

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MERCHANT'S QUAY, LIMERICK, ON MONDAY, 21ST SEPTEMBER, 2015, AT 10.30 A.M.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive (Mr. C. Murray), Meetings Administrator (Mr. C. O'Connor), Director, Environment and Water (Mr. K. Lehane), Senior Executive Officer, Home and Social Development (Ms. P. Liddy), Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development and Planning (Mr. P. Fitzgerald), Administrative Officer, Economic Development and Planning (Ms. M. Hayes), Administrative Officer, Community, Leisure and Emergency Services (Mr. D. McGuigan), Senior Engineer (Mr. V. Murray), Senior Executive Engineer (Mr. F. Keyes), Executive Planner (Ms. B. Quinn), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services (Mr. T. O'Callaghan).

Apologies for their inability to attend had been received from Councillors Clifford, Crowley and Daly.

At the outset it was noted that, on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Collins, standing orders had been suspended at 9.45 a.m. to facilitate discussion on a presentation received from Change Management that had commenced at 9.30 a.m.

A silence was observed at the start of the meeting in memory of Veronica O'Connor, Councillor O'Hanlon's sister, who had died recently. Councillor O'Hanlon thanked Councillors and staff for their support over the past days.

It was agreed that item 4 would be taken first to facilitate Mr. Gearoid Prendergast from the Mid West Regional Drugs and Alcohol Forum (MWRDAF) attend a meeting elsewhere. The Mayor welcomed Mr. Prendergast to the meeting.

Mr. Prendergast gave a powerpoint presentation which included:

- Membership and Terms of Reference of the MWRDAF.
- MWRDAF supported actions including family support, prevention and community grants.
- Overall strategic objectives of the National Drugs Strategy 2009 – 2016.
- The changing face of substance misuse and examples of substance misuse related issues.
- Details of the NACD Drug Prevalence Survey 2010 / 11.
- Emerging issues.

Members thanked Mr. Prendergast for his presentation and the following points were made by Members in relation to this item:

- The Gardai and CAB should be provided with more resources to tackle drug dealers and minimum sentencing for drug dealing should be introduced.
- Emphasis should be put on prevention through interaction with schools and community groups.
- Cannabis is a gateway drug and there is no national campaign to highlight the consequences of its use.
- The punishment model for drug users is not working, users need support rather than being put in jail where the problem worsens. Addiction should be treated as a health issue.
- Consideration should be given to requesting Mr. Prendergast to give a similar presentation to the Joint Policing Committee.

In response to issues raised by Members Mr. Prendergast clarified the following:

- There was insufficient justification to support the appointment of a Drug Liaison Midwife in Limerick. Broader womens' services would however be developed.
- The MWRDAF continues to work closely with the Gardai but the proceeds of CAB did not go back into the community and any help the Metropolitan District could give to address this issue would be appreciated.
- A change in approach and attitudes to substance misuse should be considered, including decriminalisation. Portugal, which had similar issues to Ireland, introduced a new approach which had brought about significant improvements.
- Drug related deaths in the Mid West had decreased and there was now medication that could assist in preventing overdose.
- Alcohol abuse was a highly complex issue and there was a need to target high risk groups.
- The issue of substance misuse was under the remit of a Junior Minister and was previously associated with a full Minister. In addition, no elected Council representative was on the MWRDAF to represent the Council as Councillor Quinlivan was there as a community representative.

1. Adoption of Minutes

Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick held on 20th July, 2015.

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

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

2. Community, Leisure and Emergency Services

Circulated,

- Limerick Local Economic and Community Plan Socio-Economic Statement and High Level Goals, Draft Report on Submissions and Observations received, dated August 2015.

- Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for Limerick City and County, Background Information and Draft Socio-Economic Statement, dated September 2015.
- Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report of the Limerick City and County Council Local Economic and Community Plan Draft Socio-Economic Statement 2015-2021 – Proposed Amendments, dated September 2015.
- Habitats Directive Assessment Screening Report of the Limerick City and County Council Local Economic and Community Plan Draft Socio-Economic Statement 2015-2021 – Proposed Amendments, dated September 2015.

Members noted the circulated reports and highlighted the potential of social enterprise to create jobs and revitalise communities and requested an opportunity to explore these issues further. The Executive Planner noted that there would be specific actions in relation to social enterprise under the plan and undertook to consult with the steering group in relation to the consultation requested.

3. Economic Development and Planning

Taking in Charge of Estates - Declaration of Roads to be Public Roads

Circulated, Report of the Director of Services, Economic Development and Planning dated 28th August, 2015.

Members welcomed the taking in charge of the estate as outlined in the report and sought information in relation to estates taken in charge in the Metropolitan Area, those waiting to be taken in charge and related information regarding release of bonds and any enforcement action taken.

Proposed by Councillor Leddin and seconded by Councillor Gilligan and resolved:

“That the following housing estate be taken in charge in accordance with Section 180 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2014 and Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993”

- Spring Grove, Mill Road, Corbally.

5. Economic Development and Planning

Pilot Urban Garden Project

Ms. Mary Hayes, Administrative Officer, Economic Development and Planning gave a powerpoint presentation to Members on the Pilot Urban Garden Project for the O’Connell Street / Cruises Street area of the city that included the following:

- The background to the project which focused on a lighter, quicker approach to creating attractive destinations and the benefits of same.
- The rationale for the pilot project and the key elements involved.
- Details of the consultation process undertaken, the launch and the ongoing evaluation that would take place.

Members thanked Ms. Hayes for her presentation and the following items were raised by Members during discussion:

- Concern was expressed with regard to the safety of people crossing O'Connell Street directly from Cruises Street. Views were expressed that a formal pedestrian crossing should be put in place and also that a barrier be erected to prevent crossing at this point.
- That the history of the area and in particular Cruises Hotel be used to animate Cruises Street and its adjacent lanes.
- That increased pedestrianisation of the city is needed and actions to encourage shops to remain open in the evenings should be explored.
- The views of the public should be sought in relation to this project along with the views of students, and those with expertise in this area, in the local third level institutions.
- The project should be expanded to other parts of the city.

In response to queries raised by Members, the Administrative Officer, Economic Development and Planning clarified the following:

- The crossing being used by pedestrians from the end of Cruises Street across to Penneys would be looked at in more detail.
- Consideration was being given to leaving more kiosks in place and this might assist in encouraging evening trade.
- The animation of Pery Square, the Keys and Nicholas Street was under review.
- The Council was not seeking any contribution from adjacent businesses on foot of the animation works.
- Consideration would be given to the use and quality control of live music, local bands and buskers.

6. Question submitted by Cmhlr. Séighin Ó Ceallaigh

I will ask at the next meeting when is Cluid Housing Association expected to complete works on the buildings adjacent to Colbert Station and when is it expected that people will be housed in this project?

REPLY: It is anticipated that, subject to legal title transfer and completion of competitive tender process, works should be complete and houses ready for occupation by Quarter 4, 2016.

7. Question submitted by Cmhlr. Séighin Ó Ceallaigh

I will ask at the next meeting what is the current situation with Rathbane Golf Course, and do the Council intend on promoting and funding the Golf Club for the foreseeable future?

REPLY: Rathbane Golf Course is an 18 hole municipal golf course situated

adjacent to Southill and Mount St. Oliver cemetery in Limerick. The course hosts Rathbane Golf Club, and also provides golfing opportunities to annual and pay-as-you-go clients, who are not members of Rathbane Golf Club.

In 2003 Limerick City Council entered into a contract for the operation and management of the course for a 5 year period with an option to extend for an additional 5 years. The latter option was exercised in 2008 and the contract continued until 2013.

Between 2013 and March 2015 the Council undertook two tendering processes under the open procurement procedure with a view to engaging an operator for the course. Neither tender engendered a large amount of tender submissions, and neither resulted in a suitable candidate being appointed to operate the facility, and as a result the incumbent operator has been retained on a month by month basis.

The Council has recently tendered for the operation and management of the course under the negotiated procurement procedure, which allows for an element of flexibility in negotiating the terms and conditions of any contract. It is anticipated that the negotiated procedure will generate a higher level of interest from operators than has previously been achieved.

There are 3 phases to the negotiated procedure: a) identification of suitable qualified tenderers; b) an invitation to tender to number of qualified tenderers; c) a negotiation process to agree terms and conditions of any contract. The deadline for receipt of pre-qualification questionnaires (Phase 1) is 18 September, 2015, with tender documents due to issue to qualified candidates thereafter.

A key requirement for any incoming operator will be to promote and market the Course and to increase membership and usage of the Course, thereby generating income to re-invest in the upkeep of the facility.

The Home and Community, Culture and Sport Directorate will seek an adequate operational budget for Rathbane Golf Course as part of the annual budgetary process for 2016 and in subsequent years. In addition, funding will be sought as part of the Council's Multi-Annual Capital Programme to undertake upgrade works to the course and clubhouse. Where possible, advantage will be taken of exchequer grant funding e.g. Sports Capital Grants to assist with upgrade works on the course.

8. Question submitted by Councillor Sean Lynch

I will ask at the next meeting if a permission/licence was granted by the Local Authority to remove, dispose of or store hazardous goods i.e. asbestos in the vicinity of the Dock Road, Limerick.

REPLY: No authorisations have been issued by Limerick City and County Council in this regard.

The relevant authorisations for the movement of hazardous waste can only be issued to the relevant authorised waste collectors by the National TFS Office (Trans Frontier Shipments). This is under the remit of Dublin City Council.

The EPA is the relevant authority for the issue of waste licences which would cover the storage of hazardous waste.

9. Question submitted by Councillor Jerry O’Dea

I will ask at the next meeting that the Council re-consider the creation of a one way traffic system at what is locally known as the Jail Boreen, linking Mulgrave Street and Roxborough Road, due to safety concerns expressed by residents.

REPLY: Roxborough Avenue Traffic Characteristics

Roxborough Avenue is a narrow residential road which links Roxborough Road (Regional Road R511) to Blackboy Road / Mulgrave Street (Regional Road R527).

The road is locally known as “Gaol Boreen”. Thirteen residential properties are located on the road with provision for on street parking which is unregulated. One commercial vehicle access to H.S.E. property at St. Joseph’s Hospital is also located on the road. The road has an average width of 5.0m and footpaths are available on one side of the road only.

Double yellow line parking prohibitions operate along almost the entirety of the road. These parking prohibitions are a statutory provision provided adjacent to Limerick Prison which fronts a significant part of the road. Very significant traffic congestion and disruption occurs along Roxborough Avenue and at its junctions with Roxborough Road and Mulgrave Street at peak periods.

One Way Proposal

The City & County Council have on a number of occasions proposed that Roxborough Avenue be converted into a one way street to operate in a Northbound direction from Roxborough Road to Mulgrave Street.

The purpose of this proposal is primary to relieve congestion along the roadway and at its junction with Roxborough Road and along Roxborough Road. However, the Council was unable to get the full support of residents to introduce this one way traffic proposal.

Against this background the City and County Council Traffic Department is of the view that consideration of this one way traffic proposal is again warranted at this time. The proposal would require a plebiscite of residents and property owners to be undertaken and consultation with the Gardai as the traffic authority. Where 80% of residents or property owners or operators agree to the change then the project could be implemented within a few days.

The members should note that introduction of this one way traffic scheme would require the provision of traffic calming along the road. No additional parking would be made available as the Limerick Prison statutory parking provisions would remain. The estimated cost of the provision of this project is €5,000.

10. Question submitted by Councillor Jerry O'Dea

I will ask at the next meeting for an update regarding the current and future plans for Rathbane Municipal Golf Course in light of the ongoing temporary maintenance situation that currently exists.

REPLY: Rathbane Golf Course is an 18 hole municipal golf course situated adjacent to Southill and Mount St. Oliver cemetery in Limerick. The course hosts Rathbane Golf Club, and also provides golfing opportunities to annual and pay-as-you-go clients, who are not members of Rathbane Golf Club.

In 2003 Limerick City Council entered into a contract for the operation and management of the course for a 5 year period with an option to extend for an additional 5 years. The latter option was exercised in 2008 and the contract continued until 2013.

Between 2013 and March 2015 the Council undertook two tendering processes under the open procurement procedure with a view to engaging an operator for the course. Neither tender engendered a large amount of tender submissions, and neither resulted in a suitable candidate being appointed to operate the facility, and as a result the incumbent operator has been retained on a month by month basis.

The Council has recently tendered for the operation and management of the course under the negotiated procurement procedure, which allows for an element of flexibility in negotiating the terms and conditions of any contract. It is anticipated that the negotiated procedure will generate a higher level of interest from operators than has previously been achieved.

There are 3 phases to the negotiated procedure: a) identification of suitable qualified tenderers; b) an invitation to tender to number of qualified tenderers; c) a negotiation process to agree terms and conditions of any contract. The deadline for receipt of pre-qualification questionnaires (Phase 1) is 18 September, 2015, with tender documents due to issue to qualified candidates thereafter.

A key requirement for any incoming operator will be to promote and market the Course and to increase membership and usage of the Course, thereby generating income to re-invest in the upkeep of the facility.

The Home and Community, Culture and Sport Directorate will seek an adequate operational budget for Rathbane Golf Course as part of the annual budgetary process for 2016 and in subsequent years. In addition, funding will be sought as part of the Council's Multi-Annual Capital Programme to undertake upgrade works to the course and clubhouse. Where possible, advantage will be taken of exchequer grant funding e.g. Sports Capital Grants to assist with upgrade works on the course.

At the request of Councillor Prendiville, it was agreed that items 17 and 18 would be taken next.

17. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cian Prendiville

I will move at the next meeting that Limerick Metropolitan District endorse the Doras Luimni 'Fair Work Standards' campaign, as a step towards making Limerick City a great place for worker rights.

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

In proposing the motion Councillor Prendiville noted that this campaign sought to provide information on the rights and entitlements of workers and entailed surveys of employers and employees.

The Meetings Administrator undertook to refer the motion to the Community, Leisure and Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee where a presentation on this topic could be arranged.

18. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cian Prendiville

I will move at the next meeting that Limerick Metropolitan District calls on the Government to take urgent action to provide the thousands of social and affordable houses needed for the homeless, those on housing waiting lists and those coming to Ireland to seek refuge from war and persecution in the Middle East and North Africa. We extend our solidarity and welcome to those refugees, and call on the Council to work with other interested groups locally to investigate what they can do to help provide support, sanctuary and security.

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

In proposing the motion Councillor Prendiville highlighted the plight of the refugees from the Middle East and North Africa and the need for response at national and local level.

The Meetings Administrator pointed out that the motion would be forwarded to the Government and read out the following reply on behalf of the Home and Community Directorate.

REPLY: I wish to acknowledge your Notice of Motion and advise Limerick City & County Council is working closely with all agencies with regard to our housing waiting list and will play its part when required by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service.

11. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Daniel Butler

I will move at the next meeting that Limerick City and County Council reduce the city centre prime parking times to 30 minutes or maximum of 45 minutes to promote turnover of spaces, to increase customer numbers and reduce abuse of spaces through long term occupancy.

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

In proposing the motion Councillor Butler highlighted the abuse of on street parking through long term occupancy and the need to encourage the use of long term off street parking.

Members expressed reservations in relation to the motion and made the following points during discussion of the motion;

- The motion should apply to only some spaces on certain streets.
- Extensive consultation with all involved should be undertaken before any changes are made.
- The present arrangement whereby car owners can pay for 30 minutes parking, through Park Magic, works well and more parking spaces are needed.
- Some car owners don't like to use multi storey car parks or find them too expensive. The Council should look at ways of encouraging people to stay on in town by having free parking in the mornings after the school drop off.
- Not all multi storey car parks are open in the evenings and discussions in relation to Christmas parking should commence now.
- Traffic Wardens have a common sense approach to parking and it would be unwise to make alterations at this time.

The Meetings Administrator informed Members that an extensive reply had been prepared in response to this motion and that he would circulate same after the meeting and refer the motion to the Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee.

For the benefit of Members the Meetings Administrator read out the following segment of the aforementioned reply:

REPLY: In response to the items raised in the Notices of Motion in relation to providing for either a maximum of 30 or 45 minutes parking on-street it should be noted that this is one of several different proposals in relation to parking that have been brought forward by members for consideration over the past year. The current Parking Bylaws approved by Council allow for a maximum stay of 2 hours on any street and there is a general acceptance of this 2 hour period from the business community and parking users. Any previous changes to how parking operates have always led to confusion among users and as a result a higher number of appeals to fixed penalty notices. As each of the proposals brought forward by members in relation to the operation of parking over the past year have all been different. Therefore any of the proposed changes to the way parking is operated in the city will have consequential effects. The traffic department do not at this time recommend any changes to the parking system as what is in place is well accepted and is working reasonably well for the majority of users and the business and residential communities. If the members believe that the current system of on street parking management needs reviewing then it is recommended that this issue should be an item for review and consideration by the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) on Transport where the current operation of the on street parking system can be reviewed and a new policy's and procedures developed if required.

As noted above the vast majority of car parking in the city centre is provided in off-street car parks and on-street car parking occupancy is running at close to 100%. There is not really an issue with getting people to use on-street parking. The bigger issue is that it is a limited resource. Private Car Parking short term charges are generally much higher than on-street and this also needs to be considered as part of any review of how parking operates.

The Members should also be aware that income from parking is used to run the traffic light system, provide new road markings and signs, and

provide school wardens as well as improvement and maintenance of city centre streets. Any loss of parking revenue by providing an alternative charging system on-street will result in a loss of revenue for these essential services and this revenue will have to be found from other sources.

12. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor John Gilligan

I will move at the next meeting that this Council set aside a budget and invite other like-minded people to set up a committee to celebrate the 325th Anniversary of the Signing of the Treaty of Limerick next year.

Councillor Gilligan informed the meeting that he had agreed to withdraw the motion on condition that it be forwarded to the 1916 Commemorative Committee for consideration.

13. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Maurice Quinlivan

I will move at the next meeting that the Council explore the possibility of obtaining and refurbishing the derelict flats commonly known as the “Newly Wed Flats” at the junction of Mary Street and Creagh Lane.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Quinlivan and seconded by Cmhr. Ó Ceallaigh.

The Director, Environment and Water noted that these houses were originally owned by the Dioceses and were now in Council ownership. He informed Members that the Housing Department were developing proposals to bring these houses back to active use as housing units. Costs were being assessed and a timeframe for the project would be available in the immediate future.

14. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Malachy McCreesh

I will move at the next meeting that this Council take immediate action to resolve the ongoing problems associated with student events taking place in licensed premises in the Milk Market area. Residents have to endure the noise from taxis and the associated assembly of students in the streets from approximately 10:30 pm until 3:30 am each and every Tuesday and Thursday night during the college term September to June. The unauthorised taxi activity taking place in Little Gerard Griffin Street continues to cause major problems for residents.

The motion was proposed by Councillor McCreesh and seconded by Cmhr. Ó Ceallaigh.

In proposing the motion Councillor McCreesh highlighted the difficulties being experienced by the many residents in this area and noted that residents were now calling for their properties to be sound proofed. He pointed out that the Taxi Regulator had taken steps to resolve this issue and these had been effective for a period.

Members supported the motion and made the following observations during discussion on the motion;

- The nite clubs in the area should be required to close at 2.00 p.m.

- The Council owned car park at this location should be secured at night.
- Traffic should be blocked from key streets and the flow of pedestrians and traffic should be redirected.
- The Gardai should be engaged with in an effort to resolve this issue.
- The possibility of using byelaws to alleviate the problem should be examined along with a review of any licences issued to the premises in question.

The Meetings Administrator undertook to bring the issues raised to the attention of the Taxi Regulator and the Gardai and suggested that the matter also be brought to the attention of the Joint Policing Committee.

15. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Michael Sheahan and Marian Hurley

I will move at the next meeting that the Street Ambassador Programme be reintroduced in 2016.

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

Councillor Hurley noted the possibility of availing of the services of Volunteer Limerick as an interim measure and the need to engage with Failte Ireland and Limerick Marketing in this regard.

REPLY: The Limerick Street Ambassadors programme was run by the Limerick Communications Office (formerly Coordination Office) over the last ten years or so, until the Limerick Communications office ceased to exist in 2013. The service was funded by a combination of funds from the (then) Limerick City Council, Limerick County Council and Shannon Development.

Limerick Marketing ran the programme on a one off basis in 2014 given the City of Culture year. For resource issues the programme wasn't run in 2015 but the restoration of the Limerick Street Ambassadors programme is under review for future years, as part of the current review of marketing and festivals & events being undertaken under the change process.

16. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Sean Lynch

I will move at the next meeting that Limerick City and County Council examine the possibility of developing the River Shannon area between the Docklands and Thomond Bridge as a regular space for water sports, recreation, etc. and that a dedicated sub-committee comprised of the relevant water bodies, users, officials and Councillors should be set up to examine the proposed project.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Lynch and seconded by Councillor Sheahan.

In proposing the motion Councillor Lynch emphasised the potential of the river to enhance business and tourism and the need to develop this potential in a strategic fashion. He stressed the need to celebrate and cherish the river and suggested that the use of extra lighting at night to ensure that the river flowed in light through the city could be used as a positive theme in this regard.

Members supported the motion and the following points were made by Members during discussion of this motion;

- Efforts should be made to affirm the positive aspects of the river. Fishing areas should be considered and University of Limerick should be contacted to establish if they could move some of their water activity resources into the city. Waterways Ireland should be consulted in relation to any planned activities on the river.
- The river should be made a focal point of the city and any walkways adjacent to the river should be developed to their full potential.
- Proposals in relation to the membership of the proposed group should be developed and brought back to the Members and it was important that Councillors be represented on any such committee.
- An annual boat race between Limerick Institute of Technology and University of Limerick should be organised.

REPLY: The Council will liaise with Waterways Ireland and other appropriate bodies regarding the establishment of a dedicated sub committee to examine the possibility of developing The Docklands and Thomond Bridge as a space for water sports.

The terms of reference and the representative bodies to be part of this working group will be considered following consultation with Waterways Ireland, the navigation authority for the River Shannon.

In response to a query, the Senior Engineer noted that a section of the riverwalk adjacent to the Condell Road was still closed off as it was in a dangerous condition and that any works in the immediate future would be of a temporary nature until adequate funding was sourced. He highlighted that, on foot of studies carried out by the OPW, embankments around the city may need to be raised and he would take steps to organise a briefing for the Members from the OPW in this regard.

19. Correspondence

The Meetings Administrator noted that correspondence had been received from Gas Networks Ireland on behalf of the Commission for Energy Regulation led Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week Industry Group in relation to Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed: _____
MAYOR

Dated: _____