

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MERCHANT'S QUAY, LIMERICK, ON MONDAY, 15TH DECEMBER, 2014, AT 9.45 A.M.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor Byrne, Deputy Mayor

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Deputy Chief Executive (Mr. P. Dowling), Acting Director, Community, Leisure and Emergency Services (Mr. D. Brady), Senior Executive Librarian (Mr. D. Dullaghan), Meetings Administrator (Mr. E. Griffin), Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development and Planning (Mr. P. Fitzgerald), Senior Executive Officer, Home and Social Development (Ms. P. Liddy), Senior Engineer (Mr. V. Murray), Senior Engineer (Mr. P. O'Neill), Project Manager, Office of Regeneration (Mr. S. Hanrahan), Co-ordinator of Homeless Services (Mr. R. Lowth), Administrative Officer, Road Design (Mr. D. Hennessy), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services (Mr. T. O'Callaghan).

At the outset, Members paid tribute to Andy Lee on claiming the WBO Middleweight title and congratulated him on being the first Irish boxer to win a world title on American soil since 1934. They expressed the hope that Andy Lee would defend his title in Limerick in a location such as Thomond Park and requested that he be given a Civic Reception in honour of his achievements. The Deputy Chief Executive informed the Members that steps had already been taken towards organising a homecoming event for Mr. Lee.

Congratulations were also extended to Councillor Daly on the recent birth of his daughter.

1. Adoption of Minutes

Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick held on 17th November, 2014.

Proposed by Councillor Byrne
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

Update on the Arts, Culture and Sports Areas

Mr. Damien Brady, Acting Director, Community, Leisure and Emergency Services

presented an update on the Arts, Culture and Sports areas which included the following :

- An overview of the library service including infrastructure, vision and service indicators.
- An update on the Limerick Museum and Archives including plans for the Franciscan Friary and reference to the Haselbeck Collection, the City of Churches Exhibition and Conference, From Limerick with Love Photographic Collection and the digitisation of information recorded on Mount St. Lawrence headstones.
- An overview of the arts including, infrastructure, programme of activities and supports.
- A review of the sports infrastructure with reference to the Limerick Sports Partnership Company Limited.

Members thanked Mr. Brady for his presentation and commended the work being carried out by the library service and in particular initiatives to encourage children to read and also book clubs for older members. Plans for a museum in the old Franciscan Church were welcomed as one of the ways that the arts and culture sector could act as a driver for tourism, economic growth and increased footfall in the city.

The promotion of traditional Irish music in the city was discussed and it was pointed out that, while the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance was located in University of Limerick, the World Harp Centre in Castleconnell and traditional music was taught in most primary schools, more could be done to promote traditional music in the city. The city's links to Ciarán MacMathúna were highlighted and a proposal was put forward by Councillor O'Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Leddin, that Mr. MacMathúna's achievements and association with Limerick should be marked by the erection of a plaque in Mulgrave Street. It was also suggested that a Fleadh Ceoil type weekend should be organised in the city and the promoters of Limerick should come on board in this regard.

The Deputy Chief Executive clarified the following points in response to queries raised by Members :

- In relation to 1916 Commemoration activities, a co-ordinating group comprising staff and nominated members was to be established and guidance with regard to the consultation process was awaited from the Department.
- Requests for tenders for the operation of Rathbane Golf Course were about to be issued and the Council was committed to the continuing success of the course.
- St. John's Church, in use by Dance Limerick, was in Council ownership.
- In relation to plans for the Belltable, discussions with the Arts Council with a view to establishing the appropriate structures were ongoing but no formal proposals were in place yet.

The following further points were clarified by the Acting Director, Community, Leisure and Emergency Services :

- Dooradoyle Library had 7631 members and in 2014 had 150,000 visits and 154,000 issues. Visits to each library were measured by a counter on the entrance door and provided a rough link between visits and issues. Opening hours were matched to the level of visits.
- Ebooks and the internet were seen as an alternative way to access information and as such were welcome and would continue to be embraced.
- In relation to the demands for improved library services, a five year development plan would be brought to the SPC in the New Year.
- Formal procedures were in place to regulate the rental of Artists Studios with an independent board involved in the process.

3. Disposal of Land

Circulated Report of the Senior Engineer, Mid West National Road Design Office dated 21st November, 2014.

Members noted and approved the disposal of land at Garraun, Lisnagry, Co. Limerick.

4. Travel and Transportation

(a) Part 8 - Rhebogue Neighbourhood Greenway, Limerick

Circulated, Report of the Acting Director of Service, Travel and Transportation dated 4th December, 2014 enclosing the Chief Executive's Report in relation to the proposed Rhebogue Neighbourhood Greenway. The Chief Executive's Report set out details of the proposed development and was prepared and submitted to the Members pursuant to Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 – 2014 and Part VIII of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2013 and it was proposed to proceed in accordance with this report.

The report was noted by the Members who welcomed the proposed development and the public meeting that had taken place in Rhebogue in relation to same.

Members raised issues in relation to Park Bridge, traffic management plan for Rhebogue, the timing of lights for traffic exiting Rhebogue, two dangerous bends near pump house cross and the absence of footpaths adjacent to the Railway Over Bridge.

In response to queries raised, Mr. Pat O'Neill, Senior Engineer, Limerick Smarter Travel made the following points :

- A detailed study was underway with a view to optimising the Dublin Road, Park Road junction.
- In relation to concerns for pedestrian safety at the rail overbridge, discussion had taken place with Irish Rail with regard to a pedestrian tunnel at this location but the

provision of same would be outside the scope of the Smarter Travel works due to funding limitations. The proposed works would however promote the rail overbridge as a shared surface with raised tables on both approaches.

- Solutions to the issues at Park Bridge were being looked at and same would be put before Members when available.

In relation to the traffic lights at Rhebogue, Mr. Vincent Murray, Senior Engineer pointed out that these traffic lights had been recently reviewed and optimised. He acknowledged that the adjacent school generated traffic issues at this location but noted that alternative routes were available to road users.

(b) Part 8 - Route 4 Ballysimon, Castletroy and Newtown Infrastructure Improvements

Circulated, Report of the Acting Director of Service, Travel and Transportation dated 4th December, 2014 enclosing the Chief Executive's Report in relation to the proposed Route 4 Ballysimon, Castletroy and Newtown Infrastructure Improvements. The Chief Executive's Report set out details of the proposed development under a number of headings and was prepared and submitted to the Members pursuant to Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 – 2014 and Part VIII of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2013 and it was proposed to proceed in accordance with this report.

The report was noted by the Members who welcomed the proposed development which would improve quality of life and encourage walking and cycling in the area.

Issues were raised by Members in relation to the need for traffic calming between the Kilmurry roundabout and the roundabout at Annacotty and the effectiveness of the signage at the Groody roundabout where traffic, coming from the Dublin side, was not stopping to allow pedestrians to cross.

Mr. Pat O'Neill, Senior Engineer, Limerick Smarter Travel made the following points in reply:

- Preliminary design was underway in relation to the roadway between the Kilmurry roundabout and the Gaelscoil. It was hoped to go to Part 8 in 2015 but no commitment in relation to funding was yet in place.
- In relation to the Groody roundabout, this had been redesigned with lanes narrowed and tabletops installed to reduce traffic speeds. Sharing of the road surface was highlighted and before and after studies showed that traffic speeds had reduced.

The Mayor, Councillor Sheahan took the chair at this point of the meeting.

5. Question submitted by Councillor Joe Leddin

I will ask at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District if the draft "Limerick City and County Council, Storage, Presentation and Collection of Household and Commercial Waste Bye-laws" that are currently in the course of preparation will regulate the times and or locations that waste collection companies can start collecting domestic rubbish so as to prevent traffic congestion especially on main access roads to the city.

REPLY: Draft bye-laws, the "Limerick City and County Council, Storage, Presentation and Collection of Household and Commercial Waste Bye-Laws" are currently in the course of preparation and will be brought for consideration to the Environmental SPC as soon as possible following the establishment of the SPC's early in 2015.

The matter in relation to collection times and locations will be considered at that stage.

6. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Joe Crowley

I will move at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District that Limerick City and County Council will, in the interest of the safety of pedestrians, look at extending the barrier along the 40 metre section of the river-front from the Skateboard Park back towards the Clarion Hotel where there is no barrier in place to prevent falls into the river and that the Council repaint to white the black bollards and chains, adjacent to the slipway at Howley's Quay, to make them more visible at night and provide more safety for any person in their vicinity.

In proposing the motion, Councillor Crowley highlighted the dangers of this section of the Quay to pedestrians and members of the suicide prevention patrol and noted that the black bollards at Howley's Quay were practically invisible at night and also posed a danger. He paid tribute to the Council for improving the lighting at Arthur's Quay.

In seconding the motion, Councillor O'Hanlon pointed out the need for platforms over or adjacent to the river to enable the provision of assistance from the riverbank and in particular on the north side near the boat club and called on the Council to provide same.

It was noted that a lifebuoy was now installed adjacent to the skateboard park but the cobbles in the area were slippery at times and the lighting was poor.

REPLY: The area referred to in the Notice of Motion above is known as Steamboat Quay. Steamboat Quay is private property in the ownership of Steamboat Developments Limited. Therefore the City and County Council has no responsibility for maintenance in this area or for the provision of riverside railings as it is private property.

However, Steamboat Developments Ltd have written to Limerick City and County Council asking the Council to take in charge Steamboat Quay. This request is currently under consideration by the Planning and Economic Development Unit.

If Steamboat Quay is taken in charge Limerick City and County Council will be able to erect a pedestrian guardrail along the riverside as requested above.

In relation to painting the Black Bollards and Chain adjacent to the steps on Howley's Quay to make it more visible at night Limerick City and County Council will examine this issue and carry out paint work in quarter 1 in 2015.

7. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Joe Leddin

I will move at the next meeting that Limerick City & County Council provide an updated report on all those properties / lands currently listed on the derelict sites register within the metropolitan area and what progress is being made with owners to redevelop these sites.

In proposing the motion, Councillor Leddin noted that no progress had been made in relation to the derelict site adjacent to the Milk Market which detracted from the amenity of the area. A number of privately owned houses on Hyde Road were boarded up and also in a derelict state. He called for the Council to take action in relation to these sites and sought information with regard to proceeds from the Derelict Sites levy and details of any court cases pending.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Quinlivan asked that the members be briefed on the issues pertaining to the various derelict sites in the Metropolitan area.

Members also raised issues in relation to properties that were damaged by the recent storm and still not repaired and contrary views were expressed in relation to the condition of the Opera Centre site.

REPLY: The Derelict Sites Act requires that the owner and occupier of land ensure that the land or structures do not become or do not continue to be a derelict site. The Act imposes duties on the Local Authority including the maintenance of a Derelict Sites Register and to make the Register available for public inspection. The purpose of the Act is not to redevelop land but to take property out of a state of dereliction. Redevelopment is a matter for the site owners and is often dependent on market conditions and the state of the property economy.

I attach a list hereunder of properties on the Derelict Sites Register for the Metropolitan Area. The majority of these sites are single dwellings where the Council has brought to the attention of the owners the requirements of the Council under Derelict Sites legislation. It is only as a last resort that Limerick City and County Council issue formal notification/issue notices under the Derelict Sites Act 1990.

DERELICT SITES FOR THE METROPOLITAN AREA		
1	7 Wolfe Tone Street, Limerick	DS5
2	1 Wellesley Lane, Off Clontarf Place, Limerick	DS49
3	2 Wellesley Lane, Off Clontarf Place, Limerick	DS50
4	3 Wellesley Lane, Off Clontarf Place, Limerick	DS51
5	4 Wellesley Lane, Off Clontarf Place	DS52
6	6 Mallow Street Upper	DS128
7	7 Mallow Street Upper	DS129
8	2 James Street	DS130
9	3 James Street	DS131
10	Woodlawn Park, Ballysimon Road	DS232

11	Cogan Street	DS260
12	86 Lenihan Avenue	DS273
13	1 Lenihan Avenue	DS258
14	111 Hyde Road	DS383
15	Canal Bank House	DS406
16	Locke House Canal Bank	DS349
17	Corner of Rosbrien & Punches Cross	DS357
18	106 Hyde Road	DS368
19	Meadowbrook Mill Road Corbally	DS403
20	Barnaklye Patrickswell	DS12/09
21	23 St. Patricks Villas Castleconnell	DS10/17
23	Scart Ballysimon	DS10/34
24	125 Elm Park, Castletroy	4C002
25	Former Esso Garage, Castletroy	DS12/03
26	50 Kilbane, Mulcair Road, Raheen	DS12/31
27	St. Nessans Road, Dooradoyle	
28	Rathmale, Mungret	4B001
29	Church Road, Raheen	DS10/21
30	Willowhurst, Church Road, Raheen	DS10/22
31	3 Beverley Heights ,Raheen.	DS12/4

The Meetings Administrator pointed out that a briefing would be organised to give Members an update on the various derelict sites.

The Senior Executive Officer (Economic, Development and Planning) clarified the following points in response to issues raised by members.

- The application of the 3% levy was not automatic and a number of steps had to be gone through before same was applied.
- The Planning Department worked closely with the Environment Department where any health or environmental issues arose in relation to derelict sites.
- The legislation included for a strict legal definition of commercial sites and some of the sites already discussed were not included. Notwithstanding same, the Council continued to work with the owners of the sites to seek a resolution.
- A cabinet memo in relation to the Opera Centre was awaited following which expressions of interest will be sought.

Further discussion took place in relation to derelict sites in Georgian Limerick, protected structures, the old Bord na gCon building and a building opposite The George with a tree growing from the roof. The adequacy of the existing legislation was raised and it was noted that the new Planning Bill includes a “use it or lose it” clause.

It was agreed that derelict sites would be discussed in more detail at a forthcoming meeting.

8. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cian Prendiville

I will move at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that funding be made available to ensure Novas Initiatives can continue the Cold Weather Service in Limerick city they provided in previous years. This emergency service ensures that, on particularly cold nights, an extra staff member is brought in so they can allow people to sleep overnight in their reception area.

In proposing the motion, Councillor Prendiville indicated that the mortgage crisis and resultant evictions, the lack of rent control and the insufficient number of Local Authority houses being built was leading to an increased number of people finding themselves homeless. He acknowledged that the work of Novas and the Homeless Action Team ensured that Limerick was better positioned than many locations in relation to dealing with this issue but wanted to ensure that sufficient funding was available to Novas to fund an extra staff member on cold nights.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Loftus pointed out that people were sleeping in empty buildings and car parks in Limerick and with the bad weather approaching these people should be catered for by ensuring that Novas was adequately funded.

Members commended the work being carried out by the Homeless Action Team, Novas and a range of other organisations throughout the city who provided meals, accommodation and helped people get back on their feet and noted the investment that had been made in facilities such as Br. Russell Hostel and McGarry House.

REPLY: In terms of the overall delivery of homeless services, both the HSE and Limerick City and County Council contract a number of Non-Government Organisations (NGO or Voluntary Housing Bodies) to deliver a range of service in the Limerick City and County Local Authority area. It is important to highlight that both the NGO's, the HSE and Local Authority jointly agree that we do not have a bedded down rough sleeping population in Limerick.

Given any one period of time these service have capacity for emergency homeless accommodation which can vary from day to day, this depends on the levels of referrals from the Local Authorities central placement service in the Homeless Action Team. All Services (SVP, Thomond House) delivering emergency accommodation have been involved in a Cold Weather Agreement for a number of years in terms of taking additional numbers into the hostels during periods of colder weather. NGO's may seek costs to provide additional staff members to cover night shifts to ensure adequate health and safety is maintained in their facility, the Local Authority deals with such requests on an individual basis. The priority of both the NGO's and the Local Authority is to free up bed spaces to allow those presenting homeless to avail of a dignified response to their need.

Novas is one of the contracted providers of emergency accommodation , they receive just under €1 million per year to deliver a range of service in conjunction with the City and County Council and a further approximately €1.2 million per year from a number of Departments in the HSE.

Limerick City and County Council as Lead Local Authority for Homelessness

in the Mid West Region are currently in the process of reviewing the delivery of all homeless services to assess, plan and align the delivery of services to a housing led approach to homelessness in line with National Policy. While everyone involved in the sector acknowledges this is the right direction to take, it is also acknowledged that we will always require a level of emergency accommodation in Limerick.

In response to issues that had been raised by Members, Mr. Rob Lowth, Co-Ordinator of Homeless Services clarified the following points :

- Homelessness was an ongoing issue but each case was dealt with individually and cold weather systems were in place.
- A new location was being looked at for the street outreach service.
- The cold weather situation was kept under constant review as were the related requests from the NGO's and there was capacity within the existing services to deal with this issue.
- The Homeless Team would welcome an opportunity to discuss these issues further at SPC.

As Item 10 related to Item 8 it was agreed to take it at this point.

10. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Sean Lynch

I will move at the next Metropolitan District meeting that, in future, as a matter of extreme urgency, temporary night shelter be provided in Limerick City to cope with the overflow of homelessness between the months of October and March.

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

In proposing the motion, Councillor Lynch cited instances in Limerick where people were being turned away from homeless shelters that were full and being forwarded to the Gardai. He indicated that there were people who wanted to remain anonymous and not engage with normal services, people new to town and not aware of services and some newly released prisoners who would benefit from the provision of a temporary night shelter.

A view was expressed by some members that existing services were sufficient to deal with this issue.

REPLY: In terms of the overall delivery of homeless services, both the HSE and Limerick City and County Council contract a number of Non-Government Organisations (NGO or Voluntary Housing Bodies) to deliver a range of service in the Limerick City and County Local Authority area. It is important to highlight that both the NGO's, the HSE and Local Authority jointly agree that we do not have a bedded down rough sleeping population in Limerick.

The National Homelessness Implementation Strategy and the Regional Mid-West Homelessness Strategy is focused on the delivery of Housing Led solutions to dealing with Homelessness. This system has been proven to

deliver a greater level of success to individuals at a fraction of the cost of delivering emergency accommodation in hostel type accommodation. The example of the Br. Stephen Russell Hostel on Mulgrave Street has proven this, this hostel was formerly an emergency accommodation service of shared dormitory rooms which offered residents little dignity or a chance to deal with their life issues. It is now a state of the art building offering permanent accommodation to residents who would have been resident in hostels for many years.

It is the broad view of all groups involved in the delivery of emergency accommodation in the Limerick City area that a strategy of delivering more units of permanent accommodation via a combination of Private Market, NGO's and Local Authority is vital. These units will benefit from support staff from the various NGO's dealing with all of the individuals needs from health to housing in a secure environment.

In terms of meeting the needs of those requiring emergency accommodation, McGarry House currently operates a night shelter type service 24/7 365 days of the year. Both the Local Authority and Service Providers are actively working to move residents into more appropriate accommodation every day.

Mr. Rob Lowth, Co-Ordinator of Homeless Services clarified the following points in relation to queries that had been raised by Members :

- A street count the previous week had found no one bedded down on street.
- McGarry House provided the type of service suggested in the motion and the Homeless Unit would engage with McGarry House to establish sufficiency of service.
- A prison inreach service that works with inmates, pre-release, was in place and the prison service was engaged with where the inmate gives a false address.
- The national strategy was to provide people with their own accommodation rather than accommodating them at shelters.

The Deputy Chief Executive stated that the Council had a well developed Homeless Strategy with no one sleeping on the streets and no one needing to be homeless.

9. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Paul Keller

I will move at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that we register our support for the recent secondary school teachers' strike and write to the Minister for Education calling on her to scrap plans to introduce school-based assessment that would put enormous strains on the relations between teachers, pupils and parents.

In proposing the motion, Councillor Keller pointed out that teachers did not want to be involved in the assessment of pupils and noted that the teachers unions had asked for external moderators to be appointed and an independent chair. He noted that teachers did not take strike action lightly and that a further strike was planned for 22nd January, 2015.

In seconding the motion, Cmhlr. Ó Ceallaigh indicated that he wished to extend his full support to both teachers and pupils in this dispute as he anticipated that the percentage of marks to be assessed by the teachers would increase over time and ultimately spread to the leaving certificate cycle.

Members indicated that the proposed system would compromise teacher integrity and called on the Minister to find a solution.

Councillor Butler indicated that industrial relations mechanisms should be used to find a solution to this issue and urged parties to come back to the table. He requested that the motion be withdrawn.

As there was disagreement in relation to the motion, a vote was taken in the form of a show of hands with nine members in favour of the motion and two against. The Mayor declared the motion carried.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed: _____

MAYOR

Dated : _____