road will be completed.

REPLY: Limerick City and County Council have completed two Restoration Improvement Schemes on Bloodmill Road during 2015 and 2016 costing €300,000 approx. These schemes included road widening, surface water drainage, road construction overlays and watermain upgrades over a length of 800m between the Garryglass roundabout and the old City/County boundary at Carn Na Ree estate entrance.

There is a current multi annual roadworks programme 2016-2018 and I confirm that within this programme Limerick City and County Council have no plans to continue improvement works between Carn Na Ree estate and the traffic lights at the junction with Childers Road. The completion of Bloodmill road may be included from the 2019 roadworks programme.

8. Question submitted by Councillor E. Secas

I will ask at the next Meeting that the Council confirm to residents of Friarstown Park, Ballyclough when the road in this estate is going to be resurfaced following the representations made by them and on their behalf in the past years.

REPLY: This estate has a road surface area of approximately 3,800 metres and is in reasonable condition. Like most of the older estates in the Metropolitan area it could do with a resurface and a ralumac surface would be recommended here. The estimated cost of same is €35,000. The estate has not been included in the 2017 Road Works Scheme but it is proposed to carry out some heavy macadam patching around the estate entrance where potholing occurs frequently. This work will commence shortly.

9. Question submitted by Councillor E. Secas

I will ask at the next Meeting that the Council confirm to residents of Grangewood, Rich Hill and local houses on Newport Road when the footpath on this road from the Mackey roundabout to the Rich Hill estate, which was due to be constructed in May 2016, will be built to address the issue of road safety.

REPLY: At the April Local Area Briefing Meeting held on 4th April a sum of €30,000 was approved in GMA Funding to provide a footpath link between Grangewood Estate and the Mackey Roundabout. Previous requests to carry out this work were declined due to lack of funding. The work includes 100 metres of footpath plus surface water drainage, public lighting and associated civil works. These works are due to take place during May 2017 with the public lighting in place and lit by end of June 2017. Rich Hill Estate is a further 350 metres away and funding is not available to extend the footpath to this estate. Note that Limerick City & County Council will be surfacing Richill Estate in 2017 using Ralumac.

10. Question submitted by Councillor E. Secas

I will ask at the next Meeting that the Council confirm when speed ramps will be put in place on Golf Links Road, Monaleen Road and Old School House Road following the representations made in the past years on behalf of residents living in those areas.

REPLY: There is no specific budget provided for traffic calming and any new speed ramps would have to be paid for out of general maintenance budgets. A 50 km/hr speed limit applies in all cases and we have received no complaints from An Garda Siochana about speeding issues on the three roads mentioned.

Golf Links Road:

In 2015 and 2016 Limerick City & County Council has undertaken works to manage traffic speeds along a substantial length of Golf Links Road including:

- a structural overlay between School House Road junction and Castletroy Golf Club. There were 3 sets of speed cushions incorporated along this length to enhance the safety for individual dwellings and through traffic along this length.
- Structural overlay at entrance to Mount Green Estate with an upgrade to the existing table top ramp.

School House Road:

There are four flat top ramps covering a 400 metre length of this road where dwellings are concentrated and have individual accesses onto the road. The remaining 420 metres of the road has only three entrances serving housing estates. I am satisfied that there is no need for additional traffic calming measures on this road.

Monaleen Road:

This road has two ramps at the southern end, another one at Monaleen Church and a fourth at the approach to the R445 Dublin Road junction. There is also a raised pedestrian crossing at Monaleen School and traffic lights at the junction with School House Road and Monaleen Link Road. I am satisfied that there is no need for additional traffic calming measures on this road.

11. Question submitted by Councillor C. Prendiville

I will ask at the next Meeting for an update on the plans for outdoor film showing nights over the summer, whether in the public parks or the Milk Market, as discussed last year.

REPLY: Outdoor cinema events were held successfully in the Peoples Park in 2014 as part of the City of Culture. There are currently no plans for outdoor cinema events in our public parks for the coming year but this can be kept under review subject to funding and weather.

We cannot comment on film nights planned for the Milk Market as this comes under the remit of The Limerick Market Trustees.

12. Question submitted by Councillor P. Keller

I will ask at the next Meeting for an update on the situation regarding the increasingly derelict Horizon Mall site, if it will be inspected for inclusion on the derelict sites register, and if there are any plans for it to be developed as student accommodation, community facilities, or a public space as previously suggested.

REPLY: All previous planning permissions on the Horizon Mall site at the Parkway, Dublin Road, Limerick have expired.

There are on-going discussions, since the autumn 2016, with the promoters of the site to consider the possible re-uses of the site in keeping with the Limerick County Development Plan and the City Development Plan. It is not yet appropriate at this stage to consider the potential inclusion of this site within the derelict sites register.

NOTICES OF MOTION

13. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor C. Prendiville (to be referred to the Economic Development, Enterprise & Planning Strategic Policy Committee)

I will move at the next Meeting of Limerick's Metropolitan District that the Council look to amend our development plan to ban the development of incineration, gasification, fracking and other environmentally damaging and destructive industries in Limerick City & County Council.

It was agreed to refer this Notice of Motion to the Economic Development, Enterprise & Planning Strategic Policy Committee.

14. Notice of Motion submitted by Cmhlr. S. Ó Ceallaigh

I will move at the next Meeting that this Council commit to allocate funding towards the restoration of the Black Bridge, a facility which has been used for recreational purposes by people across the whole Metropolitan District.

The motion was proposed by Cmhlr. Ó Ceallaigh and seconded by Councillor Costelloe.

In proposing the motion Cmhlr. Ó Ceallaigh noted the extent of GMA funding that had been allocated to carry out a study on the work needed to repair the Black Bridge, the amenity value of the bridge in relation to walking, cycling and fishing and the need to reopen same. He called on University of Limerick, Waterways Ireland, Clare County Council and Limerick City and County Council to come together and arrange for the necessary works to be carried out.

Members supported the motion and acknowledged the work of Smarter Travel in improving the pathway from Limerick City to U.L. and highlighted the need to reopen the Black Bridge to complement this work and provide additional walking route options and enhance the tourism potential of the area.

REPLY: The 2017-2019 Capital Programme as adopted by the Council in November 2016 provides for expenditure in the amount of €1.7m over the three years in respect of essential bridge repairs, with a proposed spend of €700,000 in 2017.

The Capital Programme also provided for expenditure in the amount of €50,000 in respect of the footbridge at the Black Bridge. This €50,000 is required to fund detailed studies etc.

The adopted Budget set out that this proposed expenditure would be funded through grants.

The Council has received grant funding in respect of Bridge Rehabilitation Works in the sum of €428,000 from DTTAS to fund works of repair in 2017 to 16 bridges on Regional and Local roads throughout the County. The Bridge Rehabilitation Works Scheme generally funds works to roads with bridges carrying vehicular

traffic where significant funding is not required.

The Council has also received an allocation of €700,000 under the 2017 Specific Improvement Grant for Thomond Bridge.

However, the estimated costs of restoration works to the Black Bridge at Plassey have been estimated at €1m.

The Council will engage with DTTAS to establish if funding could be sourced under the Specific Improvement Grant Scheme.

The Council will also seek to ascertain if other relevant statutory or non statutory bodies may be in a position to contribute financially to the restoration of the Black Bridge.

Cmhr. Ó Ceallaigh expressed dissatisfaction with the reply and noted that the Council would not be in a position to approach others for funding if it could not make a commitment itself in this regard.

The Meetings Administrator undertook to convey the sentiments expressed by Cmhr. Ó Ceallaigh to the appropriate parties.

15. Notice of Motion submitted by Cmhr. S. Ó Ceallaigh (to be referred to the Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee)

I will move at the next Meeting that this Council devise a strategy on the implementation of ramps, across the Metropolitan District.

It was agreed to refer this Notice of Motion to the Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee.

16. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor M. McCreesh

I will move at the next Meeting that the Council support Limerick City Community Radio in the provision of permanent accommodation for the community radio which provides an important public service to the population of the Metropolitan District.

The motion was proposed by Councillor McCreesh and seconded by Cmhr. Ó Ceallaigh.

In proposing the motion Councillor McCreesh pointed out that Limerick City Community Radio, which was run by volunteers and broadcast on weekends, was under threat of closing if a suitable premises could not be found. He noted that, ideally, a city centre location with adequate parking and wheelchair access was required.

In seconding the motion Cmhr. Ó Ceallaigh praised the broad range of high standard programmes produced by Limerick City Community Radio, who operated on a limited budget, and on a not for profit basis and in the process provided valuable training for those planning a career in broadcasting.

Members supported the motion and noted the potential of the Digital Hub, run by Innovate Limerick, to meet the requirements of Limerick City Community Radio, in conjunction with Wired FM with whom they share a broadcasting frequency and who might also be in need of premises, and requested that the motion be brought to the attention of Innovate Limerick. Members also noted that Limerick Community Radio were in need of financial support and the Meetings Administrator undertook to bring the matter to the attention of both Innovate Limerick and the Home and Social Development Directorate.

17. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor C. Prendiville (to be referred to the Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee)

I will move at the next Meeting that this District write to the Minister for Housing expressing, in the strongest possible terms, its objection to the exclusion of Limerick City from the Government's rent pressure zones and calling for rent controls to be introduced in the city.

It was agreed to refer this Notice of Motion to the Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee.

18. Correspondence

Correspondence was noted.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed: _____
MAYOR

Dated: _____