

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MERCHANT'S QUAY, LIMERICK, ON MONDAY, 20TH APRIL, 2015, AT 9.45 A.M.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor Michael Sheahan, Mayor

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive (Mr. C. Murray), Meetings Administrator (Mr. E. Griffin), Director, Community, Leisure and Emergency Services (Ms. J. Cotter Coughlan), Head of Finance (Mr. T. Gilligan), Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services (Mr. C. O'Connor), Senior Executive Officer, Home and Social Development (Ms. P. Liddy), Senior Social Worker (Mr. S. O'Connor), Senior Engineer (Mr. V. Murray), Administrative Officer, Home and Social Development (Ms. A. Duke), Administrative Officer, Community (Mr. D. McGuigan), Administrative Officer, Economic Development and Planning (Mr. J. Clune), Senior Executive Engineer (Mr. F. Keyes), Assistant Staff Officer, Economic Development and Planning (Mr. J. Cregan), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services (Mr. T. O'Callaghan).

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

With the Mayors permission, sympathy was extended to the following on their recent bereavements :

Noreen Ryan on the death of her husband Michael Ryan, former Fianna Fail Councillor who had served on Limerick City Council.

Phyllis McCarthy on the death of her husband Jim McCarthy.

1. Adoption of Minutes

Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick held on 16th March, 2015.

Proposed by Councillor Hourigan
Seconded by Councillor Byrne
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, Travel and Transportation dated 30th March, 2015 in relation to the disposal of land at Dromroe House, Plassey Park Road, Castletroy, Co. Limerick and Report of the Director, Economic Development and Planning dated 9th April, 2015 in relation to proposed disposal of land at Bunlicky, Dock Road, Limerick and proposed lease of land at Southill House, Roxboro Road, Limerick.

Members noted the proposals to dispose of land as set out in the above reports and the Administrative Officer, Planning clarified that the sale of 4.37 hectares at Bunlicky, Dock Road was to Valcroft Limited, who had submitted the highest bid for the property, subsequent to the sale being advertised.

3. Economic Development and Planning

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

Circulated, Report of the Director, Economic Development and Planning dated 30th March, 2015.

Members welcomed the taking in charge of the estates outlined in the report and the Senior Engineer clarified the extent of green areas to be taken in charge in Dromroe.

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

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

- Dromroe, Rhebogue
- Oakwood, Old Singland Road.

4. Travel and Transportation

Notice of Intention to advertise Part VIII for Parnell Street, Wickham Street and Davis Street Urban Realm and Street Improvement Works

Circulated, Report of the Director, Travel and Transportation dated 14th April, 2015.

Members welcomed the proposed development as a positive addition for the city that would improve the first impressions of the city for those arriving at Colbert Station. Members expressed the following views in relation to the proposed development.

- That traders have concerns at the loss of parking on Davis Street and Parnell Street and that the routing of the cycle lane down Mallow Street should be considered as an alternative to the existing proposal.
- That every effort be made to ensure the continuity of the affected businesses during construction and a compromise be reached with regard to short term parking.
- While acknowledging the concerns of the traders, these must be balanced against the needs of the city.
- It was hoped that this development would proceed in parallel with the redevelopment of Colbert Station and Hyde Road Flats and in this regard Cluid should be invited to

attend a District Meeting to discuss same.

- That access to the adjacent Jackman Park be reviewed as part of the development.
- That works be carried out at Baker Place to repair damage that has taken place there and bring it back to its previous standard.
- That any proposed changes to the design of the project be brought to the attention of the Members.

In response to queries from Members, the Senior Engineer pointed out that the proposed works would be advertised for three weeks, with six weeks allowed for feedback. The project team would continue to meet with residents and traders and take on board their concerns. He noted that Irish Rail were anticipated to commence their works at Colbert Station within the following two months.

In relation to the Bike Scheme, the Senior Engineer informed the Members that usage was continuously monitored and ahead of expectations. Twenty three stands were in place, with the stand planned for Colbert Station held back in anticipation of the works to take place there.

Councillor Maria Byrne took the chair at this point of the meeting.

5. Finance

(a) General Municipal Allocation

Circulated, Report of the Director, Corporate Services, Human Resources and Change Management dated 15th April, 2015 setting out proposals for expenditure.

Members acknowledged the positive discussions that had taken place at the Area Forums in relation to traffic management allocations and special projects but expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of consultation and discretion in relation to expenditure detailed under D05 Tourism Development and Promotion. Members expressed concern that the amount of €30,000 allocated under “Assistance for Maintenance of Open Spaces” would be inadequate and leave the affected communities with no option but to fundraise in order to bridge the gap between the amount of the grant and the actual cost of grass cutting. Members welcomed the opportunity to allocate funding to special projects at St. Munchin’s Community Centre, Garryowen Green and the Black Bridge in Plassey and it was suggested that both the University of Limerick and Clare County Council should contribute towards the Black Bridge Project.

In response to queries raised by Members, the Head of Finance clarified the following:

- In relation to marketing and branding it was important to make every effort to attract businesses and tourists to Limerick and enhance its profile. The Council was working with other agencies in this regard.
- It was not anticipated that any substantial funding would be made available to Local Authorities arising from the sale of the former Anglo Irish Bank.
- The Development Fund could not be used for maintenance works such as grass cutting and the amount allocated to grass cutting could be looked at again in 2016.
- Salting of roads was carried out because of the health and safety issues that arose and these issues did not arise in relation to grass cutting.
- The GMA had already been agreed by the Members in October 2014 and included in the budget for 2015.

Members agreed, on the proposal of Councillor Collins and seconded by Councillor O'Hanlon, to adjourn the meeting for five minutes.

On resumption of the meeting the Meetings Administrator clarified that a vote on this item was not required as the District had already approved the GMA in October 2014. He pointed out that the process would be reviewed for 2016, in conjunction with the party leaders.

Members expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of discretion in relation to the expenditure of elements of the GMA and it was agreed, on the proposal of Councillor Leddin, seconded by Councillor Hurley, that Limerick Marketing come to a future meeting of the District to present their proposals and plans in relation to venue branding and special events.

(b) Schedule of Works for the Metropolitan District of Limerick

Circulated, Report from the Director, Corporate Services, Human Resources and Change Management dated 15th April, 2015, setting out the draft Schedule of Municipal District Works for 2015.

Proposed by Councillor Leddin
Seconded by Councillor Butler
And Resolved;

“That the draft Schedule of Works for the Metropolitan District of Limerick 2015, as circulated, be adopted”.

6. Community

The Senior Social Worker (Home and Social Development) gave a presentation on the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) that included the following :

- The objectives set out in “Putting People First (Action Programme for Local Government)” October 2012 with regard to the alignment of local government and local development to bring about greater area-based collaboration for the range of publicly funded local and community development programmes.
- The establishment of LCDCs as committees of the local authority under Part 6 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014.
- The guiding principles, key provisions, responsibilities, members and current funding programmes of the LCDC.
- The development of a six year local economic and community plan (LECP) and the work to date of the LCDC.
- The role, functions, structure and work to date of the Public Participation Network.

Councillor Butler informed the meeting that he was a member of the LCDC which was working to identify and address issues facing communities and to ensure a balance between economic and social development. The committee was meeting monthly and informing itself on issues relating to drugs, mental health, youth and unemployment, amongst others.

Members raised the issue of private housing estates compared to council estates and the contribution Part 5 agreements had made to bridge the gap between the two types of

estates. It was noted that the 20% allocation under Part 5 had been reduced to 10% and a view was expressed that this was a regressive step.

In relation to access to schools it was noted that Minister Jan O'Sullivan had allocated a maximum of 10% of spaces to the children of past pupils and this was welcomed.

In response to queries raised by Members, the Senior Social Worker clarified the following :

- In relation to the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), following a procurement process, contracts for the operation of this programme were awarded to PAUL Partnership, Ballyhoura Development Limited and West Limerick Resources.
- It was anticipated that the PPN Secretariat would be in place within a week and the steps to fill the remaining places on the Strategic Policy Committees could then commence.
- The LCDC was obliged to submit an annual report to the full Council and would use this to keep the Members informed of progress.
- With regard to the Local Economic and Community Plan, the community element of the plan would be prepared by the LCDC and the economic element by the Economic Development SPC. The Advisory Steering Group would oversee the development of both strands of the plan.

7. Home and Social Development

The Administrative Officer (Home and Social Development) gave an update to the Members that included the following :

- Details of the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) including qualification requirements, benefits to the tenant and the landlord, numbers involved in the scheme and associated cost, account movements in 2014 and targets and challenges for 2015.
- The background and objectives of leasing, how property owners can become involved, a comparison of RAS and leasing and details of property leased.
- The various types of Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs), the range of AHBs operating in Limerick and how the system operates.

Members thanked the Administrative Officer (Home and Social Development) for her presentation and made the following points in response to same :

- That the money being paid in rent to private landlords would be better spent on the provision of social housing.
- That tenants in receipt of state assistance towards the renting of private accommodation do not have security of tenure and landlords are using the supposed sale of their property as a way of moving to private tenants.
- There were up to six houses in the Moyross area, under the control of Respond, that were boarded up. There was a large demand for housing in this area and Respond should be requested to brief the Metropolitan District Members as to their proposals for these houses.
- That rent caps are set too low and people are having difficulty sourcing affordable private rented accommodation.

- That some housing applicants are seeking to be housed in particular areas only and this requirement should be challenged.
- HAP will prove successful in that it does not discourage tenants taking up employment.
- There are too many Approved Housing Bodies, leading to fragmentation in this area.
- That companies, acting as agents for landlords, are not passing on issues raised by tenants.

On the proposal of Councillor O'Dea and seconded by Councillor Butler it was agreed that standing orders be suspended to allow for the completion of the agenda.

In response to queries raised by Members the Administrative Officer (Home and Social Development) clarified the following :

- The Council will make contact with Approved Housing Bodies to ensure stock is being maximised and will invite an Approved Housing Body to a future meeting of the District.
- While the Council is having difficulty sourcing new RAS accommodation, as it is competing with the private market, some landlords are happy with the guarantee of rent being paid.
- The Residential Tenancies Acts sets out standards in relation to the condition of rental property. The Council can issue improvement notices under this legislation and escalate to a higher process if necessary. The legislation also covers instances where landlords decide to sell their property and in these instances, if sufficient notice is given, the Council has no option but to accept that the property will be sold.
- Housing allocations are a complex process that seek to match accommodation requirements, including location, of applicants to the stock available.

8. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Daniel Butler

I will move at the next meeting that Limerick City and County Council introduce pick up and drop parking spots for the main shopping streets to allow customers to collect or drop off items to various businesses in the city where they would be met by a staff member.

In proposing the motion Councillor Butler stated that this proposal was intended to facilitate one off purchases, increase the flow of traffic in the city and encourage the purchase and payment of goods over the phone for subsequent collection.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Byrne indicated that this proposal would be suited to niche businesses and a number of key locations for such parking spots should be identified with this in mind.

Members supported the motion and made the following points in relation to same :

- Many shoppers park in Davis Street and Parnell Street to pick up goods but the works proposed there will reduce this facility. While pedestrians and cyclists must be facilitated, every effort must be made to facilitate businesses.
- The proposal has merit but will only work if the spaces are managed and this raises the question as to who will monitor these spaces.
- Parking is an issue in all cities and the Council should consider requiring taxis to be

based off street in multi-storey car parks.

REPLY: The City Centre has a finite amount of road space and different competing needs are assigned to road space to allow the city to function both commercially and in terms of moving traffic. Regulatory provisions enable and provide for a multiplicity of traffic and parking requirements i.e., Bus Stops, Coach Parking, Taxi Ranks, Loading Bays, pedestrian mobility, cycle and car parking.

In the case of each of the above the various groups and representatives would argue that not enough space is allocated to their services.

The current Parking Bye-Laws and the operating procedures for Limerick City permit car users to park on-street for up to 10 minutes free to do quick pick ups and drop offs. Traffic Wardens will not issue a fixed penalty notice to a vehicle parked in a disc parking area for 10 minutes after monitoring a vehicle that does not have paid for parking. This 10 minute grace period is to allow motorists time to purchase parking discs or to do a quick pick-up or drop-off.

The time a vehicle is discovered parking without a valid paid for Parking Disc/Parkmagic is recorded electronically by Wardens and a fixed penalty notice will not be issued for at least another 10 minutes. This period of grace does not apply to vehicles parked illegally on double yellow lines, in bus stops, etc.

Loading Bays also operate in the city that allow commercial vehicles to load and unload for a maximum of 30 minutes while actively engaged.

Because parking control operating procedure currently permits a minimum of 10 minutes grace period to motorists parked in on-street parking zones, the Traffic Department do not believe there is any merit in introducing a different type of on-street drop off and pick-up space or enforcement procedure at this time and believe it would also create unnecessary confusion for shoppers and visitors to the city.

Councillor Butler stated that he did not accept the points made in the reply and suggested that the Council open its mind to alternative parking options that support business.

It was agreed that the motion be discussed further at the Travel and Transportation SPC.

9. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Daniel Butler

I will move at the next meeting that Limerick City and County Council write to Bus Eireann to request they cease driving through Glencairn Estate, Raheen as part of their 304 bus route in the interest of public safety.

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

Members supported the motion and it was highlighted that part of the route referred to had previously been a pedestrian walkway, widened to accommodate a car and was too

narrow to accommodate a bus safely. Issues were also raised with regard to the speed at which buses take the corner at Ashbrook and the visibility of ramps at that location. The need for discussions to take place with all residents, including those that might be affected by an alternative route, was stressed.

As Items 10 and 11 were similar it was agreed that these motions would be taken together.

10. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Elena Secas

I will move at the next meeting that the Council carries out as soon as possible a dog fouling campaign, similar to the one organised last October/November to highlight the dog fouling problem, which is a big issue in more areas across Limerick and erects 'No Dog Fouling' signs where necessary and where requested.

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

11. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Maria Byrne

I will move at the next meeting, following the success of the TLC on Good Friday, that Limerick Metropolitan District will start a scoop the poop awareness campaign and place dog litter bins on the main roads to facilitate the campaign.

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

In proposing her motion Councillor Secas highlighted the ongoing problem of dog fouling and the need to emphasise to dog owners that this is an offence that will not be tolerated.

In proposing her motion Councillor Byrne emphasised the need for dog litter bins in the absence of normal bins on many main roads.

Members supported the motions and called on the public to challenge the behaviour of dog owners who do not clean up after their dogs.

REPLY: The Environment Department will start a scoop the poop awareness campaign over the coming months.

The Environment Department will undertake a review of the current location of "No Dog Fouling Signs" and will provide additional signage where necessary.

The Environment Department found that the provision of dedicated dog litter bins resulted in significant difficulties with bins overflowing and difficulty in emptying. The current council policy is "any bag, any bin" which allows dog owners use the existing bin network to dispose of dog litter. We have found this policy to be the most effective in dealing with dog litter.

The Meetings Administrator undertook to establish if there was a budget for the supply of new bins and it was clarified that any dogs rehomed from the Dog Control Centre in Mungret are micro chipped and that the number of dogs rehomed from that location had

increased on foot of the efforts of the new kennel caretaker and the use of social media.

12. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Maria Byrne

I will move at the next Metropolitan meeting that this Council give consideration to the provision of free wifi on the centre city streets.

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

In proposing the motion Councillor Byrne pointed out that free wifi was available in most European cities.

In seconding the motion Councillor Butler highlighted the benefits of wifi to tourists in facilitating them to access the range of services and attractions available in the city and region.

Councillor Quinlivan pointed out that the provision of free wifi may give rise to legal issues under EU Regulations relating to anti competitiveness.

REPLY: Limerick City & County Council is presently considering the provision of a free pilot WiFi area in the City Centre. Following an evaluation of this pilot initiative further consideration will be given to the provision of free WiFi in other City Centre streets.

13. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Malachy McCreesh

I will move at the next meeting that the Council provide details of inspections under the Fire Services and Licensing Acts carried out on all premises and apartment blocks in the Metropolitan Area in the last year and give details of any issues found and the follow up procedures.

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

In proposing the motion Councillor McCreesh pointed out that he was seeking information in relation to fire safety issues for apartment blocks and details of maximum capacity and during performance inspection for licenced premises and clubs and any follow up action taken.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the Chief Fire Officer had submitted a detailed report in reply to the motion and he would circulate same to Members.

In reply to queries raised by Members the Chief Fire Officer clarified the following :

- There was no obligation on premises to display Fire Safety Certificates but details in relation to maximum capacity should be on display.
- Licence details granted to Dance Halls / Discos were on the public record in the District Court.
- Any issues brought to the attention of the owners of premises, not dealt with, would be reflected in the Chief Fire Officer's report to the Licencing Court.
- Fire Safety Certificates apply to relevant buildings, newly built or refurbished since

1990 under the Building Control Act.

14. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Maurice Quinlivan

I will move at the next meeting that this Council has a briefing session for elected members with senior management to update the elected members on the progress of the Limerick 2030 plan, following the decision of An Bord Pleanála to grant permission to Horizon Mall application.

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

Members supported the motion and expressed concern at the implications of the Bord Pleanála decision for the 2030 Plan and proposed developments at the Opera Centre.

The following views were also expressed by Members :

- That the Members be provided with details of the retail element of plans for the Opera Centre and an update on the retail plan for the city and whether there is funding to implement the plan.
- Resulting from the Bord Pleanála decision, the Council should look creatively at key issues, such as parking, and not place an over reliance on retail as part of our strategy, going forward.
- That Members were disappointed at not being consulted prior to the recent announcement relating to the Opera Centre.

REPLY: The management team are currently reviewing the decision of An Bord Pleanála in respect of the Horizon Mall including any possible impact on the delivery of the projects outlined in Limerick 2030. On completion of this review a briefing session will be arranged for all councillors.

15. Correspondence

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed: _____
MAYOR

Dated : _____