

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE, LIMERICK, ON MONDAY, 27TH MARCH, 2017, AT 3.00PM.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:

Councillor K. O'Hanlon, Mayor

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Browne, Butler, Collins (J), Collins (M), Costelloe, Crowley, Daly, Donegan, Foley, Galvin, Gilligan, Gleeson, Hogan, Hourigan, Hurley, Keary, Keller, Leddin, Loftus, Lynch, McCreech, Mitchell, O'Brien, Cmhlr. Ó Ceallaigh, O'Dea, O'Donnell, O'Donoghue, Pond, Prendiville, Ryan, Scanlan, Secas, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (K), Sheahan (M), Sheehy, Teefy, Teskey.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive (Mr. C. Murray), Deputy Chief Executive and Director, Economic Development (Mr. P. Daly), Director, Customer Services, Culture and Arts (Ms. J. Cotter Coughlan), A/Director, Support Services – Finance, Corporate, Human Resources and ICT (Mr. S. Coughlan), Director, Physical Development (Mr. K. Lehane), Director, Regional Services (Ms. C. Curley), A/Director, Social Development (Ms. C. Kirby), Director, Service Operations and Business Improvement (Mr. G. Daly), Administrative Officer, Accounts Receivable (Mr. J. O'Brien), Meetings Administrator (Mr. C. O'Connor), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services (Ms. T. Knox),

VOTES OF SYMPATHY

At the outset and with the permission of the Mayor, Votes of Sympathy were extended to the following on their recent bereavements and a minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect:

- The family of the late Martin McGuinness, former Northern Ireland Deputy First Minister.
- The families of the Irish Coast Guard Rescue 116 Air Crew who tragically lost their lives on a rescue mission.
- The family of former Bishop of Galway, Eamonn Casey.
- The families of Gary Kelly and Delia Keary, both from Co. Clare, the young couple who tragically lost their lives following a collision near Abbeyfeale.

With the permission of the Mayor, it was agreed to take Notice of Motion No. 24 and a Supplementary item – Notice of Motion No. 24A - prior to proceeding to Item No. 1 on the Agenda.

24. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors K. O’Hanlon (Mayor), M. Collins, M. McCreesh, C. Prendiville, E. Secas, J. Sheahan, B. Teefy

We will move at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council call on the Minister for Education to include the victims of the sexual and physical abuse suffered in Creagh Lane Primary School in the redress scheme. The victims in question have fought long and hard and their lives have been undermined and, in some cases, destroyed as a result of what they suffered as innocent children in the care of the State. We are calling on the Minister to remove all barriers to gaining access to the redress scheme for the Creagh Lane victims.

The Mayor and Members welcomed to the Meeting former students of the Creagh Lane Primary School and representatives of the victims’ groups who were seated in the Public Gallery.

In proposing the Motion, the Mayor said he had met with former students of the school and he was of the opinion that they had a very moral and just case. He referred to the horrific treatment which had been experienced by some who had attended the Creagh Lane School. In particular, he highlighted how innocent children in the care of the state had been let down and treated in a despicable manner.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Costelloe who added his full support to the Motion. He commended the former students for their courage in coming forward. He said the school should have been a place of hope, learning and sanctuary but that this had not been the case for some who had attended there.

A large number of Members spoke in support of the Motion and said it was not good enough for the Government to hide behind technicalities to try and exclude the victims of Creagh Lane Primary School from the redress scheme.

In conclusion, the Members pledged their unanimous support for the Motion and called on the Minister for Education to include the victims in the redress scheme. In addition, they requested the removal of all barriers to gaining access to the redress scheme for the Creagh Lane victims.

Reference was also made to the former Industrial School at Glin and Members stressed the importance of preserving the records that had been retained in relation to Glin to facilitate any future investigation.

24A. Notice of Motion submitted by Mayor K. O’Hanlon

I will move at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council note the campaign of the National Union of Journalists’ Local News Matters Week. The campaign is aimed at highlighting the importance of properly resourced independent media to the functioning of democracy at local and regional levels. Limerick City and County Council recognises the importance of local media in reporting on local government and informing citizens about the work undertaken on their behalf by elected representatives and local authorities and agencies. Local media also reflect the concerns of citizens and provide a platform for civic participation in dialogue on all aspects of community life. Journalists engaged by media organisations: print, broadcasting and online, face many challenges, including increased workloads, reduced resources, and lower staffing levels. This Council urges media organisations to provide journalists with the level of resources necessary to ensure accurate and comprehensive coverage of local democracy. This Council reaffirms its commitment to make information available to the local media and to providing appropriate facilities for journalists attending Council meetings.

In proposing the Motion, the Mayor highlighted the importance of a properly resourced independent media to the functioning of democracy at local and regional levels.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Sheahan (J) who highlighted the importance of a strong local media. He indicated that local media was crucial in informing citizens about work undertaken by the Local Authority, Elected Members and Agencies.

There was unanimous support for the Motion.

1. Adoption of Minutes

Circulated, copies of draft Minutes of the following Meetings:

- (i) Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 23rd January, 2017.
- (ii) Special Meeting of the Council held on 3rd February, 2017.

Proposed by Councillor Collins (M);
 Seconded by Councillor Sheahan (J);
 And Resolved:

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

2. Disposal of Land

- (a) Circulated, copy of Statutory Notice dated 13th February, 2017, concerning disposal of land at 19 Elm Place, Rathbane, Limerick.

Proposed by Councillor Collins (M);
 Seconded by Councillor Sheahan (J);
 And Resolved:

“That, the approval of the Council be and is hereby given to the disposal of property at 19 Elm Place, Rathbane, Limerick, to Michael and Rita Keane for the sum of €139.45, the disposal to be by way of Deed of Conveyance of the interest of Limerick City and County Council in the property, particulars of which were contained in Statutory Notice dated 13th February, 2017.”

- (b) Circulated, copy of Statutory Notice dated 9th March, 2017, concerning disposal of property at 89 Mayorstone Gardens, Limerick City.

Proposed by Councillor Collins (M);
 Seconded by Councillor Sheahan (J);
 And Resolved:

“That, the approval of the Council be and is hereby given to the disposal of the freehold (ground rent) interest in the property at 89, Mayorstone Gardens, Limerick City, to Niall Keely and Niamh Keely, the holders of the leasehold interest in the property by way of a 150-year lease from 1st May, 1954, for the sum of €206.09 (including Sealing/Transfer Order Fees), particulars of which were contained in Statutory Notice dated 9th March, 2017.”

- (c) Circulated, copy of Statutory Notice dated 14th March, 2017, concerning disposal of derelict land adjacent to entrance to Public Car Park, off Church Street, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick.

Proposed by Councillor Collins (M);
 Seconded by Councillor Sheahan (J);
 And Resolved:

“That, the approval of the Council be and is hereby given to the disposal of derelict land comprising 21 square metres adjacent to entrance to Public Car Park, off Church Street, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick, to Pat McLoughlin and Eleanor McLoughlin – with 3 square metres of land to be disposed of by Pat and Eleanor McLoughlin to the Council at Church Street, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick – particulars of which were contained in Statutory Notice dated 14th March, 2017.”

- (d) Circulated, copy of Statutory Notice dated 15th March, 2017, concerning disposal of property at 36 Greenhills Road, Garryowen, Limerick.

Proposed by Councillor Collins (M);
 Seconded by Councillor Sheahan (J);
 And Resolved:

“That, the approval of the Council be and is hereby given to the disposal of property at 36 Greenhills Road, Garryowen, Limerick, to William and Mary Walsh, for the sum of €95.42, the disposal to be by way of Deed of Conveyance of the interest of Limerick City and

County Council in the property, particulars of which were contained in Statutory Notice dated 15th March, 2017.”

- (e) Circulated, copy of Statutory Notice dated 15th March, 2017, concerning disposal of property at 5 Reidy Park, Clancy Strand, Limerick.

Proposed by Councillor Collins (M);
 Seconded by Councillor Sheahan (J);
 And Resolved:

“That, the approval of the Council be and is hereby given to the disposal of 5 Reidy Park, Clancy Strand, Limerick, to Michael and Yvonne Clarke, for the sum of €139.45, the disposal to be by way of Deed of Conveyance of the interest of Limerick City and County Council in the property, particulars of which were contained in Statutory Notice dated 15th March, 2017.”

- (f) Circulated, copy of Statutory Notice dated 16th March, 2017, concerning disposal of property at 3 Cherry Villas, Limerick.

Proposed by Councillor Collins (M);
 Seconded by Councillor Sheahan (J);
 And Resolved:

“That, the approval of the Council be and is hereby given to the disposal of property at 3 Cherry Villas, Limerick, to Phillip Kelly, for the sum of €139.45, the disposal to be by way of Deed of Conveyance of the interest of Limerick City and County Council in the property, particulars of which were contained in Statutory Notice dated 16th March, 2017.”

3. Support Services Directorate

(a) Fixing of Date – Special Meeting

On the proposal of Councillor Collins (M), seconded by Councillor Sheahan (J), it was agreed to hold a Special Meeting of the Council on Monday, 29th May, 2017, at 10am, in the Thomas Fitzgerald Centre, Bruff, to commemorate the centenary of the birth of John Fitzgerald Kennedy on that date, former President of the USA, whose grandfather originally came from Bruff.

(b) Chief Executive’s Report

Circulated, Chief Executive’s Reports for the months of January and February 2017.

The Chief Executive’s Reports were noted by the Members.

(c) Filling of Vacancy – Board of Innovate Limerick

Circulated, report of the Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services, dated 22nd March, 2017.

The report stated that Councillor Keary, one of the Council's representatives on the Board of Innovate Limerick, had resigned from this position. Accordingly, there was a vacancy on the Board and a resolution of the Council was required to appoint a Member to fill this vacancy.

On the proposal of Councillor Sheahan (J), seconded by Councillor Hourigan, Councillor Hogan was appointed to the Board of Innovate Limerick to replace Councillor Keary.

(d) Review of Commercial Rates 2016 and Actions for 2017

A PowerPoint presentation on commercial rates collection 2016 and proposals for 2017 was delivered by the A/Head of Finance and Administrative Officer, Accounts Receivable.

The A/Head of Finance commenced by stating that the purpose of the presentation was to give an update on the following:

- 2016 Commercial Rate Update and Key Performance Indicators.
- Analysis of arrears at 31st December, 2016.
- Commercial Rates 2017: Schedule, Legal Action and Schemes.

In relation to Commercial Rates for 2016, the A/Head of Finance advised as follows:

- Commercial Rates Collection = 77% (equated to an increase of 2% year-on-year).
- Reduction in arrears year-on-year = €2.64 million (equated to a drop of 12% year-on-year).
- Reduction in receipts collected year-on-year = €2 million (equated to a 3.9% decrease in rates collected).
- No change in level of vacancy/write-offs year-on-year.
- Reduction in commercial rates income year-on-year = €1 million (equated to a 1.9% reduction).

A further detailed analysis of the 2016 Warrant was provided by the A/Head of Finance, as was an analysis of commercial rates arrears for the years 2008-2017. The Members were advised that the level of collection had improved and was now running at 77% and that the objective was to reach 80% by the end of 2017.

It was noted that the number of people paying through direct debit had increased from just over 800 in 2014 to over 1,100 in 2016. The target for 2017 was to have 1,350 customers on direct debit with a projected value of €8,750,000.

The Administrative Officer, Accounts Receivable, continued the presentation by outlining the timetable for 2017 as follows:

Week Starting:	Issue:
23 rd January	Statements
6 th February	Rate Demands (only)
20 th February	SME, Tourism, DD Forms
20 th March	Reminder 1
29 th May	Reminder 2
3 rd July	6 Days (for 'problem' accounts)
28 th August	Reminder 3 (for 'other' accounts)
Issue 6 Days, Court Summons, Civil Summons throughout the year as required	

He explained the process involved in Debt Management Actions as follows:

- Continuous engagement with customers:
 - Encouraging completion of vacancy forms.
 - Agreeing payment plans.
 - Promoting direct debit/standing order.
- Communication from Members to ratepayers:
 - Promotion of incentive schemes, i.e. Tourism, SME and Vacancy Schemes.
- Interaction with Limerick Chamber.
- Customers who did not engage:
 - Use of external collection agency.
- Increase in number of legal referrals:
 - Debt Reminder Letters.
 - 6 Day Notice.
 - Civil Summons.

The Members noted that the Council's Small and Medium Business Support Scheme was being widely availed of and that the numbers were set to almost double this year from 991 to 1,800. Under this Scheme, businesses with rate bills of between €500 and €21,000 could get relief of 9%, subject to the conditions of the scheme.

It was noted that the Council also operated a Tourism Sector Support Scheme for those in the sector whose commercial rates liability was in excess of €21,000. The support grant payment was set at 4% of the total rates, including arrears.

Members thanked the A/Head of Finance and Administrative Officer for the comprehensive nature of the presentation. They also highly commended staff in the Finance Department who they said were professional, helpful and courteous and asked for this message to be relayed to them.

In the ensuing discussion, Members made the following points:

- Various schemes introduced were working well.
- The importance of communication and engagement was highlighted.
- Very positive to see reduction in arrears.
- Need to be even more creative going forward.
- Programme for resolving issue of vacant sites needed.

(e) Civic Reception

Proposed by Councillor Collins (M);
 Seconded by Councillor Sheahan (J);
 And Resolved:

“That, the approval of the Council be and is hereby given to the grant of a Civic Reception to honour Professor Don Barry, President of the University of Limerick, in accordance with Section 74 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended.”

(f) Proposed Visit to Boston

Circulated, report of the Deputy Chief Executive dated 15th March, 2017, regarding proposed Limerick delegation visit to Boston, USA.

The Mayor informed the Members that he had met with Martin J. Walsh, Mayor of Boston, on a recent visit and said it was proposed to sign a *Letter of Friendship* between Limerick and Boston. He added that the visit was also linked with marking the birth of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, who was a Freeman of Limerick. The Mayor said he would be accompanied on the visit by three fellow Members, along with representatives of Limerick’s third level colleges, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, sporting communities, business concerns, Garryowen Ceoltas and hopefully representatives from the Armed Forces and Gardaí.

Proposed by Councillor Leddin;
 Seconded by Councillor Hourigan;
 And Resolved:

“That, the approval of the Council be and is hereby given to proposed visit by the Mayor and 3 Members to Boston, under Section 142 (5) of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended.”

(g) Strategic Policy Committee Reports

- (i) Circulated, Chairperson's Report dated 20th March, 2017, on the Travel & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 20th February, 2017.

The report was noted by the Council.

- (ii) Circulated, Chairperson's Report dated 20th March, 2017, on the Environment Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 27th February, 2017.

The report was noted by the Council.

- (iii) Circulated, Chairperson's Report dated 11th March, 2017, on the Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 27th February, 2017.

Recommendation No. 1:

That, the Council write to the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government and the local Oireachtas Members urging them to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2004, to abolish sale of a property as a grounds for terminating a tenancy.

Recommendation No. 2:

That, the Council write to NAMA and the Minister for Finance urging them to halt any sales of loans or properties to vulture funds, and instead use these resources to provide social and affordable housing.

On the proposal of Councillor Galvin, seconded by Councillor Collins (M), both recommendations were agreed.

- (iv) Circulated, Chairperson's Report dated 16th March, 2017, on the Community, Leisure and Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 21st February, 2017.

Recommendation:

That, the Council call on the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, to retract the policy that has introduced the roll-out of the 'Open Library' Initiative across Local Authorities.

On the proposal of Councillor Galvin, seconded by Councillor Collins (M), the recommendation was agreed.

- (v) Circulated, Chairperson's Report dated 20th March, 2017, on the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 13th February, 2017.

Recommendation

That, the Council call on Gas Networks Ireland to ensure that the proposed Gas Pipeline from Foynes to Kerry Co-Op Plant is Listowel take into account the location, the design and capacity of the pipe for future potential demand, i.e. the Industrial landbank at Tarbert/Ballylongford, the Power Station in Tarbert, the existing manufacturing businesses in Glin and the future possibility that the people of Glin Town would have access to domestic gas supply.

On the proposal of Councillor Galvin, seconded by Councillor Collins (M), the recommendation was agreed.

4. Social Development Directorate

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) Annual Report 2016

Circulated, report of the LCDC Chief Officer, Social Development Directorate, dated 20th March, 2017, enclosing the Annual Report on the activities of the Limerick Local Community Development Committee for the year ending 31st December, 2016.

The LCDC Annual Report was noted by the Members.

5. Economic Development Directorate

Part VIII Procedure – Enhancement Works to the Great Southern Trail

Circulated, Report of the Director, Economic Development, dated 21st February, 2017, enclosing Chief Executive's Report dated 21st February, 2017, prepared pursuant to Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Part VIII of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) in relation to proposed Enhancement Works on the existing Great Southern Trail from Rathkeale to the Kerry Border adjacent to Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick. It was proposed to proceed as outlined in the Planning Report.

Members welcomed the proposed enhancement works as set out in the report circulated. They complimented staff involved in this project and highlighted the huge tourism potential of the Great Southern Trail.

6. Service Operations Directorate

Re-Naming of the Square, Newcastle West

Circulated, report of the Director, Services Operations and Business Improvement, dated 22nd March, 2017, in relation to proposal to change the name of “The Square,” Newcastle West, Co. Limerick, to Con Colbert Square.

The report stated that in accordance with relevant legislation, this proposal had been advertised. As no relevant submissions had been received with regard to the names outlined on the list of ‘Qualified Electors,’ the approval of the Council was now being sought to adopt the List as submitted for the purpose of compiling the Electoral Roll.

Proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J);
 Seconded by Councillor Collins (M);
 And Resolved:

“That, the List of Qualified Electors as circulated and as set out in report of the Director, Service Operations and Business Improvement, dated 22nd March, 2017, be adopted in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act, 1946, as amended.”

7. Customer Services / Culture Directorate

(a) Grants under the Arts Act, 2003

Circulated, report of the Arts and Culture Officer dated 16th March, 2017, enclosing schedule setting out the applications recommended for grant assistance under the Arts Act, 2003.

Proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J);
 Seconded by Councillor Sheahan (M);
 And Resolved:

“That, the approval of the Council be and is hereby given to the payment of grants under the Arts Act, 2003, as recommended and as set out on the Schedule attached to the report of the Arts and Culture Officer dated 16th March, 2017.”

(b) Proposed Site Visits by a Representative Group of the Culture and Arts Working Group to Liverpool and Manchester

Circulated, report of the Arts and Culture Officer dated 9th March, 2017, in relation to proposed Site Visits by a representative group of the Culture and Arts Working Group to Liverpool and Manchester, in accordance with Section 142 (5) of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended.

Proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J);
 Secoded by Councillor Butler;
 And Resolved:

“That, the approval of the Council be and is hereby given to proposed Site Visits by a representative group of the Culture and Arts Working Group to Liverpool and Manchester, in accordance with Section 142 (5) of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended.”

(c) Proposed Visit to Finland

Circulated, report of the Arts and Culture Officer dated 9th March, 2017, in relation to proposed visit by the Mayor to accompany County Limerick Youth Theatre on a visit to Loimaan Teatteri Youth Theatre, Finland, in accordance with Section 142 (5) of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended.

Proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J);
 Secoded by Councillor Hourigan;
 And Resolved:

“That, the approval of the Council be and is hereby given to proposed visit by the Mayor to accompany County Limerick Youth Theatre on a visit to Loimaan Teatteri Youth Theatre, Finland, in accordance with Section 142 (5) of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended.”

8. Conferences

(i) Participation by Members at Conferences

Details of the following Conferences had been circulated electronically to the Members: (a) Transport and Climate Summit held in Dublin on 9th February, 2017; (b) International Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre Conference held in Dublin on 9th/10th February, 2017; (c) Conference on ‘The Challenge of Local Government Modernisation’ held in Cork on 16th February, 2017; (d) 2-Day Social Media Training for Councillors held in Clonakilty, Co. Cork, on 22nd/23rd February, 2017; (e) National nZEB (near Zero Energy Buildings) Conference – Fast Track Delivery of Affordable Energy Efficient Social Housing, held in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, on 2nd March, 2017; (f) Conference on 150th Anniversary of Fenian Rising, held in Ardagh, Co. Limerick, on 4th/5th March, 2017; (g) Cyber Security Awareness Breakfast Briefing held in Dundalk, Co. Louth, on 8th March, 2017; (h) Conference on the Fair Deal Scheme held in Carlingford, Co. Louth, from 10th to 12th March, 2017; (i) 2-Day Microsoft Excel Workshop for Councillors to be held in Clonakilty, Co. Cork, on 22nd/23rd March, 2017; (j) Conference on the Finance Act, 2016, to be held in Clonakilty, Co. Cork, from 24th to 26th March, 2017; (k) Conference on “What does a hard Brexit mean for Ireland” to be held in Carlingford, Co. Louth, from 31st March to 2nd April, 2017; (l) Cross-Border Tourism Conference 2017 to be held in Carlingford, Co. Louth, on 5th April, 2017; (m) 2-Day Social Media Training for Councillors to be held in Clonakilty, Co. Cork, on 15th/16th April, 2017; (n) Hepatitis C Community Summit to be held in Amsterdam, the Netherlands,

on 18th/19th April, 2017; (o) 2-Day Social Media Training for Councillors to be held in Clonakilty, Co. Cork, on 19th/20th April, 2017; (p) Conference - LGAS (Local Government Audit Service) – An Overview of the Work of Local Government Auditors, to be held in Clonakilty, Co. Cork, from 21st to 23rd April, 2017; (q) Conference on ‘Your Development Plan and Climate Change’ to be held in Baltimore, West Cork, from 28th to 30th April, 2017; (r) Rural Revitalisation Conference to be held in Dublin on 26th May, 2017.

On the proposal of Councillor Sheahan (J), seconded by Councillor Collins (M), the Council approved the attendance of the following Members:

The Conferences were noted by the Members.

(ii) Reports on Conference/Seminar/Meeting/Event

Circulated, reports by Members who had participated at Conference/ Seminar/ Meeting/Event.

The reports were noted by the Members.

ADJOURNED NOTICE OF MOTION

9. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Gilligan

I will move at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council calls on the Government to notify the Council of Europe’s Convention Against Trafficking in Human Organs.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Gilligan asked that the wording of the Motion be amended from ‘to notify’ to ‘to ratify’ and this was agreed. The amended Motion was seconded by Councillor O’Brien and agreed.

QUESTIONS

Replies to the following Questions on the Agenda were circulated to all Members prior to the Meeting and the Questions were therefore considered as having been dealt with:

10. Question submitted by Councillor V. Crowley

I will ask at the next Meeting has the Council any long-term plans for the maintenance and/or improvement of the Limerick Westfield Wetlands and Bird Sanctuary, which are in a Special Area of Conservation.

REPLY: The 2017 Budget, as adopted, allows for some minor works of repair and maintenance at Westfields. The Council carried out some maintenance works to the path through Westfields recently as it was prone to flooding and needed to be re-graded so that water would run off. The Council also placed tar and chip on the surface.

The Council has received representations in relation to installing a tarmac surface with a kerb. The Council does not have the resources available to undertake works such as this and any proposal to undertake such works would have to be considered as part of the 2018 budget process.

The Council does not have any long-term plans at the present time for the Westfields area as it would be necessary to provide significant capital funding to substantially upgrade the Westfields Sanctuary.

It should also be noted, however, that the 2017 Draft General Municipal Allocation (GMA) Scheme for the Metropolitan District of Limerick includes a proposal to carry out improvements to the footpaths in this wetlands area. These proposals are still in draft format as the GMA Scheme has not yet been approved by the Members.

11. Question submitted by Cmhr. S. Ó Ceallaigh

I will ask at the next Meeting how many litter fines have been issued in each of the Municipal Districts over the past year.

REPLY: The Council issued a total of 500 litter fines in 2016. It is not possible to provide exact details of litter fines issued per District. The following sets out the approximate number of litter fines issued per District:

350 fines approx. were issued in the Metropolitan District of Limerick.
 15 fines approx. were issued in the Municipal District of Adare-Rathkeale.
 55 fines approx. were issued in the Municipal District of Cappamore-Kilmallock.
 80 fines approx. were issued in the Municipal District of Newcastle West.

12. Question submitted by Councillor C. Prendiville

I will ask at the next Meeting approximately how many units of accommodation are currently vacant in the old Georgian Limerick Quarter, and are there any plans for the State to step in to renovate them as affordable and social housing for people to rent or buy.

REPLY: The Newtown Pery Historic Georgian area of the City is comprised of the five electoral divisions of Custom House, Shannon A, Shannon B, Dock A and Dock B. According to the 2016 Central Statistics Office Census figures, the average vacancy rate across these 5 electoral divisions is 18.56%. Within these areas

there exists a housing stock of 3,464 units and, according to the Census, a population of 5,991 persons is contained. This represents a population increase of 12.27% from 2011 to 2016. Please refer to Figure 1.

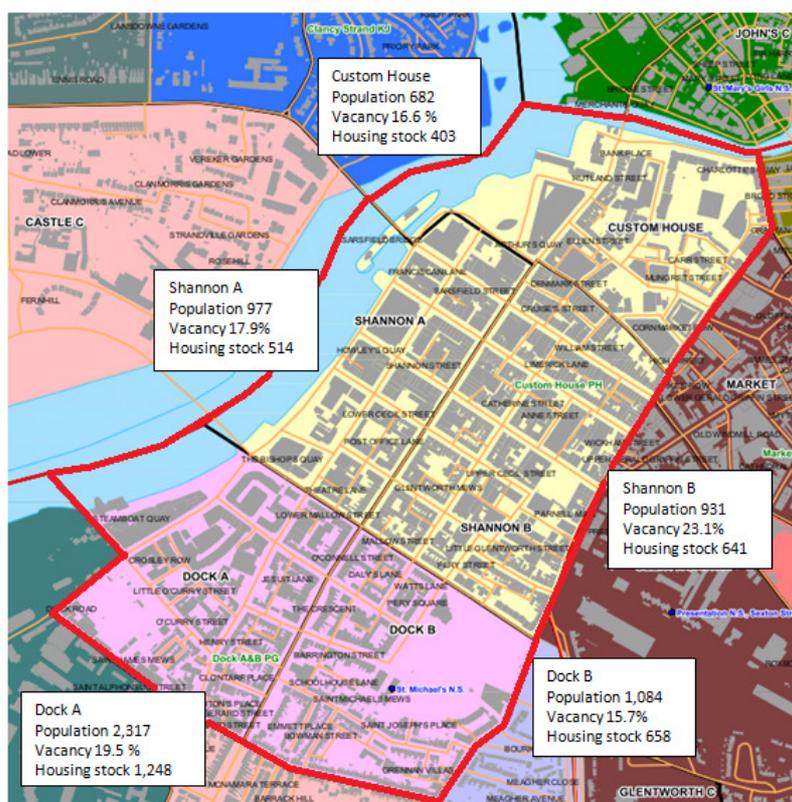


Figure 1: Electoral Divisions of Limerick city centre (Newtown Pery Historic Georgian area), Census, 2016

Two major initiatives to tackle vacancy were recently launched by The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government under the Rebuilding Ireland – Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness. These are (1) Repair and Leasing Initiative and (2) Buy and Renew Scheme. The first initiative is targeted at encouraging private owners to refurbish property and lease to the local authority, while the second scheme involves a local authority or Approved Housing Body (AHB) acquiring and refurbishing property for social housing. Limerick City and County Council welcomes both of these initiatives and the potential positive impact of unlocking vacant properties. Further details on these schemes are available on the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government website.

In October 2016, Limerick City and County Council also submitted an application currently under consideration to 'Rebuilding Ireland' entitled 'Living Georgian Limerick Revitalisation Demonstration Blocks Project' which focuses on targeted actions and measures to renew existing vacant housing in Limerick city centre. A decision is awaited on this 'Pathfinder's Proposal'

for innovative projects which fall under Pillar 5 of the Rebuilding Ireland Programme to 'Utilise existing housing.' It builds on the Living City Initiative (LCI) tax incentive to proactively demonstrate diverse development models for the re-inhabitation of the historic core of the city. This tax initiative incentivises the redevelopment and refurbishment of residential, rented residential and commercial properties built prior to 1915, within the LCI designated areas.

13. Question submitted by Councillor C. Prendiville

I will ask at the next Meeting will ultrafine particles, dioxins and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) be monitored at the proposed air quality monitoring stations in Mungret and the City Centre.

REPLY: The Council has tendered for real time air monitors to monitor the following parameters in ambient air: (i) PM₁₀; (ii) PM_{2.5}; (iii) NO_x; (iv) SO_x. In terms of particulates, PM_{2.5} is considered to be the best available indicator in terms of human health. Ultrafine particles are still under investigation and there are no agreed limits for them in ambient air. However, the possibility of measuring particulates down to PM_{1.0} will be explored and added to the monitoring regime if possible.

Dioxin monitoring in Ireland is carried out by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is measured in milk fat as this is considered to be the best indicator of human exposure. At the request of the Council, the EPA has agreed to include an additional dioxin monitoring station in the vicinity of Irish Cement.

VOCs will be monitored by the EPA at its proposed monitoring station in the city centre.

14. Question submitted by Councillor P. Keller

I will ask at the next Meeting what schemes are there in place to promote the development of vacant 'over the shop' accommodation in Limerick.

REPLY: The Living City Initiative is a scheme of property tax incentives which applies in certain 'special regeneration areas' in the centres of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway, Waterford and Kilkenny. The scheme provides for tax relief for qualifying expenditure incurred on both residential and certain commercial refurbishment and conversion work that is carried out during the qualifying period. The qualifying period for incurring qualifying expenditure on owner/occupied residential property and commercial property started on 5th May 2015 and ends on 4th May 2020. The equivalent period for incurring expenditure on the refurbishment or conversion of rented residential property starts on 1 January 2017 and ends on 4 May 2020.

The owner-occupier residential element provides tax relief by way of a deduction from total income of 10% per annum of qualifying expenditure over a 10 year period and is only available where the property is the claimant's only or main residence.

Rented Residential and Commercial Relief is given in the form of an accelerated capital allowance for qualifying expenditure on refurbishment or conversion of rented residential and certain commercial premises within the special regeneration areas. The capital allowance is given at the rate of 15% of qualifying expenditure for each of 6 years and 10% in year 7. In the case of a commercial premises it must be used, after refurbishment / conversion, for retail purposes or for the provision of services within the State or the premises must be let on bona fide commercial terms for such use. In the case of a rented residential premises, which must have been originally built prior to 1915, it must be let on bona fide commercial terms, after refurbishment /conversion, for use as a dwelling by the lessee. The maximum level of actual tax relief which can be obtained in respect of any individual project is capped at €200,000, in accordance with EU State aid rules. The legislation is contained within Chapter 13 of Part 10 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997.

A person can apply for both the commercial element of the scheme and also the rented residential/owner occupier element.

The scheme was launched originally in May 2015 but it was not deemed successful, Limerick did not have any applications. The Budget 2016 set out the following revisions to enhance the scheme and generate increased uptake:

Changes to the Living City Initiative (LCI) as and from the 1st of January 2017

- Extension of the residential element of the scheme to include landlords
- Removal of the requirement for a pre 1915 building to have been originally constructed for use as a dwelling
- Floor restriction for owner occupiers has been removed
- In order to qualify for residential relief a minimum amount of capital expenditure under all elements of the scheme must exceed €5,000

An implementation team has been established by Limerick City and County Council to manage the roll out of the 'Living City initiative'. The team run 'one stop shop' clinics every fortnight at the Limerick City and County Council Office in 7/8 Patricks Street. These clinics are by appointment and allow citizens an opportunity to come and ask questions related to the scheme to a cross departmental panel.

A Living City Initiative re-launch is being organised for early April 2017 and Councillors will be informed. All material pertaining to the Initiative can be easily located on the following Limerick.ie address: <https://www.limerick.ie/council/living-city-initiative-limerick>

NOTICES OF MOTION

15. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Leddin (to be referred to Environment Strategic Policy Committee)

I will move at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council amend the guidelines for the current waiver scheme so that those persons in receipt of invalidity payments can also qualify, similar to those in receipt of disability allowance, for the waiver.

It was agreed to refer the Motion to the Environment Strategic Policy Committee.

16. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors S. Keary, C. McMahon, E. O'Brien, R. O'Donoghue, K. Sheahan, A. Teskey

We will move at the next Meeting that Transport Infrastructure Ireland make direct arrangements for the gathering and removal of litter along national roads in the administrative area of the Council.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor O'Brien, while acknowledging that funding was limited, stressed the importance and vital need for a pronounced action plan with matching funding to tackle the issue of littering on national primary routes. In addition, he said a clear message should go out to those involved in littering/illegal dumping, it was not acceptable and, if caught, the full rigours of the law would be used in bringing them before the courts.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Keary said he was calling on Transport Infrastructure Ireland to take direct responsibility for the gathering and removal of litter along national roads and, in particular, on the N21.

17. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor K. Sheahan

I will move at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council actively promote the use of the landbank at Askeaton with a view to enticing a suitable industry to locate at this site.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Sheahan (K) stated that, for a considerable number of years, he had been pointing out and actively promoting the potential use of the very suitable landbank at Askeaton. He had had a number of meetings with Shannon Development in this regard. He added that the landbank in question had been vacant for

half a century. He stated that while he welcomed all of the new developments in the city area, he felt that Askeaton represented an opportunity for very beneficial development.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Sheahan (J).

REPLY: The Askeaton landbank (200 acres approx.) is in the ownership of the Shannon Group and it is zoned for industrial use. It is also identified as one of six strategic sites suitable for industrial development in the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary. The landbank is included in all promotional and marketing material issued by Limerick City and County Council, Shannon Foynes Port Company, SIFP stakeholders as a location for investment and development. The Council continues to work with the Shannon Group, the IDA and other interested groups regarding the identification of suitable projects for the site.

The Chief Executive stated that Management had had a meeting with the Shannon Group since the lands in question were in the ownership of the Shannon Group. It was hoped to progress the matter in the near future.

18. Notice of Motion submitted by Cmhrl. S. Ó Ceallaigh

I will move at the next Meeting that this Council call on the Department of Agriculture to reimburse the Council for the full cost of horse control in Limerick.

In proposing the Motion, Cmhrl. Ó Ceallaigh said the Council should not have to carry the bulk of the cost of horse control in the City and County. He added that the Department of Agriculture only covered one-third of the cost of horse control in Limerick which cost approximately €500,000 per year. He concluded by calling on the Department of Agriculture to reimburse the Council in full for the collection and impounding of wandering horses.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Costelloe and agreed.

19. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Lynch

I will move at the next Meeting that this Council call on the Government and the Minister for Education and Skills to award a set number of extra points, not exceeding twenty-five (25) (under the Leaving Certificate Points System), to 5th and 6th year students who participate in a formally assessed programme of engagement with the elderly and other vulnerable people in their community. The purpose of this programme is to help elderly and other vulnerable people identified by the HSE and/or Department of Social Protection to continue living in their own homes.

Councillor Lynch, in proposing the Motion, requested that the Council call on the Government to award a set number of points, not exceeding 25, in the Leaving Certificate to students who participated in a formally assessed programme of engagement with the elderly and other vulnerable people in their community. He explained that there might be a mechanism for awarding these points through the Leaving Certificate. Vocational

Programme (L.C.V.P). He added that it would be important for the programme to have a clear and easily understood structure. He said that engagement would be mainly social in nature with an emphasis on visiting, chatting, listening and reassuring the vulnerable/elderly people in question. The elderly would feel supported in a very practical way in their own homes and in their own communities and would learn about their own communities and about their young neighbours, their news, interests and concerns. He stated that Garda Vetting would be a requirement for participants. In addition, procedures regarding safe working practices would need to be incorporated into the programme. He concluded by highlighting the many benefits for the students, elderly and those vulnerable in society.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Donegan paid tribute to the sterling work carried out by students in their community and, in particular, made reference to work undertaken by Transition Year students.

The Motion received unanimous support and it was felt that it could be an exciting and innovative approach to help tackle rural isolation experienced by those most vulnerable.

20. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Browne

I will move at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council call on Minister Creed to relax the criteria for the Young Farmer Scheme as regards educational requirements. As it currently stands, the strict deadlines for enrolment in FETAC level 6 courses means that many worthy applications are automatically excluded from the scheme. With farming uptake by young people at an all-time low, this Council considers it of the upmost importance that proper incentives are given to young people to get involved in farming activities and that the legislation in place is as inclusive as possible. This Council also calls on the Minister to recognise that the competence for setting educational criteria and their enforcement is a matter for the Irish Department of Agriculture and not a European competence. In fact, only 10 out of 28 EU Member States have chosen to adopt educational criteria as a prerequisite for availing of Young Farmer funds. Young farmers face an increasingly complex set of barriers when trying to get on an even footing in their sector. The Minister cannot continue to deny responsibility when it comes to breaking down some of those obstacles.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Browne stated that only 7% of Irish farmers were under the age of 35. The 2013 CAP reforms set out to encourage the uptake of farming activities by young people by offering additional “young farmer payments.” This reform defined ‘Young Farmer’ as anyone under the age of 40 who had taken up farming within the previous 5 years. Although these first two criteria were universal within the EU, the Irish Government had chosen to apply an educational requirement which compelled participants to be enrolled in a FETAC level 6 course in order to apply. He stated that there were long waiting lists to get onto those courses and that the Department was stating that the rules could not be changed. He added that there was nothing in the EU Regulations preventing the Irish Government from changing the date of enrolment or any other criteria so that anyone who had applied to take part in an educational course could avail of the payment.

The Motion was seconded by Cmhlr. Ó Ceallaigh and agreed.

21. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor L.M. Sheehy

I will move at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council oppose the closure of any Post Offices across Rural Ireland and call on the Government to commit to the survival of the Post Office Network in rural Ireland by encouraging people to use it to collect their payments from Government Departments, instead of insisting on electronic transfer.

Councillor Sheehy, in proposing the Motion, stated that action was needed to protect the Rural Post Office Network. She expressed her concern regarding reports that 80 post office branches could close across rural Ireland. She said that rural post offices across Ireland and County Limerick must be protected and their services enhanced. She added that the Post Office was a core component of the viability of small towns and villages and that its removal would have a negative knock-on effect for other services. She highlighted the damage that had already been done to rural communities by the closure of shops, public houses and schools. She asked for the Members' support in relation to the Motion and concluded by stating that future expansion of services provided by the Post Office Network would be essential for their long term viability.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Browne and agreed.

22. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor C. Prendiville

I will move at the next Meeting that the Council agree to make a submission to the Environmental Protection Agency registering its opposition to Irish Cement's proposal to burn tyres and other rubbish in its plant in Limerick.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Prendiville requested that the Council make a submission to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registering its opposition to Irish Cement's proposal to burn tyres and other rubbish in its plant in Limerick.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Keller.

Several Members raised questions regarding the legality of the Council making such a submission and it was felt that legal advice should be sought.

The Chief Executive stated that the Executive of the Council would be making a submission to the EPA which would be made available to the Members. In addition, the Members were welcome to meet with the Consultants to seek further clarification.

Following considerable discussion, it was agreed to refer this item to the Mayor and Party Leaders for further consideration.

23. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor P. Keller

I will move at the next Meeting that the Council write to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Transport urging them to: (i) take action to ensure Shannon Airport is not used by President Trump to implement his proposed travel ban; (ii) In light of President Trump's reported support for torture methods, immediately implement inspections and oversight of all planes that may be involved in the transport of prisoners, and (iii) end the use of Shannon Airport by US military for all war and occupation related activity.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Keller requested that the Council write to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Transport regarding the above issues as a matter of urgency.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Prendiville.

The Mayor was of the view that the Council should reject the Motion on the basis of the importance of Shannon Airport to the local economy from the point of view of direct foreign investment and tourism. He proposed the rejection of the Motion and this was seconded by Councillor O'Brien.

Following discussion, it was agreed to take a vote, in the form of a show of hands, on the Mayor's proposal to *"reject the Motion on the basis of the importance of Shannon Airport to the local economy from the point of view of direct foreign investment and tourism."* The majority of the Members were in favour of the Mayor's proposal.

Councillor Prendiville requested that a roll-call vote be taken on the Mayor's proposal to reject the Motion. The result of the voting was as follows:

For Rejection of the Motion

Councillors Collins (M), Gleeson, Hogan, Keary, Lynch, Mitchell, O'Brien, O'Donnell, O'Hanlon, Pond, Scanlan, Sheahan (J). **(12)**

Against Rejection of the Motion

Councillors Costelloe, Gilligan, Keller, Loftus, McCreesh, Ó Ceallaigh, Prendiville, Sheehy. **(8)**

There were no abstentions.

The Meetings Administrator declared the Mayor's proposal to reject the Motion as carried.

24. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors K. O’Hanlon (Mayor), M. Collins, M. McCreesh, C. Prendiville, E. Secas, J. Sheahan, B. Teefy

We will move at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council call on the Minister for Education to include the victims of the sexual and physical abuse suffered in Creagh Lane Primary School in the redress scheme. The victims in question have fought long and hard and their lives have been undermined and, in some cases, destroyed as a result of what they suffered as innocent children in the care of the State. We are calling on the Minister to remove all barriers to gaining access to the redress scheme for the Creagh Lane victims.

It was noted that this Motion had been dealt with at the commencement of the Meeting.

24A Notice of Motion submitted by Mayor K. O’Hanlon

I will move at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council note the campaign of the National Union of Journalists’ Local News Matters Week. The campaign is aimed at highlighting the importance of properly resourced independent media to the functioning of democracy at local and regional levels. Limerick City and County Council recognises the importance of local media in reporting on local government and informing citizens about the work undertaken on their behalf by elected representatives and local authorities and agencies. Local media also reflect the concerns of citizens and provide a platform for civic participation in dialogue on all aspects of community life. Journalists engaged by media organisations: print, broadcasting and online, face many challenges, including increased workloads, reduced resources, and lower staffing levels. This Council urges media organisations to provide journalists with the level of resources necessary to ensure accurate and comprehensive coverage of local democracy. This Council reaffirms its commitment to make information available to the local media and to providing appropriate facilities for journalists attending Council meetings.

It was noted that this Motion had been dealt with at the commencement of the Meeting.

25. Correspondence

The Correspondence circulated with the Agenda was taken as read.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S ORDERS:

The Register of Orders made by the Chief Executive up to the date of the Meeting was available on Alfresco for inspection by the Members.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

The Register of Decisions on Applications under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) was also available on Alfresco for inspection by the Members.

Signed: _____
Mayor

Dated: _____