



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

DATE: 15th June, 2020.

To the Mayor and Each Member of Limerick City and County Council

**Chairperson's Report of the Travel & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee Meeting
of 11th June, 2020.**

Item 1: Adoption of Minutes

On the proposal of Cllr. Daly, seconded by Cllr. Ryan (M), the minutes of the previous committee meeting held on 18th February, 2020 were unanimously adopted.

Item 2: To consider the Draft Metropolitan District of Limerick (Parking Places)(Amendment) Bye-Laws 2020:

Mr. McGuigan delivered a presentation on the Draft Metropolitan District of Limerick (Parking Places) (Amendment) Bye-Laws 2020 and explained the background to the exemption made for EV's from parking charges. Currently there is an exemption for EVs from parking fees for up to 4 hours whilst the EV is at a charging point. This exemption was adopted in September 2018 for 24 months. This is due to expire in September 2020 and it is recommended that the Committee approve the draft Bye-Laws to be discussed at a Metropolitan District meeting with a view to them being put on public display over the summer period.

The recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Leddin (J) and seconded by Cllr. Butler.

Item 3: To consider the Draft Municipal District of Newcastle West (Parking Places)(Amendment) Bye-Laws 2020:

Mr. McGuigan delivered a presentation on the Draft Municipal District of Newcastle West (Parking Places) (Amendment) Bye-Laws 2020 and explained the background to the exemption made for EV's from parking charges. Currently there is an exemption for EVs from parking fees for up to 4 hours whilst the EV is at a charging point. This exemption was adopted in September 2018 for 24 months. This is due to expire in September 2020 and it is recommended that the Committee approve the draft Bye-Laws to be discussed at a Municipal District meeting with a view to them being put on public display over the summer period.

The recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Leddin (J) and seconded by Cllr. Butler.

Item 4: To consider the Draft Municipal District of Cappamore-Kilmallock (Parking Places)(Amendment) Bye-Laws 2020:

Mr. McGuigan delivered a presentation on the Draft Municipal District of Cappamore-Kilmallock (Parking Places) (Amendment) Bye-Laws 2020 and explained the background to the exemption made for EV's from parking charges. Currently there is an exemption for EVs from parking fees for up to 4 hours whilst the EV is at a charging point. This exemption was adopted in September 2018 for 24 months. This is due to expire in September 2020 and it is recommended that the Committee approve the draft Bye-Laws to be discussed at a Municipal District meeting with a view to them being put on public display over the summer period.

Cllr Teefy welcomed the opportunity to discuss the matter at the District meeting.

The recommendation was proposed by Cllr. Leddin (J) and seconded by Cllr. Butler.

Item 5: Mobility Plan- Guiding Limerick through Covid-19:

The Chair, Cllr. Leddin welcomed the discussion saying there has been a lot of important debate in terms of the plan. He added that there are 3 aspects to the plan, which are the Cultural, Business and Public Realm aspects. The objective is that it will increase footfall into the city and will help to support businesses and generate revenue. He added that this is an opportune time in this SPC for the Members and non-elected Members to discuss and express their views.

The members of the Committee discussed the proposals and were largely welcoming of them. They raised concerns about the need to balance the needs of the public and those of traders.

Mr. Kennedy stated that the plan is a proposal for a 3-month period it is key is to get footfall and attractions into the city. He confirmed that there has been ongoing consultation with stakeholders, traders and the Advisory Forum. He stated that it is the aim of the Executive that this plan meets the many expectations and needs of the different stakeholder groups, and complies with the public health requirements of the post-Covid re-opening. It was always considered that this would be a draft proposal.

Mr. Kennedy advised that it was agreed at a recent Metropolitan District meeting that there would be a Public Consultation period, and the closing date is tomorrow, the 12th June 2020. At present submissions are being collated and a recommendation will be made on Monday next, the 15th June to the Advisory Forum. It is hoped that agreement will be reached and the Plan will be presented to the Metropolitan District meeting next week. The formal adoption will be at the Metropolitan District meeting to be held next week.

He confirmed that there is no formal approval required today because all the submissions received have to be collated.

Item 6: Update on O'Connell Street Revitalisation Project:

Cllr Leddin (J) stated that the Members will recall that they approved the €9m upgrade of the O'Connell St. project last September. He added that the project would retain the two lanes of traffic going up O'Connell St., one for buses and one for vehicular traffic. He added that because of COVID-19, in his view, the plan needs to be revisited before it goes out to Tender. He requested that this item be put on Agenda today just to gauge some level of interest from Members.

The Committee discussed the proposals and expressed concerns regarding space for cars in the city both during and after construction. Some members expressed concern that the O'Connell St. works and those proposed for the Opera Centre would co-incide with each other causing disruption to traffic.

Cllr. Ryan (M) requested clarity from the Chair on what he envisages needs to be done differently towards what has been planned and approved for O'Connell St. Cllr. Leddin explained that the plan involves two lanes, one a dedicated bus lane, the other lane for traffic. His suggestion is to reduce that to one lane for buses and re-route the traffic coming into the city around the various adjacent streets; and to part pedestrianise the street. He wished to clarify that he supports the idea of public transport on O'Connell St. and that he uses a car and is not anti- car.

Members asked the Executive what would happen if the Members were to go back and re-visit the plan, what would the effects be on the planning stage of it, how would it effect the funding that has been secured for it, and also what effect would it have on the timeline.

Mr. Gallagher, Senior Engineer advised that he staunchly defends what is being proposed on O'Connell St. because it reflects what needs to be done to invigorate Limerick city centre. He explained that the way to invigorate the city is to make it easy to access and explained the modes of transport required to do that.

He stated that LCCC continues to promote walking and cycling infrastructure so that people in the general Metropolitan area can walk and cycle with ease. In addition to this public transport will be gradually developed over the years and by the time it is in place on O'Connell St. it is hoped that social distancing will no longer be an issue.

He explained that the second important mode is by private car and continued that people also need to be able to drive into the city centre and park their cars. Mr. Gallagher stressed that these are two different modes of transport which are not in conflict with each other but work together. In order to invigorate the city-centre an effective public and active mode transport strategy is required, but the private car also needs to be facilitated, particularly when travelling from outside the city in areas with a poor public transport service. He continued that the Transport Strategy envisages an east west public transport corridor which runs from Castletroy to the city centre to Raheen. These, he said, are important residential centres, and argued that the public transport proposals in the LSMATS will only succeed if the service proposed meets the desire lines of the passengers. In the longer term, he continued, the vision is for a two-way public transport corridor on O'Connell St.

Mr. Gallagher highlighted that an effective Transport Strategy means there has to be two-way public transport movement O'Connell St. He noted that in between the maximum bus frequency of every 5 minutes, there would be no other traffic on O'Connell St., therefore it would be a very pedestrian friendly street. He also stated that if the public transport proposal for O'Connell Street is amended, it will affect the ease of cars coming into the city-centre.

He concluded that the important factor in allowing public transport on O'Connell St. is that it allows people to access the city centre. He added that if public transport is not allowed where it is most effective, the Plan will be seriously compromised, in terms of public transport but also for cars.

Mr. Kennedy confirmed that substantial funding has received for the project from the following sources: ERDF, URDF, NTA and the Council's own resources. He stated that there are deadlines in relation to the spending of that funding and that an approved Part VIII is in place. He added that the plan has been reviewed internally and also with some of the funding bodies in relation to post COVID.

He added that there are no alternative sources of funding and if this funding is lost, the project will in severe danger of not proceeding. He reiterated that the project has planning permission, has gone through public consultation, has the funding in place, and it is felt that the impact of COVID is a temporary one, and the project is ready to proceed.

Mr. Gallagher confirmed that once a Part VIII is passed, it cannot be undone. A review would mean that it has to go back through the planning process again and this would put the proposed funding in danger.

Cllr. Ryan (M) proposed that the plan goes ahead as agreed with the two lanes. His view was that if the proposal does not work correctly there will be the opportunity going forward to review and amend, whereas if the current plan does not proceed as per the Part VIII and it is done with a single lane, adjustments cannot be made.

Mr. Kennedy also advised that in relation to Part VIII, once a decision is made by the Members, it is gone through the public consultation stage so it's a matter for the Executive then to proceed with instructions according to the Part VIII that was passed in September 2019.

Mr. Kennedy advised that the aim is to go to Tender and commence construction in 3- or 4-months' time and agreed with Members that while traffic numbers are down, this is an optimal time to do the construction work. It was agreed that the existing Part VIII adequately caters for social distancing, and it was agreed not to re-visit this Part VIII and that the project would proceed to tender without delay.

Item 7: A.O.B.

None.

The Chair thanked the Members for their discussions and the meeting then concluded.

Is mise le meas,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Redden', written over a horizontal line.

Chairperson of the Travel & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee