

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE, LIMERICK, ON MONDAY, 15th JUNE, 2020 at 09:45 A.M.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor James Collins, Cathaoirleach

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Benson, Butler, Costelloe, Daly, Hartigan, Kiely, Kilcoyne, Leddin, McSweeney, Murphy, Novak Uí Chonchúir, O’Dea, O’Donovan, O’Hanlon, O’Sullivan, Secas, Sheahan, Sheehan, Slattery and Talukder.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director, Service Operations (Mr. K. Lehane), Meetings Administrator (Mr. J. Clune), A/Senior Planner, Planning and Environmental Services (Mr. S. Duclot), Executive Planner, Planning & Environmental Services (Ms. R. O’Donnell), Communications Officer (Mr. D. Tierney), A/ Administrative Officer, Corporate Services (Mr. P. Williams), Staff Officer, Corporate Services (Ms L. Creamer), Clerical Officer, Planning & Environmental Services (Ms. J. Enright).

The Cathaoirleach commenced the meeting by welcoming all Councillors back to the Chamber after the Covid-19 break in meetings.

Councillor Daly proposed an adjournment for five minutes to discuss the GMA Allocations. This was seconded by Councillor O’Hanlon. Councillor Benson pointed out that the GMA allocations were already discussed and agreed at local electoral area briefings and she then proposed to proceed with the meeting and this was seconded by Councillor Costelloe. The meeting administrator then called on members to vote by show of hands on the proposal to adjourn the meeting, which resulted in the adjournment being defeated. The meeting then proceeded.

1. Adoption of Minutes

Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick held on 9th March, 2020.

Proposed by Councillor Butler;
Seconded by Councillor Councillor Leddin;
And Resolved:

“That the draft Minutes, as circulated, be taken as read and adopted and signed”.

2. Disposal of Land

- (a) Circulated, report of the Senior Staff Officer, Housing Support Services dated 30th March, 2020 setting out proposals to dispose of the Freehold Interest of premises consisting of a dwelling house situate at 31 McDermott Avenue, Janesboro, Limerick and the intention to bring a Section 183 Notice to Full Council in this regard, for approval.

The report, as circulated, was noted by Members.

(b) Circulated, report of the Senior Staff Officer, Housing Support Services dated 30th March, 2020 setting out proposals to dispose of the Freehold Interest of premises consisting of a dwelling house situate at 1 Clarke Avenue, Janesboro, Limerick and the intention to bring a Section 183 Notice to Full Council in this regard, for approval.

The report, as circulated, was noted by Members.

(c) Circulated, report of the Senior Staff Officer, Housing Support Services dated 26th May, 2020 setting out proposals to dispose of the Freehold Interest of premises consisting of a dwelling house situate at 29 Marian Avenue, Roxboro Road,, Limerick and the intention to bring a Section 183 Notice to Full Council in this regard, for approval.

The report, as circulated, was noted by Members.

3. Support Services Directorate

(a) General Municipal Allocations 2020-2024

The Cathaoirleach read out the proposed General Municipal Allocations 2020-2024. Councillor Daly proposed an ammendment to the GMA allocation to include €50,000 for the upgrade of the Caherdavin Men's shed. He also proposed that the allocation for the upgrade of the Peoples Park Playground be reduced from €50,000 to €25,000 and the allocation for the upgrade of the O'Brien Park Playground be reduced from €50,000 to €25,000 also. Following discussion, it was agreed that the GMA allocations were already discussed and agreed at local electoral area briefings. It was proposed by Councillor Butler, seconded by Councillor Sheehan and agreed to approve the following allocations under the General Municipal Allocations 2020-2024 :

Limerick City North

€100,000 Construction of Childrens Playground in Caherdavin area
 €100,000 Construction of Footpaths on the inside of the perimeter fence in Garryowen Green
 €100,000 Public Realm Improvements in Ballynanty to include road repairs and light pillars
 €100,000 50 / 50 Split – The upgrade of The Peoples Park and O'Brien Park Playgrounds
 €100,000 Construction of Park / Playground in Corbally

Limerick City East

€100,000 Boundary wall at Mount St. Oliver Graveyard
 €100,000 Improvement of The Boro Field/Public Realm Colbert Avenue, Janesboro
 €100,000 Footpath extension on Peafield Road (final), Evanwood Playground and footpaths at Milford Grange, Kilbane and Castletroy Heights
 €100,000 Provision of Community Park, Castleconnell
 € 50,000 Upgrade of The People's Park Playground
 € 50,000 Safety Measures at Roxboro School and Derrybeg Cross

Limerick City West

€100,000 Construction of Patrickswell Community Centre

€ 50,000	Upgrade of The People's Park Playground
€ 50,000	Cricket Crease / Muslim Graveyard
€100,000	Baggot Estate Improvements
€100,000	Raheen / Dooradoyle / Mungret Community Facility
€100,000	Development of the disused Irish Cement Railway Line Greenway

(b) Annual Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick

The meeting administrator Mr. Clune explained that it was necessary to set the date and venue for the Annual meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick given the proposal to host the annual meeting in the Council Chamber, Dooradoyle. Mr. Clune advised that government guidelines were that meetings should be limited to two hours.

It was proposed by Councillor O'Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Hartigan, and unanimously agreed to hold the Annual Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick at 11.00 a.m. on Monday, 15th June, 2020 in the Council Chamber, Dooradoyle.

4. Service Operations Directorate

Strategic Housing Development Application at Walkers Lane, Annacotty, Limerick

Mr. S. Duclot, A/Senior Planner, was present to deliver a presentation on the proposed development at Walkers Lane, Annacotty, Limerick. The Cathaoirleach asked the meeting if there was a need to have this presentation given that the presentation had already been delivered at local area electoral briefings. Councillor Butler proposed that the presentation not be given and that the meeting should move instead to questions in relation to the development. This was seconded by Councillor Kiely and agreed.

Members then discussed various concerns they had in relation to the proposed development at Walkers Lane which included:

- Main concern is density, density is higher than set out in the Castletroy Local Area Plan and higher relative to other recent planning applications in the area.
- Residents have raised concerns in relation to excavation, noise, large construction vehicles.
- Concerns regarding height of 3 to 5 stories, two storeys not permitted along the road historically.
- Visual impact on existing estates, potential overlooking issues of existing properties, inaccuracies in terms of assessment /survey drawings.
- Outside 15 mins walk to UL/Castletroy Shopping Centre
- Playground – more recreational facilities needed in the area.
- Parking is deficient
- Concerns regarding levels of traffic generated and a single access point to development
- Accessed off a narrow road (Walkers Lane)
- Consideration in relation to the recorded monuments on site

Mr. S Duclot then addressed some of the concerns above, stating that Limerick City and County Council were not the deciding authority, and that the purpose of his presence was to outline the proposed development to Members. He also outlined that the pre-planning process had been completed in full. Mr. Duclot stated that all amendments and observations will be taken on board

and form part of the Chief Executive's report for An Bord Pleanála. Mr. Duclot also advised that he would send a Strategic Housing Development presentation to the meeting administrator for circulation to Members on foot of a request for same.

It was proposed by Councillor Kiely, seconded by Councillor Secas, and unanimously agreed that the Member's concerns, as outlined at the meeting, be included as part of the Chief Executive's report to An Bord Pleanála on the proposed Strategic Housing Development application.

QUESTIONS

5. Question submitted by Councillor E. Secas

I will ask at the next meeting how much waste has the Council removed in the Metropolitan area during the Covid 19 period; how many complaints of illegal dumping have been received and how many have been resolved.

REPLY: The amount of waste collected from the 17th March 2020 to the 31st April 2020 weighted 141.28 tonnes. This weight includes illegal dumping, street sweepings and waste collected from litter bins. Data for May is not yet available from the waste contractor. There were 354 illegal dumping complaints / cases received by the Domestic Water and Litter team between the 17th March 2020 and the 5th June 2020 for the Metropolitan District. To date, 253 cases / complaints have been resolved.

6. Question submitted by Councillor E. Secas

Overlaying of Upper Carey's Road was included in the three year programme 2016-2019 and €37,800.00 was allocated in the 2017 Metropolitan GMA for all Upper Carey's Road but to date Upper Carey's Road ("The Quarry" side) hasn't been done. Can the Council explain why and advise when they will overlay this side of the road.

REPLY: I refer to works carried out at Upper Carey's Road in 2017 and 2018, which entailed extensive restoration improvement, and footpath works on Upper Carey's Road.

The Upper Carey's Road (Quarry side) is 150m long approximately by 5m wide and would cost €30,000 to surface with stone mastic asphalt surfacing.

I accept that works are required on the Quarry side and these works could be completed in 2020 if there is adequate budgets available at the end of the year, if not this will be included for 2021 Restoration Improvement Scheme.

7. Question submitted by Councillor S. Novak Uí Chonchúir

I will ask at the next meeting how many dog wardens there are in the City, which areas of the City they cover, how many fines have been issued for dog fouling in 2019 and 2020 respectively, and how many fines have been paid in same periods? I will also ask for the number and locations of the dog waste bins and the frequency of emptying.

REPLY: There are two dog wardens employed by Limerick City and County Council who cover all

of the City and County. A total of seven fines were issued for dog fouling in the Metropolitan District for 2019, all of which have been paid. There are three dog waste bins maintained by the Domestic Waste and Litter Team. These are located at Dooradoyle, Gouldavoher and Raheen. These bins are emptied fortnightly. There are an additional three dog waste bins located on the Condell Road and one on Summerville Avenue which are maintained by external contractors. These are collected twice weekly or more frequently during the summer months as required.

8. Question submitted by Councillor S. Novak Uí Chonchúir

I will ask at the next meeting on the progress of the roll out of the County Limerick Special Speed Limit Byelaws 2019 for National, Regional and Local Roads. In particular in respect to the special speed limit of 30kph: what is the level of implementation achieved and which traffic calming measures were installed to ensure compliance.

REPLY: The Special Speed Limit Bye-Laws were adopted at the full meeting of the Council on the 23rd September 2019 with the 1st November being the date the bye-laws came into effect. Speed limits were installed where required on the non-national road network by Limerick City and County Council Operations staff and on the National Road network by Contractors for Transport Infrastructure Ireland. All Special Speed Limits contained in the current Bye-Laws, including the 30Kph Special Speed Limits are in place.

The introduction of 30 Kph Special Speed Limits in housing estates is a specific programme funded annually by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport that includes for the installation of 30Kph and "Slow Zone" signage. Physical traffic calming measures do not form part of the programme.

It should be noted that additional 30kph Special Speed Limits will be introduced in more housing estates across Limerick later this year. A full list of estates will be circulated to all Elected Members shortly.

9. Question submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan

I will ask at the next meeting for an update on the current use of Cleeves Site and the possibility of cultural and community organisations to use this space, for example, boat building schools or local street theatre companies that require space.

REPLY: Limerick Twenty Thirty is managing the redevelopment of the Cleeves Site and is currently in the procurement process for a team that will be appointed to develop a masterplan for the Cleeves Riverside Quarter. The site is zoned 'City Centre Area' in the City Development Plan which means it's suitable for several uses including commercial, residential and educational. There may be opportunities for community usage before the construction begins on some of the site but currently there is Covid-19 / isolation housing accommodation by the HSE on the site.

10. Question submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan

I will ask at the next meeting what measurements and assessments are used by Council to measure performance of Limerick city centre and how these are incorporated into the design and development of the city.

REPLY: Measurement of the performance of the city centre can fall under a number of different headings; economic performance, trading data, physical infrastructure, traffic measurement, footfall counters, social, cultural and civic activities, commercial occupancy rates, etc.

The Council monitor information relating to specific city centre activities to inform them on specific Council initiatives and would periodically publish such data e.g. the Limerick Economic Monitor, Traffic Flow Data, Air Quality, Vacancy Rates, etc. The data and information collected is used by the Council in framing policy and strategic decision making e.g. Development Plan, Air Quality Plan, Festivals and Events Strategy, etc.

Other data is available from NOAC, who publish annual KPI's in relation to its function, scrutinising Local Authority performance against relevant indicators and from the Central Statistics Office who make available different census and survey data to the Local Authority.

11. Question submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan

I will ask at the next meeting for usage figures for the public toilets on Upper Mallow Street and Bedford Row between January 2019 and January 2020.

REPLY: The usage figures for the public toilets between the 1st January, 2019 and the 31st January, 2020 are as follows:

Upper Mallow Street	1,683
Bedford Row	6,738

12. Question submitted by Councillor C. Slattery

I will ask at the next meeting, regarding verges and roundabouts left to grow for bee pollination, when these verges, roundabouts etc are cut can the cuttings be collected please by the Council.

REPLY: The Council where feasible will collect the grass cuttings from verges and roundabouts left to grow for bee pollination.

13. Question submitted by Councillor C. Slattery

I will ask at the next meeting, in relation to people cleaning up their Community, why is Limerick City and County Council against this and refusing to collect the rubbish that is bagged and the Council asking the public not to clean their area. In this unprecedented time this is the only activity that some people have in their area. Can this activity be allowed.

REPLY: As a result of social restrictions associated with COVID-19 the normal levels of support to community clean-ups was curtailed to ensure support and respect for compliance with Government advice. As restrictions ease and communities are expected to be able to mobilise, Limerick City and County Council will be supportive of such efforts to similar levels as previous years, and within the resources available collect street clean-up material provided advance notice is advised.

NOTICES OF MOTION

14. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor F. Kilcoyne (to be referred to the Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee)

I will move at the next Metropolitan Meeting, to request free car parking for Limerick city to be enacted for one year, when Limerick is ready for reopening (which is now) after this Covid-19 pandemic. I believe that to bring footfall back into our city, shoppers should be given 3 hours free car parking at any time of the day to help retailers.

It was agreed to refer this Notice of Motion to the Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee.

15. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Hartigan

I will move at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District that the Council increase bin provision, litter warden patrols and waste collection at public amenity areas in response to their increased use due to Covid-19 restrictions. I am asking that this include but not be restricted to Shannon Banks, Plassey, Annacotty, Worlds End Castleconnell, The Ferry Castleconnell and Clare Glens.

In proposing the Motion, Cllr Hartigan referred to the large amount of litter left in/next to bins in the aforementioned areas and requested that additional refuse bins be provided. He acknowledged the excellent work being done by the tidy towns groups in these areas. He also spoke of how a lot of rubbish has been taken home by residents as the bins are full and that some bins have domestic waste in them.

In supporting Councillor Hartigan, Members asked that the bin collections service be reviewed and that bins are emptied more frequently. Signage was requested for the recycling centre on the Dock Road. It was also asked that mobile CCTV be considered for this centre. Concern was also expressed at the cost of waste collection and disposal. The litter problem in the Peoples Park and on the river banks, and the need for greater litter enforcement was also referred to. A number of Members commended the voluntary work cleaning up the riverbed on the North Shannon Bank.

In reply the Director of Service Mr. Lehane thanked members for their contributions and concurred with a lot of what was outlined. He also confirmed that the bins are serviced at weekends and that the Council would examine increased bin collections. He added that there are two bin collections each day in the city centre and that some resources have recently been diverted to the suburbs due to reduced footfall in the city centre due to Covid-19. He also pointed out that Litter wardens were very productive and a report was available on the number of fines issued. He commended the work of the tidy towns and other voluntary groups. He also advised Members that they can let him know in future if they see particular bins/areas that require attention and that he can divert resources accordingly.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Hartigan, seconded by Councillor Benson and agreed.

16. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Hartigan (to be referred to the Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee)

I will move at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District that the Council make evidence of a household waste collection service a condition of all tenancies and in cases of non-compliance the cost of waste collection is added to the customers rent bill.

It was agreed to refer this Notice of Motion to the Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee.

17. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Novak Uí Chonchúir (to be referred to the Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee)

I will move at the next meeting that the Council introduces a litter bin tagging system (QR codes) to identify each of its bins with a unique identifier number and QR code in order to map locations and maintain bin records to ensure that litter bins (including dog waste bins) are adequately serviced and maintained and that bins are located in the most appropriate locations to cater for levels of demand. This system should also allow for the public to scan the QR code and report any issues that they might encounter.

It was agreed to refer this Notice of Motion to the Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee.

18. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Novak Uí Chonchúir (to be referred to the Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee)

I will move at the next meeting that the Council introduces a special speed limit of 30kph as a default speed limit on roads within the entire Limerick City administrative area (that is in areas other than residential areas), and roads that can safely accommodate higher speeds and those requiring lower speeds be identified and listed in the bye-laws.

It was agreed to refer this Notice of Motion to the Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee.

19. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Benson (to be referred to the Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee)

I will move at the next meeting that this Council, monitor and review the public bin collection service, in the Metropolitan area and increase collections where necessary.

It was agreed to refer this Notice of Motion to the Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee.

20. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Benson

I will move at the next meeting that this Council, adopt a policy to support local business by purchasing goods and services from Limerick companies, where possible and within the parameters of the procurement process, while still achieving value for money.

REPLY: Limerick City and County Council's Procurement Policy reflects the importance of access to SME's in accordance with the EU Procurement Directive but it would not be in-line with the Directive to have a specific policy which stipulates that local businesses must be supported. However, while bearing this in mind Limerick City and County Council will endeavor to support SME's while seeking to achieve value for money. For Supplies & Services up to €25,000, Consultancy Services & Public Works up to €50,000 – quotations are sufficient and this provides an opportunity to examine the local market while adhering to procurement rules. Also, when buyers are advertising on the tendering sites (eTenders, Supplygov.) they are encouraged, where possible, to sub-divide contracts into Lots which facilitates SME's/local suppliers engagement in the market.

Councillor Benson, in proposing the motion, commended the Council on the "Shop Limerick" campaign, and said it was a wonderful initiative aimed at encouraging people to support local businesses who need to be supported at this time. She asked that the Council review all suppliers of goods and services to the Council and switch to local businesses where possible - within the parameters of the procurement process and existing contracts. She also suggested that, further to above, the Council should be looking to source local suppliers for all other purchases including stationary, office supplies, litter bins, materials etc.

In reply to Members, the meeting administrator stated that Limerick City and County Council follow all procurement and tax guidelines and that tax clearance certs are required.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Costelloe and agreed.

21. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Costelloe

I will move at the next meeting that this Council write to Shannon Group, requesting an urgent meeting with the Council, to discuss the crisis that is unfolding and to take a wider view of the tourism sector across the Mid West and sit down with Limerick City and County Council and unions to see how jobs can be retained.

23. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor O. O'Sullivan

I will move at the next meeting that the Council seek an explanation from Shannon Heritage on why King John's Castle will only reopen for the period of July 20th to August 31st 2020 giving just a six-week window to encourage leisure tourists, instead of working to extend the season with other providers in the local tourism industry as they try to rebuild following the Covid-19 outbreak.

It was proposed by the Cathaoirleach to deal with Motions 21. and 23. together.

Councillor Costelloe, in proposing this motion, acknowledged the workers from Shannon Heritage who were seated in the Gallery. He stated that the proposed closure of King John's Castle at the end of August would have major financial implications for Limerick and the mid west region. King John's Castle is a primary tourist attraction and the closure of the Castle along with Bunratty Castle would have a knock-on effect on local tourism and businesses. He suggested that these sites should be removed from Shannon Group and transferred to The Office of Public Works and he proposed that the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht be written to on the matter.

Councillor O' Donovan requested a copy of the lease between Limerick City and County Council and Shannon Heritage that was signed in 1994.

Members enquired how it was proposed to close these sites on August 31st in Limerick and Bunratty, yet the sites that Shannon Heritage manage in Dublin are to remain open. All Members joined in supporting the staff of Shannon Heritage. The members called on the Council to write to CEO of Shannon Group to reverse the decision to close these facilities at the end of August.

Councillor Costelloe thanked Members for their support for this Notice of Motion and asked that a Special Meeting be called to discuss this matter further.

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor O' Sullivan and unanimously agreed.

22. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Costelloe

I will move at the next meeting that this Council calls on the Minister for Social Protection to engage with Debenhams to ensure a just settlement for former Debenhams workers, many who have given over 20 years of their working lives to the Company.

Councillor Costelloe, in proposing this motion, pointed out that Debenhams closed on 23rd March 2020 with 130 staff affected in Limerick and pointed out that some of the staff had over 30 years service. Staff were informed of the closure by email on 9th April. He called on the Council to ask the Minister for Social Protection to engage with Debenhams to ensure a just settlement for former Debenhams workers.

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Kilcoyne and unanimously agreed.

24. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor D. McSweeney

I will move at the next meeting of the Metropolitan area to call on the Minister for Finance to reduce the V.A.T. rate in the tourism and hospitality sector from 13.5% to 9% in an effort to support and stimulate the industry during this difficult period.

In proposing the motion, Councillor McSweeney recalled that in 2011 the Government reduced the VAT rate from 13.5% to 9% to encourage growth in this sector and that the need for similar action by the Government is needed now more than ever. He then questioned if a 4% reduction is enough to support this sector and a larger reduction may need to be considered. He highlighted that the hospitality sector forms a key part in the Irish Economy and in Limerick's economy and is worth in excess of 7.6bn per year to the Irish economy and the sector employs 180,000 people, that it is important the Government support these businesses as they begin to reopen over the coming weeks.

Councillor McSweeney then asked that Limerick City and County Council write to the Minister for Finance outlining the importance of the Tourism and Hospitality Sector not only to Limerick but the whole mid-west. Councillor O'Sullivan seconded the Motion.

Councillor Sheehan stated that he was opposed to this Motion adding that employers in the tourism and hospitality sector should pay adequate wages to all workers including seasonal workers.

Councillor Benson proposed the following amendment to the Motion;

“...conditional on the Irish Hotel Federation engaging with the Joint Labour Committees process and the introduction of Employment Regulation Orders”.

Councillor McSweeney agreed to the amendment.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor O’ Donovan and was agreed.

25. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor C. Sheehan

I will move at the next meeting of Limerick City and County Council that the Council oppose the decision by Aer Lingus to lay off its Shannon Airport staff, calls on Aer Lingus to commit to retaining cabin crew staff at Shannon and to engage with the Forsa union about their long term strategy for the airport and calls on the newly established Shannon Airport task force to restore 24 hour operations at the airport.

Councillor Sheehan, in proposing this Motion, stated that the Shannon-Heathrow route needs to be restored and there needs to be capital investment in the mid west region. He expressed concern that that the region is being actively discriminated against, and that he hoped the new Government would take Shannon Airport more seriously given the importance of it to the region.

The Motion was seconded by Cllr. Leddin and was agreed.

26. Correspondence

Correspondence was taken as read.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

Dated: _____