MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MERCHANT’S QUAY, LIMERICK, ON MONDAY, 21ST MARCH, 2016, AT 9.45 A.M.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT:
Councillors Butler, Byrne, Collins, Costelloe, Crowley, Gilligan, Hourigan, Hurley, Keller, Leddin, Lynch, McCreesh, Ó Ceallaigh, Pond, Prendiville, Secas and Sheahan.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:
Director, Transportation & Travel / Environment (Mr. K. Lehane), Meetings Administrator (Mr. C. O’Connor), Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development & Planning (Mr. P. Fitzgerald), Senior Planner (Mr. L. Conneally), Project Manager, Regeneration (Mr. S. Hanrahan), Administrative Officer, Home and Social Development (Mr. D. Hennessy), Senior Staff Officer, Home and Social Development (Ms. M. Kiely), Senior Executive Engineer (Mr. F. Keyes), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services (Mr. T. O’Callaghan).

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

The Mayor welcomed a group of media students from University of Limerick to the Meeting.

At the outset Members noted that planning issues had not been included on the agenda and the Meetings Administrator asked that party groupings nominate a Member to attend at a meeting to discuss proposed changes to the agenda and submit their nominee to the Meetings Administrator.

1. **Adoption of Minutes**

Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick held on 15th February, 2016.

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

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

2. **Presentation by Limerick Chamber**

The Mayor welcomed Dr. James Ring, CEO, Limerick Chamber to the Meeting.

Dr. Ring gave an overview of the vision, mission, strategic objectives and membership strands of Limerick Chamber and in relation to the hospitality strand of the Chamber highlighted a number of strategic action points which included:

- The representation of Limerick Chamber on key Council Committees to assist in driving the
economic revitalisation of the city as a catalyst for the region.

- To co-lead, with the Council, the efforts to achieve Limerick’s Purple Flag.
- To run a series of action orientated workshops to address the needs of retail / hospitality in the city centre.
- The installation of a town city manager, based in the city, to proactively address retail / hospitality issues.
- To lead a Limerick city centre deep clean project.
- To set up and run one major festival in Limerick.
- To establish a fund to market Limerick city centre.

In relation to marketing, Dr. Ring referred to a joint marketing fund that was to be established with €20,000 from the Council, €10,000 from the Chamber and a further €10,000 to be raised from the fees of new members joining the Chamber. This fund would be used to market a range of activities that occur in Limerick with a special focus on weekend activity and innovative events that were to be planned.

Mr. Ring also raised the need for traders to have a single point of contact within the Council.

Members thanked Dr. Ring for his presentation and welcomed the establishment of a joint marketing fund.

The following points were made by various Members during discussion of this item:

- That all efforts to strengthen the Council’s relationship with the Chamber should be welcomed.
- Clarity needed to be provided in relation to budgets and responsibilities for festivals and event management and this should be further explored by the Council and Limerick Chamber. The establishment of a fund, with contributions from special projects under the GMA, should be considered in this regard.
- The need to revitalise some of the Georgian Buildings in the city.
- The need to liaise with the Chamber in relation to a night time strategy for the city and the co-ordination of late opening of shopping outlets.
- The need to get all stakeholders on board in developing and promoting the city and to be aware of each others plans and proposals.
- The Wild Geese, which marked the beginning of the diaspora, has societies all over the world and should be marked by a major festival in the city.
- The need for park and ride facilities to be developed to encourage more people into the city.
- The need for a series of small events such as outdoor cinema to be staged and the potential of Nicholas Street to be developed as Artists Studios.
- The need for the marketing of Limerick to be fully addressed and to build on the legacy of the City of Culture.
- That the proposed new footbridge for the city is not needed and should not be built.
- That customers in the city should be surveyed, as part of a marketing strategy, to establish their views in relation to a range of issues pertinent to the city.
- Suggestions in relation to the appointment of a city centre manager were positive but support staff would also be required.
In response to issues raised by Members, Dr. Ring made the following points:

- A meeting was planned between the Chamber and the Council in relation to proposals to pedestrianise streets in the city and the Chamber would naturally have concerns in relation to the length of time any such works would take.
- In relation to parking, the focus should be on ensuring the turnover of spaces and the Chamber would anticipate that free parking would result in an increase in rates for its members.
- While shuttered closed premises were less aesthetic and prevented window shopping, security had to be taken into consideration.
- Late opening was a matter for each trader and could only be achieved through agreement. There was potential to develop Sunday as family day in the city.

The Director, Transportation & Travel / Environment noted that he was the contact point for Limerick Chamber. In relation to Christmas parking in the city, he pointed out that this was a complex issue and agreed to include the Chamber in a workshop on same, which he had already committed to having with the District Members.

Following a query from Members, the Senior Planner updated Members in relation to the status of the Opera Site and the Cleeves Site.

3. **Disposal of Land**

Members noted the proposals for the disposal of land as follows:-

- Disposal of Freehold Interest in dwelling house situate at 13 Quins Cottages, Rosbrien in the City of Limerick.
- Disposal of 150 square metres of land at Rathmale, Mungret, Co. Limerick.
- Disposal of 54 square metres of waste land at the rear of property, 7 Beechgrove, Newtown Park, Castletroy.
- Disposal of Property known as the Hanging Gardens to the LCO Local Enterprise Development Company Limited. The Company is wholly owned by Limerick City & County Council.

In response to queries raised by Members in relation to the Hanging Gardens site, the Senior Planner informed Members that the building was in excess of 114,000 square feet and would accommodate up to 750 employees. He noted that a briefing from the Design Team would be given to Members in advance of the Part VIII going on public display and that it was intended that contractors would be on site in 2016. With regard to the proposed disposal of the property to the Local Enterprise Development Company Limited, he informed Members that this was a special purpose vehicle which offered more flexibility, agility and risk sharing.

In response to queries raised by Members in relation to the Cleeves Site, the Senior Planner noted that the main building, the chimney and a reservoir were listed and that other parts that merited conservation would be conserved.
4. **Question submitted by Councillor Cian Prendiville**

*I will ask at the next meeting if there is a proposed timeline for the pedestrianisation of Limerick City Centre.*

**REPLY:** Throughout Limerick City Centre the Council seeks to achieve an appropriate balance between various traffic forms - pedestrian, cyclist, public transport and other vehicles - as required by each location.

The previously completed Howley's Quay is an example of a transformation which has increased the relative prominence of pedestrian movements vis-a-vis vehicular movements.

Later this year works will begin on Davis Street which - while maintaining two way vehicular movements - will also provide enhanced facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

This year the Council received notification of an ERDF grant of €4m towards the revitalisation of O'Connell Street area - with this money to be drawn down by the end of 2018. The Council will soon be seeking tender for Consultants to assist in the delivery of this project and will be engaging with sectoral interests to achieve the appropriate balance of treatments for the general O'Connell Street area.

The overall delivery of vehicular traffic management within Limerick City Centre will depend on the delivery of the Inner Orbital Route aspects of which remain to be delivered.

5. **Question submitted by Councillor Paul Keller**

*I will ask at the next Meeting if there is a timeline for when the long expected community centre for the Garryowen area will be provided and are there any temporary measures planned in the interim, as the current space will not be available from the middle of this year?*

**REPLY:** Limerick City and County Council is very supportive of the community in Garryowen and its many supporters and advocators in developing a community facility. Towards this end, the Council via its Regeneration Programme, are in ongoing discussions in order to find a suitable location that best suits the needs of the overall area of Garryowen. It is hoped to achieve progress in this matter during the Summer months.

Regarding Garryowen CDP, meetings have taken place and the Council is making efforts to assist in securing short-term accommodation to meet the needs of that programme.

6. **Question submitted by Councillor Cian Prendiville**

*I will ask at the next meeting if there is a plan and timetable for moving the City Centre Library to a more high-street location?*

**REPLY:** Limerick City and County Council has recently been informed by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government that approval in principle has been granted for a new Central Library for Limerick under the new Library Capital Investment Programme 2016 – 2021.
This decision now enables the Council to proceed to consider a concept design for a new Library. When this process has been completed, the Council will then be in a position to consider an appropriate site and time frame for the new Library project.

7. **Question submitted by Councillor Paul Keller**

*I will ask at the next meeting what events or festivals are planned for the Summer months to attract people into the city centre?*

**REPLY:**

**Limerick Film Festival**
April 2016
14th - 16th April
Now in its 7th year, the LIT founded three day event has grown in size and reputation attracting hundreds of filmmakers and visitors from home and abroad. Countries such as USA, Canada, Japan, Belgium, France, Israel and Spain will be represented.

**Eva International**
April - July 2016
Various venues in Limerick
EVA International is a wonderful cultural event that is unique to Limerick. It is Ireland’s biennial of contemporary art and opens in less than 40 days. This year the work of 57 Irish and international artists will be exhibited in the 2016 edition, titled *Still (the) Barbarians*. Responding to the context of the centenary, *Still (the) Barbarians* is curated by Koyo Kouoh. She is Cameroonian-born and an independent exhibition maker and cultural producer, educated in banking administration and cultural management in Switzerland and France. The exhibitions will take place across Limerick including our own Limerick City Gallery of Art and Cleeve’s Condensed Milk Factory. This is a very important exhibition that has shaped the Irish and international art world for almost 40 years and within the Limerick 2020 bid matches the ambition for Limerick to be a place of artistic excellence on an international scale.

**Live at the Castle**
Saturday 30th April
King John's Castle
Dolan’s in association with Shannon Heritage are proud to announce The Coronas Live at King John's Castle who will be the first act to play the castle since The Frames played there in 2004.

**The Great Limerick Run 2016**
Sunday 1st May
The streets of Limerick will be alive to over 14,000 runners including a fully certified marathon, a half marathon and a 6 mile run/walk and relay marathon.

**Summer Proms**
7th May
The University of Limerick Orchestra present their annual Summer Proms Concert
under the baton of Conductor Liam Daly. The concert programme features Grieg’s “Peer Gynt Suite No. 1”, from the current Junior Certificate music curriculum. This concert represents an excellent opportunity for students to hear this exciting piece performed live in advance of their exam. The orchestra will also perform Mendelssohn’s evocative “Hebrides (Overture)” and Verdi’s dramatic “La Forza Del Destino (Overture)”. The second half of the concert celebrates the musical traditions of the island of Ireland. It includes a selection of Irish traditional dance music and Ulster Scots’ music arranged for orchestra, and features special guest musicians from the Mid Ulster Pipes and Drums

**Limerick Choral Union**

8th May
Commemorating 1916, Limerick Choral Union bring together the full forces of LCU Choir and Orchestra and an impressive line-up of soloists for their performance of Beethoven’s life-affirming creation ‘Missa Solemnis’. Coláiste Mhuire School Choir opens this concert with some well-loved melodies! Soloists include Cara O’Sullivan (Soprano); Sarah-Ellen Murphy (Alto); Lawrence Thackeray (Tenor); Jeffrey Ledwidge (Bass)

**Limerick Sings International Choral Festival**

10th - 13th June
Various venues in Limerick
This will be the 4th International Choral Festival that invites choirs of all traditions and nationalities to come together for a weekend of festive non-competitive singing in St. Mary's Cathedral and Holy Trinity Abbey Church in Adare.

**International Tag Rugby Festival PigNPorter**

July
This is Ireland’s and the world’s largest and best Tag Rugby Festival and is a three day event in Limerick

8. **Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cian Prendiville**

*I will move at the next meeting that Limerick Metropolitan District congratulate the Limerick 'Pay it Forward' committee on this years' 'Festival of Kindness' and undertake to work more closely with them to help make next years even better.*

The motion was proposed by Councillor Prendiville and seconded by Councillor O’Dea.

In proposing the motion Councillor Prendiville indicated that the Council should engage with the Limerick ’Pay it Forward’ Committee to explore how the Council could help with next years festival.

9. **Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Joe Leddin**

*I will move at the next meeting that the Council consider entering into a sale and lease back arrangement so as to fast track the provision of social housing on suitably zoned land in the Council’s ownership.*
In proposing the motion Councillor Leddin noted that the process involved in the development of social housing can take up to three years and the Council should take a more proactive approach by giving Housing Associations or builders an opportunity to build houses on our behalf and lease same back to the Council.

Councillor Gilligan indicated his support for the motion as it offered an opportunity to work around the current deadlock.

Other Members spoke against the motion indicating that the private model did not satisfy the needs of ordinary people and reservations were expressed that this proposal might result in increased profits for builders.

The Project Manager, Regeneration informed Members that the Home and Social Development Directorate were looking at all options as to how to best progress the various sites in the Council’s ownership from a housing perspective and achieve the targets set out in the Social Housing Strategy 2020. He noted that a variety of funding mechanisms and instruments were being investigated including:

- Sale and lease back.
- Direct delivery.
- Part V, with the potential to take units rather than a financial contribution.
- Turn key such as at Wallers Well.
- Social leasing.
- Approved housing bodies.
- Direct purchase.

In conclusion, the Project Manager, Regeneration noted that a presentation on available sites would be made to the Home and Social Development SPC and the Mayor indicated that the motion should be discussed further at that forum.

10. **Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Paul Keller**

*I will move at the next meeting that the Limerick Regeneration programme cease the demolition of void domestic Council dwellings, other than those which are a safety issue. I propose that the funding for demolition of domestic dwellings, be reallocated instead, to building urgently required Social Housing.*

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

In proposing the motion Councillor Keller noted the extent of boarded up houses in the regeneration areas and the perception that there were more houses being demolished than built.

**REPLY:** The demolition and retention strategy being implemented in the four regeneration areas of Limerick city is in accordance with the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan (LRFIP) adopted by the elected members of Limerick City Council in February 2014. This plan significantly reduced the extent of demolition proposed in the 2008 Regeneration Masterplan. In line with the commitment in the LRFIP for monitoring and review of the programme, a review of the demolition and retention strategy took place in 2015.
This review proposes further reduction in the overall number of houses to be demolished and will be presented to the Elected Members at the next meeting.

Signed: _____________________________

MAYOR

Dated: ______________________________