

11th December 2019

To: The Cathaoirleach and Each Member of the Metropolitan District of Limerick

Memo University of Limerick City Campus

A Chomhairleoir, a chara,

As you will now be aware, the University of Limerick recently announced ambitious plans to develop and open a new University **Campus** in Limerick City Centre on the former Dunnes Stores site at Sarsfield Bridge.

Universities are recognised as key drivers for economic development in regions and cities. Universities do more than merely educate, as knowledge creation hubs, they stimulate local industry and contribute to the attraction and retention of talented people who really matter for a city's economic strength.

UL, from its founding has had a focus on impact, working with partners in the region and preparing its graduates for the world of work. UL has, in collaboration with regional stakeholders, played its part in the economic recovery of Limerick and the Mid-West region. The prospect of a city centre location has the potential to further enhance what has already been achieved and afford UL an opportunity to have an even more significant impact on the social and economic prosperity of the city and region.

The vision is to establish an iconic and vibrant collaborative campus in the heart of Limerick city that is shared with students, partners and the public; one that delivers outputs and outcomes, which have a social and economic impact locally and globally.

The project will deliver a much-needed educational, economic and social footprint for the city and will be a key contributor to the transformation and regeneration of the city centre. The project will complement the Limerick 2030 plan for the Opera site, and also other waterfront projects in the city centre.

The project is also aligned to Limerick's Digital Strategy and the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan both of which aim to position Limerick as Ireland's first Digital City Region.

It will include state of the art learning spaces, collaboration spaces for partners and the public as well as student accommodation. The project will support the delivery of a number of objectives as outlined in the University of Limerick's recently announced Strategic Plan *UL@50*. In particular, the student population is expected to grow by another 5,000 students and additional University space is critical to facilitate this level of growth.

The University of Limerick wishes to optimise the potential of the site at Sarsfield Bridge and sees this as a once in a generation opportunity to place the university at the heart of the city.

The university plans to launch an architectural competition in early 2020. The purpose of the competition is to seek proposals from an architect-led design team for the design of the University of Limerick City Campus at Sarsfield Bridge.

The University has had some meetings with our Forward Planning Department in relation to their new City Centre Campus development. To progress a master plan for the new campus, lands outside the boundaries of the University-owned site must be included in the masterplan to examine how the space around the new University Buildings, including the public realm, can be optimised and planned.

Therefore, the University has asked for consent from Limerick City and County Council to develop the master plan over an area that would include land outside their ownership that is in public ownership. This area would possibly run to the edge of the river and to the boundary of Arthur's Quay Park as shown on the attached map

In consenting to this planning over publically owned lands, the Council is asking the University to:

- Engage fully with Forward Planning, Physical Development and the CFRAMS team on the development of the masterplan and public realm plans.

This Memo is to advise members that UL is going to tender for a Design Team for their new City Centre Campus in early 2020 and that the Council is giving consent to UL to include lands in public ownership in this master planning exercise.

This will mainly involve public realm on the public owned lands and the area included in the master plan needs to be agreed prior to UL advertising for the Design Team, so that they can get certainty on the area of the master plan and the cost.

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Vincent Murray
A/Director of Services
Economic Development.