

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT SPECIAL MEETING OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE, LIMERICK, ON MONDAY, 25TH FEBRUARY,
2019 AT 3.30 P.M.**

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:

Councillor J. Collins, Mayor.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Browne, Butler, Cahillane, Collins (M), Crowley, Daly, Donegan, Foley, Galvin, Gilligan, Gleeson, Hogan, Hourigan, Hurley, Keary, Keller, Leddin, Loftus, Lynch, McCreesh, McMahon, Mitchell, O'Brien, Cmhlr. Ó Ceallaigh, O'Donnell, O'Hanlon, Pond, Scanlan, Secas, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (K), Sheahan (M), Sheehy, Teefy, Teskey.

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors O'Donoghue and Ryan.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive (Mr. C. Murray), Deputy Chief Executive and Director, Economic Development (Dr. P. Daly), Director, Social Development, (Mr. G. Daly), Director, Housing Development (Ms. A. Duke), Director, Physical Development (Mr. B. Kennedy), Director, Capital Investment (Mr. J. Delaney), Meetings Administrator (Mr. J. Clune), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services (Ms. F. McCormack), Senior Planner (Ms. M. Woods), Senior Executive Planner (Ms. K. Burke), Senior Executive Officer (Mr. P. Fitzgerald).

Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The Mayor thanked the Members for attending the Special Meeting to discuss the submission on the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. The Mayor highlighted his disappointment at the Strategy and stated that this document will create a two-tier economy, with prioritised boarding for Dublin and Cork, classified as international cities for development. Limerick, meanwhile, is classified as a second-tier 'regional city'. The Mayor referred to Cork as the primary driver of the southern region, according to this strategy, Limerick is placed alongside Shannon, with its population growth curtailed, while Limerick is the only City to develop a Spatial and Economic Strategy for the City, it has its own economic agenda and an ambition that is greater than the Draft Strategy sets out.

The Mayor outlined the projected growth for Limerick by an additional 100,000 by 2030 and stated that the Draft Strategy curtails development to 50,000 for Limerick and Shannon, which will limit investment in housing, education, health, water, wastewater, broadband and tourism. The Mayor outlined the assistance from Government that Cork is to receive while Limerick is borrowing money from the European Investment Bank to finance the redevelopment of the City.

The Mayor stated this Strategy should be putting Limerick and Cork together to work in their mutual interests but instead it sets them apart. The Mayor stated the importance of growing Cork and Limerick and Galway, to grow the South, Mid-West, and West in order to address the imbalance at the heart of our economy.

The Chief Executive thanked the Mayor and the Members for calling the Special Meeting to discuss the submission on the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, which gave the Members an opportunity to set out the key concerns. He outlined the importance of the development of the Limerick City Region, as set out in the National Planning Framework and that Limerick is the economic engine and a driver of the Mid West, which should be supported by all agencies. The Chief Executive stated that this Strategy should emphasise the collaborative nature in which the agencies work together in the Limerick Region and also referred to the South Clare SDZ and highlighted the need to focus on the primacy of Limerick City. He outlined that the SDZ is a concept at present and cannot happen until such time as the LNDR is developed. Limerick needs to focus on the development of a new Technology/Enterprise Park on the northside of the City, complementing the work that Regeneration have carried out, which will benefit from the Coonagh/Knockalisheen road, with connection to LIT, Shannon Airport and NTP, when the LNDR is developed.

The Chief Executive referred to the need for more content on rural Limerick. The Chief Executive referred to the issue of incineration that had come up at the workshops/SPC meetings and advised that the Local Authority had previously sought legal advice and advised the Elected Members on the position. The Chief Executive stated that he looked forward to a constructive debate and welcomed proposed amendments to the draft Strategy.

Senior Planner, Ms. Woods referred to previous meetings and workshops held with the Members and outlined the following issues:

- Request a more balanced approach as over emphasis on Cork relative to other cities in terms of balanced Regional growth.

Ms Woods outlined the key issues in terms of the MASP

- Lack of emphasis on the primacy of Limerick City. More emphasis needs to be given to ensure that Limerick is positioned as the principle focus within the region in accordance with the NPF
- The proposed South Clare Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) is premature pending the sequential development of the City Centre first and will undermine both the NPF and Limerick 2030 Vision. The NPF seeks to secure long term transformational and rejuvenation focused compact city growth. While Limerick 2030 envisages the city centre to be at the heart of the economic force of the region – an attractive magnet for retail, leisure, residential, commercial, educational and cultural growth
- The MASP needs to set out a clear strategic and co-ordinated approach for the prioritization of the future growth, development and investment of the Metropolitan Area.

Key Attributes and Enablers of Limerick including City Centre Revitalisation, the Georgian Quarter and creation of a Living City are not represented and are requested

to be included. Other key attributes not recognised include Thomond Park, the Milk Market and King John's Castle are also requested to be included.

- Climate Resilient City proposed for Limerick, however lack of associated actions included e.g. CFRAM Defenses.
- The level and depth of engagement between businesses, third level institutions, representative bodies and statutory bodies in Limerick is a unique and formidable strength, which justifies recognition.

Key issues – Towns

- The key attributes, infrastructure requirements and potential for development of Newcastle West is undersold and will prevent the key town achieving its full potential. An example of the further attributes and infrastructure requirements proposed include: Proven track record for investment, strong employment base, potential for residential development, Training and Education, Health Services Centre, Existing tourism investment (Desmond Hall, Castle Demesne Park) potential for community level Energy Plans.

Infrastructural Requirements: Health and education, regeneration of the town centre, broadband, redevelopment of the library, provision of rural transport links, delivery of additional economic development lands, development of a Regional Athletics Hub.

Economy - Key Issues

- Insufficient emphasis on the economic importance of Industry 4.0. Objectives for Economic Development are generic and not focused
- Policy support for a new Technology Park on the north side of Limerick is required.

Other Issues – Population & Housing

- Pg. 28 – Recognition that additional housing will be required for social housing on top of NPF requirements – This will impact on zoning requirements in a positive manner, but should also include student accommodation and housing for changing demographics including an aging population
- Pg. 30 - To take account of *"the extent to which a settlement is located inside or outside the city region catchment"*
- Other Towns" identified on the Strategy Map, however no details on the role, function of growth of these settlements
- Strategies are absent in relation to digital access/broadband, libraries, health and education, community spaces and hubs to facilitate sharing of infrastructure.
- The rural area of County Limerick is facing a number of challenges including town and village centre decline and depopulation, an ageing population and lack of access to infrastructure and services. A Rural Development Plan for investment in key infrastructure and services is required for the development of the rural areas of the Southern Region
- The Galway-Ennis-Shannon-Limerick Economic Network is a new initiative, which has not yet commenced. However, this is not clear in the document. As this is not a tried

and tested initiative, it is requested that this proposed network is removed as best practice.

- It is an objective to promote the region through a comprehensive communication and promotion strategy, including the development of a regional brand with international focus building on heritage, culture and attractive qualities”. Region doesn’t have an identity of its own, therefore objective not relevant
- Refers to REDZ – no longer exists
- RPO 72 (pg. 105): Economic Risk Management System: It is an objective to prepare and operate an economic risk management system, with preventive action plans, considering social and environment factors – Who will do this?
- RPO 73 (pg. 105): Anticipating Economic Structural Changes: “It is an objective to devise and introduce contingency plans and pilot projects based on the strengths of the Region to counteract the effects from industrial decline and potential external shocks in the Region” – Plans already in place (Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020)
- Resource Efficiency (pg.116) “Creation of a world class cluster of sustainable and renewable energy companies between Galway and Limerick. This initiative has been named the Shannon Energy Valley” –This initiative does not exist and should be removed.
- N24 between Limerick and Limerick Junction– Need to upgrade and improve entire N24
- Pg. 160 – Need to include a bypass of Adare in the Foynes to Limerick scheme
- Reference to distributor road for Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale needs to be reworded to Bypass / relief road
- The public bus service/public transport infrastructure, including a rural bus link service is inadequate and requires enhancement and substantial investment in the strive towards a low carbon society.
- The road network from Limerick to Kerry needs to be upgraded to facilitate improved connection times for the movement of goods between Shannon Foynes Port, Shannon Airport and County Limerick.
- Pg. 185 “Key priorities for the region are to ensure that the settlement strategy has regard to capacity of existing public water services” – Infrastructural needs should have regard to the settlement hierarchy
- - The above contradicts RPO 203 below..
- **RPO 203 (pg. 188): Irish Water & Wastewater:** *“It is an objective to seek Irish Water to revise the Draft Investment Plan (2020-2024), and subsequent investment plans, to align the supply of waste water treatment facilities with the settlement strategy and objectives of the Southern Region RSES and Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans for Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford*

Following the presentation the Mayor thanked Ms. Woods for her presentation and Members acknowledged the work of Ms Woods and Ms Burke in preparing this submission. A discussion then took place and the Members raised the following issues:

- The growth and development of rural Limerick is not considered in this Strategy

- Lack of ambition for Limerick which will curtail the plans and projected growth set out in the 2030 Plan
- The omission of the Shannon Estuary and Shannon Foynes Port Company from the plan is unacceptable.
- The development of technology parks need to be included
- The lack of adequate health services for the existing population also needs to be included
- Members queried the implications if they were to reject this Strategy in its current format
- Public transport links into the City Centre need to be considered
- Broadband, public transport, mobile phone coverage in the Environs need to be developed and upgraded in order to cater for the growing population in the Metropolitan area
- The lack of detail in relation to developing tourism in the City & County
- Members referred to the need for student population to be additional to the population allocation
- The potential for Limerick to be an attractive location for multinationals once the LNDR is developed
- The importance of the Shannon Consortium/Shannon Airport within the Mid West region
- The provision of conference facilities and need to support businesses.
- Member queried the branding of the region and what this will mean for the region
- Requirement to work with other local authorities in the region in order to set out the objectives to guide the development of the City and County.
- Members queried the position on incineration and the legal advice that was previously sought and to clarify position in relation to the issue.
- Members queried if the 3rd Level Institutes had made a submission
- Member queried the Planning Policy hierarchy and what the process will be for this Strategy
- To emphasise the need for rural houses in the MASP area and requested that this is included in the submission.

Councillor McCreesh proposed a ban on incineration in Limerick City and County Council. The motion was seconded by Cmhrl. O’Ceallaigh. The Chief Executive advised that to include a reference to the ban on incineration would conflict with the Regional Waste Management Plan and Planning Laws. Senior Planner, Ms Woods outlined the hierarchy of plans and the need for the Regional Waste Management Plan to comply with this hierarchy. The National Policy ‘Waste management Policy in Ireland – A Resource Opportunity’ July 2012 allows for waste recovery and waste energy. Members queried if it is possible for the ban on incineration to be included or does this conflict with the Regional Waste Management Plan. Ms Woods indicated that it is the view of the Executive that to include a policy that bans incineration in the RSES would be contrary to national policy.

In response to the queries Ms Woods clarified the following;

- Shannon Foynes Port Company is mentioned in the document but further emphasis is required in Appendix 3.
- The 3rd Level Institutes had the opportunity to make a submission
- Ms Woods outlined the planning policy hierarchy and that the City & County Development Plan are required to be consistent with the objectives outlined in the National Planning Framework
- Ms Woods confirmed that Limerick has its own brand and it would be difficult to have an overall brand for the Southern Region.

Director of Economic Development, Dr P. Daly outlined the importance of the submission and highlighted that Limerick is the first and only city with an economic and spatial strategy. Dr Daly emphasised the need and importance of working with colleagues in the Regional Assembly, and to internationalise the city and the rest of the region.

The Chief Executive thanked the Members and confirmed that a second submission will be prepared by the Executive.

Mayor Collins acknowledged the work of the Regional Assembly Members to date and emphasised the importance of the proposed amendments to be incorporated into the Strategy in order for Limerick to get the opportunity to grow and develop.

It was agreed that all amendments were to be submitted to the Executive through Party Leaders no later than close of business on Friday 1st March 2019.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed:

Mayor

Date:
