

<p style="text-align: center;">COMMUNITY, LEISURE & EMERGENCY SERVICES STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE</p>
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A meeting of the Community, Leisure & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee was held in Council Chamber, Limerick City and County Council, County Hall, Dooradoyle, Limerick, on Wednesday 26th April, 2017

The following were in attendance: -

IN THE CHAIR: Cllr. F. Foley

PRESENT: Cllr. J. Costelloe, Cllr. M Collins, Cllr. M. Hourigan, Cllr. M. Hurley, Cllr. G. Mitchell, Cllr. L.M. Sheehy, Cllr. C. McMahon, Cllr. M. McCreesh, Cllr. S. Lynch, Cllr. B. Teefy, Ms. M. Vaughan Mullane, Ms. M. Healy

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms. C. Kirby, A/Director of Service
Mr. S. O'Connor, Senior Social Worker
Ms. M. Foley Walsh, Health Limerick Co-Ordinator
Ms. Aoife Potter-Coogan, Arts Officer
Ms. G. Dollard, Administrative Officer
Ms. P. Liddy, Senior Executive Officer
Ms. E. Rea, Staff Officer

APOLOGIES: E. O'Donovan, C. Flynn

Item 1: Adoption of Minutes of Community Leisure & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee held on 21st February, 2017

Minutes of meeting of 21st February, 2017 were proposed by Cllr. G. Mitchell and seconded by Cllr. M. Hurley

Item 2: Presentation on Healthy Limerick by Mo Foley-Walsh, Healthy Limerick Co-Ordinator

Mo Foley-Walsh, Healthy Limerick Co-Ordinator gave a presentation on Healthy Limerick.

The presentation outlined that the purpose of Healthy Limerick is to improve health, positive wellbeing and quality of life by ensuring all sectors are aware of the social determinants approach to health. The policy context to Healthy Limerick is Healthy Ireland: The National Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing and Putting People First. Healthy Limerick is under the auspices of the LCDC and is about supporting the existing actions set out in the Limerick Economic and Community Plan (LECP). Healthy Limerick is inviting all stakeholders to understand health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely as the absence of disease or infirmity. Healthy Limerick is also inviting all sectors in Limerick to appreciate that health is not simply about individuals' behaviours.

Health is strongly influenced by the circumstances in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, as well as the systems put in place to deal with illness, i.e. the Social Determinants of Health. An example of one determinant of health, education, was presented and how it can impact on health.

Social connectedness is the theme of Healthy Limerick – its primary purpose is to provide a common platform for different agencies and sectors to connect to further their own goals – be they in occupational therapy, politics, family support, job creation, planning, transport, supporting jobseekers, youth work or the arts for example. An action in Healthy Ireland is specifically about increasing social connectedness and evidence suggests there is a strong link between individual health and social connectedness

Cllr. G. Mitchell welcomed the presentation and queried how this relates to the political strand as suggested in the presentation. M. Foley Walsh replied that health is impacted upon by all policies.

Cllr. L.M. Sheehy stated that politics do relate to health. She cited the example of the proposed bridge increasing connectedness and providing a walkway amenity. Cllr. Sheehy also pointed out that the decision on the height of the railways on the bridge was influenced by social factors such as its impact on reducing the risk of suicides.

Cllr. M. McCreesh stated that Healthy Limerick is very positive and that there is a lot of misinformation in the public from the food industry about food content and quality.

Cllr. M. Hourigan would like to see more communities supported such as providing club houses to the GAA which provide a social focal point for the community. Cllr. M. Hourigan queried if there was funding in place for community activities.

Cllr B. Teefy acknowledged that health has a broader definition than being about ill-health and that lifestyles are now more stressful. She asked if Healthy Limerick was working with the schools to promote health and asked if the presentation could be forwarded to Members.

Cllr. M. Hurley stated education is the key to a healthier life and the importance of retaining children at primary and secondary school level. She suggested that health policies should be imbedded in the national educational curriculum.

Cllr. C. McMahon stated that focus on health is increasingly important and gave the example of how the canteen in her workplace is now stocking healthy food. She suggested funding a walkway near the Athea pitch. Cllr. C. McMahon mentioned the health benefits of providing outdoor gyms and that the closest one to Athea is currently in County Kerry.

Cllr. S. Lynch said that parents' healthy eating and lifestyles provide good role models for their children. Cllr. S. Lynch said it is important children are educated on health including mental health.

Cllr. F. Foley said how the take-up by students of the subject of home economics has declined and that it should be a compulsory subject in schools.

M. Healy said it is positive that there is a focus on preventing ill-health. She said how vulnerable groups such as Travellers need help with skills such as preparing healthy meals and resources are needed for this. M. Healy suggested that the medical profession should take a more balanced approach to health and look at other options for patients beyond prescribing drugs and medicine. M. Healy suggested that sports clubs should provide nutritional diet sheets to children as part of the overall training and coaching. M. Healy said resources should be put into schools to promote healthy living such as healthy lunchboxes.

M. Healy commended the Council for providing walkways and amenities under Smarter Travel.

Cllr. M. Hurley pointed to the low take-up of bowel screening and more resources should be put into marketing programmes such as bowel screening. Cllr. M. Hurley agreed that home economics should be a compulsory subject in schools.

S. O'Connor said that the Council as policy makers can under-estimate the impact of policies on health and gave the example of how Smarter Travel has positively impacted on the public's health.

M. Foley Walsh replied that there isn't a dedicated funding stream for Healthy Limerick and reiterated that the purpose of Healthy Limerick is to support the actions in the LECP and that health needs to be considered when drawing up public policy. Ms Walsh also gave the example of the recently-launched Mid-West Connecting for Life Suicide Prevention Action Plan which gave agencies and groups who would not normally work together the opportunity to link due to their common theme of suicide reduction.

Cllr. G. Mitchell pointed to a survey which found that 60-70% of the age group of 17-18 year olds were mentally unhappy and that this should be a priority action area for Healthy Limerick.

C. Kirby said that on a point of information for Cllr. M. Hurley that as a result of investment in the regeneration areas in Limerick City that 96% of students were staying at secondary level up to Junior Cycle and that there has been an increase of students from DEIS schools progressing to third level. Ms. Kirby pointed to the progression of better educational outcomes leading to economic opportunities for young people in the regeneration areas which reduces poverty issues.

Item 3: Update on Suicide Awareness Working Group

Cllr. L.M. Sheehy gave Members the following update on the Suicide Awareness Working Group:

- the Group are awaiting an update from the HSE and An Garda Siochana regarding their proposals on public spaces under the Connecting for Life Local Action Plan.
- The group are working on the terms of reference at present in the context of the Connecting for Life Plan.

Cllr. L.M. Sheehy advised that Limerick Mental Health gave a presentation at their meeting and advised the members that Limerick Mental Health is running an awareness mental health week in October. Funding for this Week is very low and she asked if the Council could give some financial support towards this worthwhile programme. The organisers have also requested any practical assistance that the Council can offer such as signage and funding.

A number of Councillors said that suicide is reaching epidemic levels in Limerick and expressed their support for the Group.

Cllr. J. Costello requested training for Councillors as they often deal with vulnerable constituents with mental health issues and also to deal with stress in their own role as a Councillor. Cllr. J. Costello asked for support for the Darkness into Light walk at Thomond Park on 6 May 2017.

Item 4 Presentation on festival and events research carried out by Limerick City and County Council and GM Innovations by Aoife Potter-Coogan.

Aoife Potter-Coogan, Arts Officer, delivered a presentation on the interim results and findings from consultancy group GM Innovations on developing a Framework Document and Strategy for Festivals and Events.

Cllr. M. Hurley said she would like to see EVA extended its reach to home audiences as there is a wealth of arts experience in Limerick. She asked for a review of the EVA festival to make some small changes to give the festival broader appeal to the general public e.g. schools particularly in light of the resources given to the festival. Cllr. Hurley would also like to see more festivals organised outside of the peak times and would welcome a drama festival as Limerick has some great drama groups.

M. Healy said that opportunities had been missed to showcase Limerick in the lead up to Christmas. She suggested that the space around King Johns Castle, St. Mary's Cathedral, Civic Buildings and Nicholas Street should be used for a Christmas Market festival and that such an event could attract international exhibitors similar to the winter festival in Edinburgh.

Cllr. C. McMahon and Cllr. L.M. McMahon also spoke about the increased popularity of Christmas markets and that Limerick should try to capture both domestic and overseas visitors to this type of festival similar to the Winterwonderland festival held in London. Cllr. L.M. Sheehy suggested linking the city and county area (e.g. Lough Gur) for this type of festival.

A number of Councillors commented on the importance of developing festival promoters skills to secure funding from the Arts Council and Failte Ireland. A number of Councillors suggested that more use be made of in-house marketing in the Council such as www.limerick.ie digital platform to promote events. A number of Councillors pointed to the great resources that Limerick has such as the River Shannon, its history, culture, sporting attractions and that these should be promoted more. Cllr. S. Lynch suggested that once the Terry Wogan sculpture is in place that a festival should be organised around this. Cllr. G. Mitchell pointed to the establishment of Troy Film Studio and how this would connect with the Richard Harris International Film Festival. Some councillors pointed to the potential to attract more visitors to Limerick if Limerick could be made a designated stop for organised bus tours on route to other stops such as the Cliffs of Moher.

A. Potter-Coogan said that last year's Christmas events were based around the Switching on the Lights event with a fireworks display that night. She suggested that the members should support the use of Limerick.ie website to list events and added that it can be a promotional tool for organisations across the city and county. Ms Coogan said more investment is required and a proposal is being put forward for a more enhanced Christmas festival and pointed out that the relationship between the Council and Failte Ireland needs to be developed further.

Cllr. G. Mitchell said that it was disappointing that Limerick has only secured 1% of the national funding from Failte Ireland. A. Potter-Coogan said that only six of the eight applications submitted to Failte Ireland had met the criteria and re-iterated that we need to work with the festival organisers to develop their skills in seeking funding, in particular on

the evaluation process with Failte Ireland i.e. off season, strong markets, 500 bed nights. Cllr. G. Mitchell said the criteria of 500 bed nights would be difficult to achieve. A. Potter-Coogan acknowledged that it is high, however Failte Ireland had already amended their definition of this to include participatory events.

Item 6 Any Other Business

In reply to a query submitted by email by E. O'Donovan with her apologies in relation to the role of the Access Officer in the Council, G. Dollard read out a reply received from the Access officer outlining his role, how this service is currently advertised within the Council and how Limerick City and County Council services are currently proofed to ensure compliance with the 2005 Disability Act. It was requested that the replies be emailed to the members.

The next meeting of the Community, Leisure & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee will be held on Wednesday 21st June in the Council Chamber in Merchants Quay.

Minutes Proposed By:

Minutes Seconded By:

Minutes Signed By Chair: _____

Date: _____