

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MERCHANT'S QUAY, LIMERICK, ON MONDAY, 16TH MAY, 2016, AT 9.45 A.M.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director, Physical Development (Mr. K. Lehane), Meetings Administrator (Mr. C. O'Connor), Operations Manager, Central Services & North Division (Mr. V. Murray), Senior Executive Officer (Mr. P. Foley), Senior Executive Architect (Mr. S. Hanrahan), Administrative Officer (Mr. J. Clune), Senior Executive Planner (Ms. M. Woods), Senior Staff Officer (Ms. M. Kiely), Assistant Staff Officer (Mr. J. Cregan), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services (Mr. T. O'Callaghan).

At the outset Members congratulated former Councillor Maria Byrne on her election to the Seanad. Members noted the commitment Senator Byrne had shown to her constituents, to the Council and to the various committees she had served on and wished her well in her new role. Members also extended congratulations to Senator Kieran O'Donnell and Senator Paul Gavan on their election to the Seanad.

Members noted that despite their previous requests to have planning included on the agenda for the monthly District Meetings this had not taken place and a motion that planning be included on the agenda each month was proposed by Councillor Leddin and seconded by Councillor Daly. Members noted that the public expected Members to have knowledge of planning activity and for Members to be in a position to raise concerns being expressed by the public in relation to same. Members also noted the benefits of receiving planning updates on key projects in the District.

The Meetings Administrator pointed out that there would be legal issues in relation to discussing individual planning applications at District Meetings and undertook to take appropriate advice and revert back to the Members. Members also raised the matter of national issues being discussed at District Meetings when preference should be given to local issues.

The Meetings Administrator suggested that the various groupings in the chamber nominate a Member to discuss the agenda for the monthly District Meetings and the issues that had been raised by Members in relation to same.

Members expressed concern at the manner in which major items were presented to the media in advance of being brought to the attention of the Councillors. As a result, Members noted they were unable to respond satisfactorily to media queries and called on the Chief Executive to engage with Councillors on major issues, before they were presented to the media.

1. Adoption of Minutes

Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick held on 18th April, 2016.

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

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

2. Disposal of Land

Circulated, Report of the Director of Service Operations dated 11th May, 2016 setting out proposals to dispose of 15.98 acres of land at Mungret College, Co. Limerick to the Trustees of Mungret St. Pauls GAA Club for the proposed consideration of €191,760 and noting that the proposed disposal of land would be included on the agenda for the May Meeting of the full Council.

Members welcomed the proposed disposal as set out in the circulated report and noted that this would facilitate the GAA Club to further develop their sporting facilities to the benefit of their members, the local community and the region. Members acknowledged the existing contribution the club made to the locality and the future potential of the club through co-operation and engagement with schools and other clubs in the area.

Members noted discussions with Dooneen Athletic Club who were proposing to build a running track on the Mungret site and that the area of land under discussion was not large enough to develop a full track. Members noted that Dooneen Athletic Club were willing to collaborate with other clubs, schools and community games towards the development of shared facilities and requested that the Council assist in this regard.

The Senior Executive Officer, Property informed the Meeting that the transfer of lands to facilitate the construction of the two new primary schools at Mungret had been finalised and that a Section 183 Notice would be brought to the May Meeting of the Council seeking approval for the proposed sale. Members welcomed the proposed disposal as outlined by the Senior Executive Officer, Property and it was agreed, on the proposal of Councillor Collins and seconded by Councillor Leddin, that this disposal should proceed to full Council.

3. Support Services Directorate

Annual Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick

It was agreed that the Annual Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick would take place on Friday, 24th June at 5pm.

4. Service Operations Directorate

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

Circulated, Report of the Director of Services, Planning and Environmental Services dated 27th April, 2016 seeking District approval to the taking in charge of estates as listed below :

- **Ballycummin Village, Raheen**
- **Bruach na Sionna, Castleconnell**
- **Coolbane Meadows, Castleconnell**

Councillor Hourigan noted that there were many estates in the District not yet taken over and proposed that a list of such estates in the District be provided to Members and should include a timeframe for take over and any impediments to the taking over of individual estates. This was seconded by Councillor Gilligan.

Proposed by Councillor Leddin;
 Seconded by Councillor Secas;
 And Resolved:

“That the estates set out below be taken in charge in accordance with Section 180 of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2015 and Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993”

- **Ballycummin Village, Raheen**
- **Bruach na Sionna, Castleconnell**
- **Coolbane Meadows, Castleconnell**

5. Economic Development Directorate

Deferral of notices to make a new Local Area Plan for the Southern Environs and extend the existing plan

Circulated, Report of the Director of Service, Economic Development and Planning dated 5th May, 2016 enclosing a copy of the Chief Executive’s Report dated 5th May, 2016 in which the Chief Executive recommended that the Southern Environs Local Area Plan 2011 – 2017 be extended by a further 5 years.

Members noted that the proposed new Limerick to Foynes Road was not mentioned in the plan. The Senior Executive Planner informed the Meeting that she had raised this issue with the Mid West Road Design Office who confirmed that the line of the new road did not encroach on the area covered by the plan.

Members noted the benefits of developing a protected cycleway, via the Baggott Estate, from Limerick to Mungret and sought an update on the disused rail line to the Cement Factory in Mungret and noted its potential to be used for light rail or as a cycleway. The Senior Executive Planner noted that a cycle strategy was in place for the city and that there were no immediate plans to develop this rail line. Members requested that the Council initiate discussions with Iarnród Éireann in relation to the future use of this line and the Senior Executive Planner undertook to revert to the Members in relation to same.

In response to queries the Operations Manager, Central Services & North Division noted that there was no funding available for the development of Park and Ride facilities and Members stressed the importance of having plans in place and sites identified, should funding become available in this regard.

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

"That, having considered the Chief Executive's Report dated 5th May 2016, in accordance with Section 19 (1)(d) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) approval is hereby given to defer the sending of a Notice under Section 20(3)(a)(i) and defer publishing a Notice under Section 20(3)(a)(ii) for the Southern Environs Local Area Plan 2011-2017 for a further period of 5 years".

6. Question submitted by Councillor Joe Leddin

I will ask at the next Meeting that the Council clarify the correct boundary lines that designate the areas named as Ballysimon, Roxborough and Ballinacurra. I have received a number of queries from residents and local businesses who are querying the fact that Council maps are practically stating that the entire South side of the City is called Roxborough.

REPLY: Ballysimon, Ballysimon Commons, Ballysimon (Dickson), Ballysimon (Staunton), Ballinacurra (Bowman), Ballinacurra (Hart), Ballinacurra (Weston) and Roxborough are all townlands adjacent to the city. Further details in relation to the boundaries of each of these townlands is available at www.townlands.ie

The Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan (LRFIP) references 'Roxborough Road' and 'Roxboro roundabout' in its objectives and not Roxboro as an area/townland. Any Council maps that may be giving rise to confusion in relation to the naming of locations in the south side of the city should be brought to our attention and we will review same.

It may be that the location of some premises adjacent to the Roxborough Road and the Ballysimon Road, both of which pass through a range of townlands, is giving rise to confusion.

It should be noted that Eircode uses 'Roxboro' in its address for the Maldron Hotel. Eircode's data sources are from the OSI and An Post Geodirectory in addition to the Placenames Branch (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht). It is a matter for the above agencies to rectify any error that may exist in their databases in relation to 'Roxboro' and south side Limerick City addresses.

7. Question submitted by Councillor Joe Leddin

I will ask at the next Meeting for an update on the lands formerly owned by Braddish & Co. located in Ballykeefe and whether the legal transfer of ownership has been completed and if not what is the expected timeframe for concluding this matter.

REPLY: Discussions are continuing to advance with regard to these lands at Ballykeefe

owned by Braddish and Co.

The Council is taking a proactive position in relation to regularising the position and securing the optimum outcome for the local authority.

It is intended to bring the engagements to a conclusion during the coming months.

8. Question submitted by Councillor Cian Prendiville

I will ask at the next Meeting, in relation to the old Limerick City Council, from the launch of the scheme in 2011 to the merger of the Councils in 2014, how many people began JobBridge internships for that Council and how many went on to secure full time jobs with the Council afterwards?

REPLY: 44 No. participants commenced Jobbridge Internships with Limerick City Council from the launch of the scheme in 2011 to the merger of the Councils on 1st June 2014.

2 No. participants went on to secure full time jobs with the Council afterwards.

9. Question submitted by Councillor Cian Prendiville

I will ask at the next Meeting what plans the Council has to revive Nicholas Street and develop it as an historic and cultural centre of Limerick?

REPLY: Limerick City & County Council is involved in a series of initiatives in the Nicholas Street area with the ultimate aim to revitalise the area from a residential, commercial, tourist and cultural point of view. These initiatives include:

- Utilising existing Council property for commercial and community use e.g. the development of a community park in partnership with the Civic Trust; making two properties available for the development of a craft hub, etc.
- Working with the Nicholas Traders on issues of mutual interest
- Working with Shannon Heritage to improve the tourism offering around King Johns Castle e.g. signage, upgrading of existing car park, concerts, etc.
- In discussions to acquire the Convent site
- Facilitating investment in commercial activities - currently there are three live projects
- Love Your Street scheme to get underway in the summer (agreement with traders)
- Living Cities initiative extended to Nicholas Street
- Purple Flag application to incorporate Nicholas Street

10. Question submitted by Councillor Paul Keller

I will ask at the next Meeting how many houses in the Metropolitan District have been brought into Council ownership through Mortgage to Rent Schemes for those in mortgage difficulties since the Council merger in 2014?

REPLY: I wish to advise the Approved Housing Bodies have 4 properties under the Mortgage to Rent Scheme which were privately owned through financial institutions and are currently processing additional applications.

Limerick City and County Council currently have no properties in local authority ownership under the Mortgage to Rent Scheme.

11. Question submitted by Cmhrl. Séighin Ó Ceallaigh

I will ask at the next Meeting how many social houses are planned to be built in the Metropolitan Area of Limerick by the end of 2016 and separately, by the end of 2017?

REPLY: The number of new-build social housing units scheduled to be completed in the Metropolitan Area by Limerick City and County Council in 2016 and 2017 is 12 units (Cliona Park Phase 2 and Cliona Park Gap site) and 143 units (Lord Edward Street, Sheep Street / Athlunkard Street, Churchfield Site Southill Phase 1, Clare Street and Joseph Street) respectively. The above figures exclude housing units delivered under the major refurbishment programme (8-10 Gaol Lane, Hassett's Villas and Hyde Road Flats).

The number of new-build units to be delivered via Part V is not estimated as this overall number is dependent on the level of activity in the private construction sector.

There are 3 main mechanisms to the delivery of social housing units – 1) Construction, 2) Acquisitions and 3) Leasing.

NOTICES OF MOTION

12. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor John Gilligan

I will move at the next Meeting that this Council move the statue of Patrick Sarsfield from its present position to a more prominent location in St. Johns Square.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Gilligan and seconded by Councillor Costelloe.

In proposing the motion Councillor Gilligan noted that this statue had been located on its current site 125 years ago on land allocated by the Bishop of Limerick as a temporary site and was effectively hidden from the view of the general public. He noted that Patrick Sarsfield had been headquartered in the guard house of St. John's Hospital and would be best remembered in St. John's Square, with the existing fountain moved to the inner square.

Members supporting the motion noted that Patrick Sarsfield was an important part of our history and his statue should be in a prominent public location accessible by the general public and by tourists.

Members opposing the motion suggested that the people in the area should be consulted on whether the statue should be moved or not and noted that the current location of the statue offered protection from vandalism. A view was also expressed that the railings around the statue at its current location be recessed to allow access at all hours of the day.

Following discussion it was proposed by Councillor O'Hanlon, seconded by Cmhrl. Ó Ceallaigh that the 1916 Centenary Committee should also fill the role of a Monuments Committee and that Councillor Gilligan should be added as a member of this committee. The Meetings Administrator undertook to revert to the Members at the next Meeting with the names of the members of this committee. He pointed out however that the 1916 Centenary Committee had a county wide brief and was set up for a specific purpose. In this regard it may be necessary for the Metropolitan Committee to instead establish a Special Committee to look at the issue of statues and monuments etc in its area.

13. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Joe Leddin

I will move at the next Meeting that the Council enter into negotiations with NAMA with a view to providing a temporary car park on the former John Moloney garage site opposite Punches so as to facilitate a park & ride service and remove another derelict site from the city landscape.

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

In proposing the motion Councillor Leddin noted that, while planning permission for commercial development had been granted on this site a number of years previously, there were a number of derelict buildings on the site that should be removed to facilitate the use of the site as a temporary car park. In addition, Councillor Leddin pointed out that St. Pauls Primary School planned to move temporarily to the adjacent Scoil Carmel to facilitate building works and the availability of a temporary car park as suggested would assist in this regard.

Members supported the motion and noted that parking was already an issue in the locality with the former Punch's Hotel being used for student accommodation and Mary Immaculate College located nearby and requested that the start time for St. Pauls Primary, when it relocates, should be staggered with other schools nearby.

The Director pointed out that Punches Cross was already a busy location and that park and ride facilities would be better located further out from the City Centre. He undertook however to review the matter based on the proposed temporary relocation of St. Pauls Primary School.

The Operations Manager undertook to work with St. Pauls Primary School and also to discuss the future use of the site under discussion with the Economic Development Directorate and revert to the Members at the next Operational Briefings.

14. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Joe Leddin

I will move at the next Meeting that approved housing bodies be invited to present their suggestions and plans to the Elected Members of the District as to how we can fast track the development of 23 sites identified as suitable for housing and in Council ownership.

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

In proposing the motion Councillor Leddin noted the slow lead in time to developing sites for housing and pointed out that a number of the sites in question may be eligible for the fast track process. In seconding the motion Councillor McCreesh noted that the motion was appropriate

given the numbers on the housing list and the relatively small number of houses to be delivered by the Council by the end of 2017.

REPLY: The policy document 'Assessment for Selecting Sites for Social Housing' (ASH) identified 23 sites in Limerick City within the ownership of Limerick City and County Council which passed the Stage A 'Strategic Constraints' filter.

Limerick City and County Council are currently engaging with the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) regarding the potential involvement of Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) with appropriate capacity to advance the delivery of social housing. When specific proposals are developed, engagement with the elected members will take place.

In response to queries from the Members the Senior Executive Architect clarified the following :

- There were approximately 500 Approved Housing Bodies (AHB) in the state. The Council was looking at streamlining the housing delivery process and working with AHBs that could deliver housing units.
- The devolved process involved a single stage approval process compared to four stages in the normal process. Costings for the single stage process had to be robust as any subsequent cost increases would have to be carried by the Council. Because of the potential for unforeseen costs in infill projects there was a reluctance to use the single stage process.
- Tenders for the Hyde Road redevelopment were expected back in the immediate future and Members would be kept updated in relation to same.
- There were 736 units currently in the process, in conjunction with AHBs.
- In relation to Kilmurry Court, site clearance was underway. It was envisioned that this development would facilitate people to downsize to more suitable accommodation, freeing up bigger houses and also provide access to the adjacent graveyard.
- The proposed development at Doonbeg, Rhebogue had not gone to planning.

Members sought more regular updates on progress in delivering social housing. The Senior Executive Architect noted that a recent presentation to the Home and Social Strategic Policy Committee in this regard could be circulated to District Members.

15. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cian Prendiville

I will move at the next Meeting that Limerick Metropolitan District write to the EPA asking for them to resume monitoring air quality in Limerick City.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Prendiville and seconded by Cmhlr. Ó Ceallaigh.

In proposing the motion Councillor Prendiville noted that air monitoring was in place in Limerick City up to 2011 and would be of benefit now to monitor the benefits of Smarter Travel initiatives and in light of the potential for new fuels to be used at the Cement Factory, Mungret.

REPLY: The EPA divides the county into four zones (A, B, C & D) for the purposes of air quality monitoring. Zones A & B relate to Dublin and Cork respectively and both of these areas have permanent air quality monitoring stations. Limerick is a Zone

C (towns with populations greater than 15,000). Zone D relates to smaller towns and rural areas.

Present EPA policy is to use mobile assessment units in Zones C & D which are left in place for approximately 12 months. Limerick was last assessed by this unit in 2000. At the time air quality was good for all parameters with the exception of PM10, which was above the upper threshold value.

There was a permanent station monitoring for NOx and Ozone at the Park Road Depot. However this was removed in 2011 because of access difficulties. Currently the EPA are developing a National Ambient Air Monitoring Programme. This will allow for doubling of the monitoring network and is likely to include re-establishing a monitoring station in Limerick. However, it is likely to be 2017 to 2018 before this is in place.

Consideration can also be given to the installations of a number of real time monitoring stations for particulates in the City. All these matters can be examined further.

Members supported the motion and indicated that, with the ban on smokey coal in the city, air quality had apparently improved and stressed that it was important to monitor air quality and be aware of the facts in relation to same.

16. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cian Prendiville

I will move at the next Meeting that, given the particularly high levels of suicide and mental health difficulties in the Metropolitan District, we write to the incoming Minister for Health and Minister for Finance urging them to reverse plans to take €12m from the mental health services budget.

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

In proposing the motion Councillor Prendiville noted that the recent Darkness into Light marches had shown the level of public concern and support for this issue. He stressed the need for increased Government spending in this area and for discussions to commence on interventions that needed to be provided.

Members supported the motion and made the following points during discussions on same :

- Increased support should be given to programmes that improve mental health and to the voluntary organisations that work in the area of suicide prevention.
- Many homeless people were in need of support for mental health issues.
- Many young people leaving the education system were facing mental health issues with increased stress due to the challenges of securing employment and accommodation.
- A programme should be put in place in primary schools using role models to convey the message that “it’s okay not to feel okay” and the Minister for Education should be written to in this regard.

On the proposal of Cmhlr. Ó Ceallaigh, seconded by Councillor Sheahan, it was agreed that Standing Orders would be suspended to allow for the completion of the agenda.

17. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Paul Keller

I will move at the next Meeting that, given the importance of transparency to so many people in the Metropolitan District, this District calls on the Government to introduce legislation to require all debt write down's and write off's by NAMA be approved in the Dail.

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

In proposing the motion Councillor Keller noted issues raised in the media regarding low cost sales and lack of transparency by NAMA and indicated that there was an increased public perception that NAMA had carried out transactions that were not in the best interest of the tax payer.

18. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Daniel Butler

I will move at the next Meeting that the Council appoint a dedicated European Officer whose function it would be to identify programmes that could be authorised or monies drawn down for Council activities.

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

In proposing the motion Councillor Butler noted the potential of Europe as a source of broad based funding and the need for specialised skills and expertise to tap into same. He noted the importance of this role as Limerick competed as a European city to attract high skilled labour and companies.

REPLY: The Economic Development Directorate has responsibility for European Projects and there is an established expertise within the directorate for EU projects. To date the team has managed 3 projects to conclusion that were transferred from the Mid-West Regional Authority.

The team

- was successful in securing €4.2 million in ERDF funding to improve the public realm on O'Connell Street
- is participating in an URBACT network that will investigate the potential of developing the digital economy to support economic development
- has prepared and submitted an application under the Urban Innovative Actions initiative (€5mil)
- is preparing an application for funding to support "smart aging"

It is anticipated that in the course of 2016 that a further 2 applications will be made for funding.

Members noted that, while the staff that had transferred from the Mid West Regional Authority had expertise in this area, they also had other duties to carry out. They noted the potential of Europe as a source of funding and that the Council was not making the most of this opportunity. Members requested that the Economic Development Directorate attend at a future Meeting to discuss existing projects and proposals going forward in this regard.

19. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor John Costelloe

I will move at the next Meeting that the Council consider the purchase of vacant houses at St. Ann's Court (off Bishops Street), King's Island, currently owned by Saint Vincent DePaul (SVP) and that the amount of €1,984,600 allocated to Shelbourne Square, North Circular Road be reallocated to facilitate this purchase.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Costelloe and seconded by Councillor Gilligan.

REPLY: Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) are currently in discussions with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government regarding a replacement project for the Shelbourne Square, North Circular Road project. This replacement project will require a similar level of funding to that connected to the Shelbourne Square scheme.

St. Ann's Court is not within the ownership of LCCC. LCCC will engage with the owners with a view to establishing their future intentions for this site.

Members noted that an undertaking had not been given to purchase these houses and the Meetings Administrator undertook to clarify the Council's intentions in relation to St. Anne's Court and revert to the Members.

20. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Malachy McCreesh

I will move at the next Meeting that this District seeks clarification from Planning and Environmental Services as to what public consultation process will be included in the decision regarding the revised planning application lodged by Irish Cement seeking permission to gradually replace imported fossil fuels at its Castlemungret factory.

In proposing the motion Councillor McCreesh noted that people living near the Cement Factory were seeking an independent assessment of Irish Cement's plans for the plant and details of what controls would be in place in relation to any accidental discharges from the plant.

Members supported the motion and noted that the proposed development included both a planning application and a licence application to the EPA and that local residents were anxious to establish how they could participate in both processes and at what level decisions would be made in relation to these applications.

Members noted that this issue had been raised at a recent Meeting of the full Council where Members had sought a briefing from Management on the role of the Members and the public in these processes.

REPLY: The planning application by Irish Cement was lodged with Limerick City and County Council on the 27th April 2016. Site notices were erected at the site and a newspaper advert was placed in the Irish Independent newspaper. Submissions from the general public can be received by the planning authority for a 5 week period up until the 31st May 2016. The planning application is due for decision on the 21st June 2016. The planning file can be viewed on Limerick City and County Council website or at the front desk in Planning and Environmental Services Department in County Hall, Dooradoyle.

The Director, Physical Development undertook to address the information request made by the Members.

21. Correspondence

Correspondence was noted.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed: _____
MAYOR

Dated: _____