

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MERCHANT'S QUAY, LIMERICK, ON MONDAY, 16TH NOVEMBER, 2015, AT 9.45 A.M.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor Jerry O'Dea, Mayor

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Butler, Byrne, Clifford, Collins, Crowley, Daly, Gilligan, Hourigan, Hurley, Keller, Leddin, Loftus, Lynch, McCreesh, Ó Ceallaigh, O'Hanlon, Prendiville, Quinlivan, Secas and Sheahan.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director, Transportation and Travel / Environment (Mr. K. Lehane), Meetings Administrator (Mr. C. O'Connor), Administrative Officer, Economic Development and Planning (Ms. M. Hayes), Senior Engineer (Mr. V. Murray), Senior Engineer (Mr. D. Brennan), Senior Executive Engineer (Ms. C. Lynch), Senior Executive Planner (Ms. M. Woods), Executive Engineer (Mr. N. Boyle), Executive Planner (Ms. S. Newell), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services (Mr. T. O'Callaghan).

At the commencement of the Meeting a silence was observed as a mark of respect to those who had been killed and injured following the recent terrorist attacks in Paris and Beirut.

On the proposal of Mayor O'Dea, seconded by Councillor Hourigan, it was agreed that, in relation to the Paris attacks, the sympathies of the Metropolitan District be extended to the Mayor of Quimper with whom the Council was twinned.

1. Adoption of Minutes

- (a) Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick held on 19th October, 2015.

Proposed by Councillor Byrne;
Seconded by Councillor Collins;

A disagreement arose as to the accuracy of the minutes and following discussion it was agreed, on the proposal of Councillor Hourigan, seconded by Councillor Byrne that the meeting adjourn for five minutes.

On the resumption of the meeting Councillor O'Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Lynch, proposed that the District accept the accuracy of the minutes as presented.

The Mayor called for a vote on this motion and the result of the voting was as follows:

IN FAVOUR

Councillors Byrne, Clifford, Collins, Crowley, Daly, Gilligan, Hourigan, Hurley, Leddin, Lynch, O'Dea, O'Hanlon and Secas

(13)

AGAINST

Councillors Keller and Prendiville (2)

ABSTAIN

Councillors Butler, Loftus, McCreesh, Ó Ceallaigh, Quinlivan and Sheahan (6)

And therefore by this vote, it is resolved:

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

- (b) Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Draft Budgetary Plan Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick held on 19th October, 2015.

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

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

2. **Travel and Transportation**

Part 8 Procedure – Parnell Street, Wickham Street and Davis Street Urban Realm and Street Improvement Works

Circulated, Report of the Director, Travel and Transport dated 11th November, 2015 enclosing the Chief Executives Report which had been prepared in accordance with Section 179 (3)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2015 and Part VIII of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001–2015 and proposed to proceed in accordance with Section 5 of same.

Members pointed out that a number of traders still had issues in relation to the proposed works and noted that a further meeting between traders and the executive was arranged for the evening of the 16th November, 2015. In view of same it was suggested that consideration of this item be postponed for a short period. Following discussion it was agreed, on the proposal of Councillor Hourigan, seconded by Councillor Butler that this item be deferred to a future meeting. It was agreed that a special meeting could be arranged if required to deal with the matter.

As item 5 on the agenda related to item 2, it was agreed that it would be raised during discussion of item 2.

5. **Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Joe Crowley**

I will move at the next meeting that the Council include Upper Gerald Griffin Street for immediate upgrade along with the streets in the vicinity that are in the Plans at present.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Crowley and seconded by Councillor Leddin.

In seconding the motion Councillor Leddin noted that the Council was the owner of a derelict site on Upper Gerald Griffin Street that had trees growing from same and asked that this be addressed.

Councillor Keller highlighted issues in relation to 26 / 27 Edward Street and asked that these be investigated.

3. Finance

General Municipal Allocation 2015 – Special Projects Limerick City West

Circulated, Report of the Director of Service, Metropolitan District dated 11th November, 2015 setting out proposals for the expenditure of €50,000 allocated under the General Municipal Allocation 2015 to special projects in Limerick City West.

Members highlighted a number of additional projects across the District worthy of support and stressed the need to have a more formalised process in allocating similar funding in 2016.

In response to queries raised by Members, the Director of Service, Metropolitan District pointed out that the wishes of the District with regard to 2015 GMA allocations would be respected and a capitalisation process was in place in relation to any allocations not drawn down by the end of 2015. He acknowledged the need for a formal policy in relation to the support of outside bodies and undertook to engage with the Home, Community, Culture and Sport Directorate in relation to same.

Proposed by Councillor Butler;
Seconded by Councillor McCreesh;
And Resolved:

“That the following allocations be made under the General Municipal Allocation 2015 for Special Projects, Limerick City West in the Metropolitan District of Limerick in accordance with Section 102 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended.

Patrickswell Community Centre Professional Costs:	€20,000
Boherbuoy Band Building Repairs:	€10,000
Mens Shed Group:	€10,000
Raheen / Dooradoyle Community Start Up Costs:	€10,000”.

4. Question submitted by Councillor Maurice Quinlivan

I will ask at the next meeting, following my recent notice of motion, for an update on the possibility of obtaining and refurbishing of derelict flats commonly known as the “Newly Wed Flats” at the junction of Mary Street and Creagh Lane.

REPLY: The subject site is within the ownership of Limerick City and County Council.

A proposal to refurbish the units was sent to the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government in October for approval and we are awaiting a response to same.

6. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Daniel Butler

I will move at the next meeting that all representative bodies that work in the city centre are

invited to participate on a committee to develop a night time strategy for Limerick City centre.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor Byrne.

In proposing the motion Councillor Butler highlighted the social and economic benefits of representatives of hotels, restaurants, night clubs, vintners, arts, entertainment, sports, etc. in conjunction with the Council and the Gardai, coming together to develop a cohesive package of diverse night time activities in the city that would take account of safety and social issues and attract a wide range of people into the city between the hours of 6pm and 3am.

Members supported the motion and raised the following issues during discussions on same:

- The need to encourage the later opening of shops in the city including Sunday opening and the need to focus on the time between 6pm and 9pm which can be quiet in the city.
- The potential of supporting the culture of marching bands within the city.
- The need to encourage the opening of more small cafes and a cinema in the city.
- The need to consider the bus service to and from the city, in conjunction with such an initiative.
- The potential to learn from Galway where all traders meet early each week to discuss plans and initiatives for that week.
- The need for the Opera site to be progressed and the need to provide a location for bands or performances in the city with the old tourist office in Arthurs Quay as a possible location.
- The potential of illuminating key features within the city and providing night tours of the city, including Georgian Limerick.

The Administrative Officer, Economic Development and Planning informed Members that the Council, in conjunction with Limerick Chamber of Commerce, were formulating an application for Purple Flag Status for Limerick and a workshop was planned for February, 2016 in this regard. She also noted that the Economic Development Directorate were considering the establishment of a City and Town Development Unit with the following remit:

- Retail, commercial and residential occupancy.
- Image and appearance.
- Night time economy.

The Meetings Administrator indicated that this motion would be best dealt with by the Economic Development Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee from the point of view of recommending how to move the initiative forward and giving consideration to the structure of any committee and it was agreed that the matter would be referred to that area.

7. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Joe Crowley

I will move at the next meeting that the Council will put a "Yellow Box" at the junction of Lr. North Circular Road and Lr. Shelbourne Road, entering to the mini roundabout. This would free up space and not block the exit, which happens at present during the 'school run', in particular.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Crowley and seconded by Councillor Daly.

REPLY: Limerick City and County Council Traffic Department have examined this proposal and are consulting with An Garda Síochána Traffic Division and recommending that this regulatory provision be provided to support school time vehicular traffic congestion reduction at and adjacent to this location.

8. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor John Gilligan

I will move at the next meeting that the Metropolitan District of Limerick request the Government to put a 10% tax on chewing gum to be paid to the Council to clean up the mess chewing gum makes on our streets.

In proposing the motion Councillor Gilligan pointed to the high grade street paving in the city that was being defaced by chewing gum, the recurrence of this issue in spite of previous clean-ups and the inadequacy of national T.V. campaigns in resolving this problem.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Quinlivan stressed the need for the general public to challenge offenders and highlighted the need for increased spending to tackle this problem along with the issuing of fines to offenders.

Members, in general, supported the motion and made the following additional points during discussions on same:

- The motion was important in terms of the Councils bid for European City of Culture 2020.
- More bins should be provided outside the immediate city centre.
- The education and support of gum users through a poster campaign and the provision of containers in which to dispose of gum might prove more effective than the raising of a tax on gum.
- If retailers were concerned with regard to this issue they would not sell gum and they should be written to in this regard.

9. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor John Gilligan

I will move at the next meeting that, in relation to the two lanes running westward from the Dock Road roundabout, the inside lane be made a "left only lane" and the outer one be made a "straight ahead lane".

In proposing the motion Councillor Gilligan noted that, during peak traffic flows, traffic leaving the city via the Dock Road was encouraged to form two lanes of traffic which then had to merge into a single lane approaching the first set of traffic lights. He pointed out that this merging process gave rise to considerable delays and aggressive driving as drivers in the outside lane, many of whom had overtaken a long line of traffic on the inside lane, sought to force their way back into the inside lane.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Keller.

There was general agreement amongst the Members that this issue should be reviewed.

REPLY: Limerick City and County Council Traffic Department have examined this proposal. The Traffic Department advise that, in conjunction with the Council's Capital Works Department, designs are being considered for

the reassignment of traffic lane provisions on the Dock Road R510 (between Bawneys Bridge and the Shannon Bridge roundabout). It is intended that draft proposals for such works will be brought to the Metropolitan District for consideration in 2016 following consultation with TII (Transport Infrastructure Ireland) in respect of scheme provisions and funding.

Councillor John Gilligan took the Chair at this point in the meeting as the Mayor had to leave for another appointment.

10. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cian Prendiville

I will move at the next meeting that Limerick Metropolitan District calls on the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Finance for the introduction of real rent controls, linking rents to inflation, to stop the sky-rocketing of rents currently taking place.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Prendiville and seconded by Councillor Keller.

In proposing the motion Councillor Prendiville noted the extent to which rents were increasing in the absence of similar increases in income, the high numbers on the waiting list for social housing and that landlords were carrying out economic evictions.

In supporting the motion Councillor Quinlivan pointed out the lack of affordable housing and noted that some couples, each with jobs, could not afford current rents. He referred to his previous motion calling for an increase in rent supplement and noted that this had been applied, in some instances, in other cities.

11. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Frankie Daly

I will move at the next meeting that Limerick City and County Council undertake meaningful consultation with residents and elected members when they are planning to submit proposals for social housing to the various housing agencies. The people have given a mandate to elected representatives to assist them with local issues such as planning and it is not right for the council to make de-facto decisions on where they want to build, with absolutely no input from, or no consultation with, local residents.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Daly and seconded by Councillor Secas.

In proposing the motion Councillor Daly noted the positive benefits that accrue from meaningful public consultation and stressed that, in the case of proposals to build social housing in Drominbeg using an Approved Housing Body, such consultation had not taken place and Members were not afforded a say in this development.

On the proposal of Councillor Quinlivan, seconded by Councillor Daly, it was agreed to suspend standing orders to allow for the completion of the agenda.

Members, while acknowledging the need for social housing, supported the motion and the following additional points were raised during discussion on same:

- That issues relating to planning should be included for discussion on the agenda for District meetings.

- Many support services were required in conjunction with social housing and Members were not afforded an opportunity to discuss such services in instances such as Drominbeg.
- That there was a considerable difference in the current value of houses in Drominbeg compared to the larger cost of providing the proposed new units there and the reason for this difference should be established.
- Drominbeg had no public transport facilities, no amenities beyond a green space and no community or youth centre. The houses there were in negative equity and there was already in excess of 10% social housing in the area. Residents did not believe that Members could have been unaware of proposals to carry out this development.
- All necessary services for an estate should be identified at the planning stage.
- On the proposal of Councillor O’Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Collins, it was suggested that two residents from Drominbeg be invited to attend the next District meeting. It was noted by Members that the District Members, in this instance, did not have the powers to rule on this proposed development and that consideration be given to meeting residents at an Operational Briefing instead.

REPLY: It is a priority of Limerick City & County Council to update our elected members of housing schemes being progressed by this Authority or the Approved Housing Bodies. The delivery of Social Housing is provided via two distinct supply channels;

1. Local Authority -Limerick City & County Council or
2. Approved Housing Bodies.

1. Limerick City & County Council Delivery:

During 2015 Limerick City & County Council submitted project appraisals to the Department of Environment Community and Local Government for four projects, which received ‘Approval in Principle’.

These projects cannot proceed without the approval of the Elected Council through the Part 8 process/Patrickswell 20 units, Hospital 20 units, Adare 30 units and Clonmacken 40 units.

A policy document is being finalised presently which outlines the methodology applied during the site selection process. It is proposed to table this draft document for discussion at the first Home & Community SPC meeting of 2016.

2. Approved Housing Bodies Delivery:

The provision of Housing for people with specific categories of need is funded under the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS). Any applications made to the Department must be supported in terms of identified housing need in that general area.

During 2015, 110 Units have been approved by the Department of Environment Community and Local Government for Acquisition and Construction, with a total estimated budget of €13,036,897.

In the Call for Proposals 15 projects were submitted with 6 receiving funding approval in principle.

All AHB’s have responsibility for the delivery of the approved projects and have to

go through the normal planning permission process.

Limerick City & County Council will provide updates on the Capital Construction work programme and developments being progressed by the AHB's at the Housing & Community SPC meetings and by regular email to Councillors and where appropriate to full Council.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the issues they had raised would be taken into consideration in drawing up policy on site selection. In relation to deputations he noted that, according to standing orders, proposals to invite any deputation to a District Meeting should be placed on the agenda in the form of a notice of motion for consideration at the next meeting.

12. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Paul Keller

I will move at the next meeting that Limerick Metropolitan District calls on the Minister for Health to re-open the A&E units in St. John's, Ennis and Nenagh Hospitals and the 1,600 hospital beds closed nationally since 2007 and provide the extra staff urgently needed to solve the health crisis.

In proposing the motion Councillor Keller highlighted the overcrowding, delays and loss of dignity experienced by patients in the A&E Department of University Hospital Limerick. He paid tribute to the staff working in A&E and stressed that people with serious injuries or conditions had no option but to attend at the A&E.

In seconding the motion Councillor Prendiville noted the number of patients on waiting lists nationally and indicated that the University Hospital Limerick, despite its best efforts, could not cope with the number of patients it was expected to deal with and that the centralisation model had failed.

Members generally supported the motion and stressed the need for the new A&E unit in University Hospital Limerick to be opened.

13. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Marian Hurley

I will move at the next meeting that the Council look at options for safety and junction improvements at Walker's Road/Lane, Castletroy, which leads on to the main Dublin Road, R445.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Hurley and seconded by Councillor Byrne.

In proposing the motion Councillor Hurley highlighted the volume of traffic at this location and the concerns of the local residents in relation to the junction in question. She noted that this matter had already been raised at operational briefings and acknowledged the efforts of staff in working towards a resolution of this issue.

Councillor Secas also acknowledged the co-operation of staff in bringing forward proposals to resolve this issue which had already been discussed in detail at the operational briefings and asked that these proposals be discussed with local residents.

REPLY:

Traffic on Walkers Road has increased over the last number of years due to new housing development in the area, the expansion of Castletroy College and the construction of Gaelscoil Chaladh an Treoigh.

Footpath and public lighting improvements are warranted on this road as a result of the increased traffic. However, no budget was provided in 2015 for this work and a large portion of land necessary for road widening at the R445 end of the road is not in Council ownership.

The Roads Department will work with the Members and the residents to deliver some short term improvements on this road over the remainder of the year and into 2016 such as improving footpaths, public lighting and signage.

It is unlikely that the Council will be able to get agreement to widen the road at the end of Walkers Road next to the R445 and therefore it may be prudent to consider making the final section of this road one-way until such time as the field known as Kenny's Field is developed. The Roads Department envisage that the one way section would be very short and will develop plans to show the extent of this on the rest of the improvements works.

Funding will need to be provided in 2016 for this work either from the GMA fund or from Planning and Development Levies.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed: _____
MAYOR

Dated: _____