

COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON 27th March 2017

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 GMA Scheme for the Metropolitan Area 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 councillors.



Kieran Lehane
Director of Service
Physical Development Directorate
Date 24/03/2017

COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON MONDAY 27th MARCH, 2017.

Question submitted by Cmhlr. 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 approximately were issued in the Metropolitan District of Limerick.

15 fines approximately were issued in the Municipal District of Adare – Rathkeale.

55 fines approximately were issued in the Municipal District of Cappamore – Kilmallock.

80 fines approximately were issued in the Municipal District of Newcastle West.

SIGNED:


Stephane Duclot.

A/ Senior Planner

Planning & Environmental Services Department.

DATE:

23/03/2017

COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON 27TH MARCH 2017

t: +353 (0) 61 407 270
f: +353 (0) 61 415 266

Question submitted by Councillor C. Prendiville

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 Statistic Office Census figures, the average vacancy rate across these 5 electoral divisions is 18.56 %ⁱ. Within these areas there exists a housing stockⁱⁱ 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 & 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 welcome 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 websiteⁱⁱⁱ.

In October 2016, LCCC 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. We await a decision on this 'Pathfinders Proposal' for innovative projects which falls under Pillar five 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.

Rosie Webb
Senior Architect
Economic Development
Limerick City and County Council

Date of Reply: 22nd March 2017

ⁱ CSO, 2016 <http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/saveselections.asp>

ⁱⁱ CSO, 2016

http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/documents/census2011profile4/Profile4_Statistical_Tables_and_Appendices_and_Form.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.housing.gov.ie>

COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON 27th March 2017

EIRCODE V94 EH90

t: +353 (0) 61 407 100
f: +353 (0) 61 415 266

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:

PM₁₀
PM_{2.5}
NO_x
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 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.

VOC's will be monitored by the EPA at their proposed monitoring station in the city centre.



Kieran Lehane
Director of Service
Physical Development Directorate
Date 24/03/2017

COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON 27th MARCH 2017

Question submitted by Councillor P. Keller

What schemes is 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 LCCC 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 LCI re- launch is being organised for early April 2017, 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>

Rosie Webb
Senior Architect
Economic Development
Limerick City and County Council

Date of Reply: 22nd March 2017