

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT SPECIAL MEETING OF METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE, LIMERICK, ON THURSDAY, 20TH JUNE, 2019

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor James Collins, Cathaoirleach

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Benson, Butler, Costelloe, Daly, Hartigan, Kiely, Kilcoyne, Leddin (B), McSweeney, Murphy, O'Dea, O'Donovan, O'Sullivan, Secas, Sheehan, Slattery and Talukder.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director, Service Operations (Mr. K. Lehane), Meetings Administrator (Mr. J. Clune), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services (Ms. F. McCormack), Senior Engineer (Ms. A. Peters), Health and Safety Officer (Mr. J. Cooney), Assistant Health and Safety Officer (Ms. S. O'Connell), Assistant Engineer (Mr. S. McLaughlin), Senior Executive Engineer (Ms. C. Lynch), Supervisor (Mr. L. Cantillon).

1. Park Road Recycling Facility

Councillor James Collins, Cathaoirleach welcomed the Members to the Special Meeting convened on foot of request from the following Members in relation to the closure of the Park Road Recycling Centre; Cllrs Costelloe, Benson, Leddin(B), Leddin (J), Hartigan, Sheehan (C) and O'Donovan.

The Director, Service Operations, Kieran Lehane introduced his team to the Members and thanked the Members and staff for their attendance. Mr Lehane circulated a presentation and extract from the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005.

Mr. Lehane provided the history of the recycling centre, which was opened in 1991. The Recycling centre was provided for in the office car park of the depot. Mr Lehane confirmed to Members that initially Park Road handled paper and cardboard only and over the years plastics were added. The operation in Park Road has evolved and in the latter years batteries, bulbs, cooking oil and paint were included. Mr. Lehane provided the Members with the data for Park Road for 2018 and outlined the services that will remain in Park Road.

The Health and Safety Officer, Mr. Cooney outlined to Members the legal responsibilities of the local authority under the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005 and referred to the increasing awareness of risks and their mitigation. Mr. Cooney informed Members that revised Safety Statement for the organisation was prepared in 2018 and an inspection regime for all Council depots was established and implemented. Park Road Depot was included as part of this inspection programme as was the civic amenity centre which is in the car park of the depot. Following these inspections safety issues were highlighted.

Mr. Cooney referred to the pictures contained within the presentation and outlined the various risks identified in each picture. The pictures identified risks in relation to traffic congestion, HGV entering and exiting the site and high sided vehicles with limited visibility. Mr. Cooney referred to the legal responsibility on the Council to maintain the premises in a safe manner on a day to day basis.

Mr. Cooney informed Members that a Health and Safety inspection was carried out by the Health and Safety Team. Their role is to inspect, report on and advise to council management within operational areas. The Park Road Report contained a number of observations and two particular items referred to the public and operational interface within the depot. Mr. Cooney informed Members that immediate steps that were possible within the confines of the site were taken, to minimise the inter action of the public and operations. Mr. Cooney stated that these steps were deemed emergency measures and were implemented in December 2018 which solved the issues of public interface with equipment. The effect of the emergency measures led to a reduction in already limited and inadequate space within the car park. Mr. Cooney confirmed to Members that a buffer zone was created to allow the operation of the forklift and compactor by Council staff. It was not possible to implement a suitable traffic management plan to segregate public traffic, pedestrians and operational staff due to the limited space.

Assistant Engineer, Mr. S. McLaughlin referred to the three other recycling centres, Mungret, Kilmallock and Newcastle West, which are not adjacent to residential areas and are purpose built. Critical features of these recycling centres include a one-way traffic system, stopping zone and segregated parking. These features are deemed essential in the interest of both public and staff, health and safety and operational requirements and cannot be implemented at Park Road.

The recycling services provided within Park Road must be supervised by Council staff to ensure correct segregation. Mr. McLaughlin stated that there are no alternative sites available to allow the transfer of the recycling centre. Mr. McLaughlin identified a number of alternative options that were considered in terms of size of the site, bring banks, paper and cardboard. These included the recycling of paper and cardboard which were the highest usage and can be disposed of through a bin service and an alternative is PTU's (Pay to Use Systems) in which there are four in Limerick and the nearest one located in Corbally. Mr. McLaughlin confirmed the second highest usage was electrical and covered by WEE and free in any electrical store. Mr. McLaughlin confirmed that Limerick City and County Council facilitates a supervised WEEE collection twice a year in the Metropolitan area.

Mr. Lehané outlined the cost of the recycling centre, which is approx. €50,000 pa which consists mainly of payroll. Mr. Lehané confirmed that existing staff will be deployed to improve street cleaning services and referred to the recent IBAL survey.

Councillor James Collins, Cathaoirleach thanked the staff for the presentation. A discussion took place and Mr. Lehané confirmed the following to the meeting:-

- The sequence of events leading to the closure of Park Road and that the decision to close the recycling facility was not part of the Budget.

- The closure of the facility was based on health & safety obligations only and that alternative locations had been examined.
- A number of emergency measures were implemented in December 2018 in order to mitigate the risks identified within the H&S report.
- The possibility of the recycling area being enlarged by incorporating the adjacent green space was considered but the enlarged area would still be inadequate.
- There are no future plans for this site and the plans discussed relate to the carrying out of further works in relation to H&S.
- Reference was made to a mobile recycling service offered by Wicklow County Council and if this service is a possibility. Mr. Lehane confirmed that this service will be investigated
- Members enquired how often inspections are carried out. Mr Lehane confirmed that considerable resources have been invested within the Health and Safety team and the team provide expert advice and guidance.
- Members requested the engineer's reports in relation to the Recycling Centre.
- Senior Executive Engineer, Ms. Lynch confirmed the engineering report was to close the recycling centre based on the findings in the inspection. Ms. Lynch also referred to the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005 which is the ultimate responsibility of the Executive.
- Members queried if the decisions to close the Recycling Centre was based on financial grounds. Mr. Lehane confirmed that the decision to close the recycling centre was based on health and safety grounds.
- Members queried if there is a recycling centre included as part of the Southside Master Plan. Mr Lehane stated that he was not aware of this.

Councillor James Collins, Cathaoirleach requested that the members be issued with a copy of the Engineering report. Mr Lehane thanked the Members for their attendance and stated that he will revert once he has discussed the matter with his team and considered the issues raised by the Members.

This concluded the Meeting.

SIGNED: _____
Cathaoirleach

DATE : _____