



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Limerick City & County Council's Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee held on Tuesday 20th October, 2020 at 3:30 p.m. by Webex Video Conference.

Members Present:

Cllrs. Leddin (Chair), Butler, Daly, Foley, Kilcoyne, McSweeney, Novak Uí Chonchúir, O'Donovan, O'Hanlon, Secas, Sheahan (J), Teefy, Ms. M Browne, Dr. C. Cahill, Ms. A Drake, Mr. B Harper, Mr. P. McCarthy.

Officials Present:

Mr. B. Kennedy, Mr. D. McGuigan, Mr. R. Gallagher, Mr. D. Slavin, Ms. M. Corrigan, Ms. K. McDonnell, Ms. A. Leahy, Ms. M. Fitzgerald.

Apologies: Cllr. M. Ryan

In Attendance: Cllr. O'Sullivan

The Chair opened the Meeting and welcomed the recently ratified PPN representatives - Ms. Maureen Browne representing Step Forward Disability Group, Ms. Ailish Drake representing Limerick Chapter of the Irish Georgian Society and Mr. Bruce Harper representing Limerick Cycling Campaign.

Item 1: Adopt Minutes of Travel and Transportation SPC Meeting of the 11th June 2020 and 14th September 2020

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee held on the 11th June 2020 and the 14th September 2020 were proposed by Cllr. Teefy, seconded by Cllr. Foley and adopted.

Item 2: To approve the proposed 2021 dates for the Travel & Transportation SPC Meetings:

Following discussion by the members, the following dates were agreed for the Travel and Transportation SPC Meetings for 2021. At the request of Ms. M Browne, the Committee agreed that all meetings would commence at 3:30pm:

- Tuesday 16th February
- Tuesday 20th April
- Tuesday 22nd June
- Tuesday 19th October
- Tuesday 14th December

Item 3: Discussion on LSMATS:

The Chair confirmed that the consultation period for the LSMATS has been extended to 30 October 2020, following a request by members to the NTA in September. He recommended to the Executive that in an effort to raise awareness that the consultation period was nearing completion, utilising the limerick.ie website and Twitter should be undertaken.

Mr. Harper asked if it was known how much the Strategy will increase carbon emissions. He also asked whether the Council had put a process in place where carbon proofing will be included in the evaluation of major decisions and projects, in accordance with the local authority Climate Charter.

Cllr. Secas asked whether the SPC supported the case for Ministerial review of the LSMATS.

In response to Mr. Harper's question Mr. Gallagher explained that the aim of the strategy is in favour of lowering carbon emissions in two ways.

1. The aim is for modal change in the metro area - to bring the car share down from high 60% to less than 50%.
2. The policy of the NTA is to introduce low emission public transport fleet by moving from the current diesel/petrol fleet over to hybrid vehicles in the interim, and ultimately to electric buses when they become available to the market.

Mr. Harper queried the timeframe to moving to net zero carbon emissions and expressed concern that the NTA do not know how much the increase will be from the present time.

In response Mr. Gallagher stated that the timeframe depends on the uptake of the strategy. The Council will put the infrastructure in place and will endeavour to bring about behavioural change in people. The change in mindset will determine the success of the strategy.

Mr. Kennedy added that the plan is linking in with the National Development Plan. The Council is currently examining frontloading most of the infrastructure over the next 7-10 years.

Mr. Harper requested a response to his earlier query regarding the processes for carbon proofing of projects.

In relation to Cllr. Secas' question Cllr. Leddin advised that several organisations have requested publicly a ministerial review of LSMATS, regarding concerns raised such as the data used, the timeframes on projects etc. Mr. Kennedy confirmed that the NTA have themselves

been in contact with the Minister for Transport and is awaiting a definitive response from his Office.

Cllr. O'Donovan asked if the NTA has done an online public meeting on LSMATS yet. Mr. Kennedy advised that due to Covid 19 restrictions, the NTA was unable to do its proposed public information sessions. However, a number of online engagements had been done. The NTA launched the LSMATS on the 2nd September and has had a number of workshops with local stakeholders through the Chamber of Commerce in recent weeks. A special briefing to the councillors was held on 2 September and a subsequent one to the Travel and Transportation SPC Committee on 14 September. He added that following the closing date, submissions will be reviewed and considered by the steering group in December/January 2021, at which point it will be brought to the members. He added that the Strategy will be incorporated into the Development Plan.

Item 4: Update on Sustainable Transport Projects:

Mr. Gallagher outlined the projects which are in progress currently:

- **O'Connell Street** –Construction to start in January 2021 on the first four blocks. It will be an 11-month contract and it is hoped to have it substantially completed before Christmas 2021.
- **Castletroy Urban Greenway** – cycleway/walkway linking side of Castletroy College to the Gaelscoil/GAA headquarters. Contractor to be appointed in the next 2 weeks. Anticipated to commence construction work in November and will be a 5/6-month construction period.
- **Milford/Plassey Park Road Junction Improvement** – Scheme involves putting in traffic lights, improved cycle and walking facilities. This scheme will link with UL/ NTP priority bus corridor to Limerick city centre, on which preliminary work has started.
- **Other Bus Corridors** - At this point it is anticipated that the other proposed bus corridors will be advanced as a bundle under a single contract.
- **Clare Street to Condell Road Cycleway** - Cycleway will link the Condell Road across Shannon Bridge onto the city quays and continue to link onto the cycleway to UL. Mr. Gallagher confirmed that consultants have been recently appointed for this scheme. Phase 1 will involve permanent cycling and pedestrian facilities on Shannon Bridge. An Options Report will be developed in November 2020.
- **Wickham Street to Clare Street Cycleway** – Continuation of works to link in with the Dublin Road.
- **UL to Annacotty Cycleway** - Currently examining the extension of the UL greenway out as far as Annacotty.
- **Pedestrian / cycle way bridges** – Currently examining if additional bridges are required, particularly on the Abbey river, or if active travel mode crossing points are required.
- **Castletroy Link Road** - Examining the linking of the Golf Links Road to the Kilbane roundabout with bus priority in place.
- **Raheen Cycleways** -

- St. Paul's Roundabout to Ballykeefe Roundabout to Dooradoyle Road - The scheme will introduce improved cycling and pedestrian facilities. It is planned to put a segregated cycle lane in later this year.
- Raheen Roundabout to Quinn's Cross Roundabout – This scheme is ready to go to public consultation with cycleways proposed for both sides of road and enhanced pedestrian facilities.
- Quinn's Cross Roundabout to St. Paul's Roundabout - This scheme is defined in the transport strategy and will involve land acquisition.
- **Traffic Management Plan for City Centre** - Currently examining strategic route plan due to requirement for displacement of existing traffic in the city.

Cllr. Secas raised three questions as follows:

1. How soon and how long will the works take on Milford Road/Plassey Park Junction scheme.
2. Update on the Castletroy Link Road, as Part 8 was to be in place in August.
3. Update in relation to Lower Golf Links Road.

In response Mr. Gallagher advised that the Part 8 on the Milford Road/Plassey Park Junction improvements will be going to the Metropolitan District meeting in November. It is then hoped to go to construction in early spring 2021.

Regarding the Castletroy Link Road, Mr. Gallagher advised that screening reports highlighted environmental issues which needed to be examined. The delay is close to being resolved.

In relation to Lower Golf Links Road, Mr. Gallagher advised that the delay resulted from getting a Section 50 agreement with the OPW, which relates to the size of the culverts under the road. This has now been resolved. It is anticipated that this scheme will go to Part 8 before Christmas 2020, and the CPO process may be required after that.

Cllr. O'Hanlon asked if there was any consideration given to a dedicated cycle path from Clare Street along by Canal up to UL. It is a shared path which is unsatisfactory for pedestrians.

Mr. Gallagher stated that creating a bigger area was explored at the time of development, however, he added that there are environment issues in terms of the impact on birds and the natural habitat which determined the extent of the development.

Cllr. Novak thanked Mr. Gallagher for the presentation and raised three questions as follows:

- Update on LIT to City Centre cycle route
- The type of planning expected for the Shannon Bridge and the quays area.
- If there is collaboration between Directorates, or is it purely Operations who are doing the projects from the July Stimulus funding.

In response Mr. Gallagher advised that a proposal has been developed for the LIT scheme which is currently being discussed with the NTA. Following feedback from the NTA, the scheme will go to public consultation before Christmas. He added that consultants are currently being appointed on the MIC to city centre scheme.

In relation to planning for Shannon Bridge this is currently in discussion to determine the appropriate option.

Regarding collaboration between Directorates, Mr. Gallagher advised that the Operations and Physical Development work in collaboration with each other. Physical Development put forward the schemes and the implementation on the ground is undertaken by Operations.

Ms. Drake asked in terms of public realm, if there is any interaction between the Directorates and if public realm considerations can be incorporated more into projects going forward.

Mr. Kennedy gave outline on the structure of the organisation and added that the Physical Development Directorate looks at the strategic elements including transport and environment, and liaises with the funding bodies such as the NTA or TII. When funding is secured, a schedule of works is agreed with the Operations Directorate. There are regular formal monthly meetings between the four strategic Directorates, the Operations Directorate and Design and Delivery.

Cllr. O'Donovan asked if there are any plans to revisit the Covid mobility proposals that were put in place over the summer. In response, Mr. Kennedy advised that the July Stimulus funding received from the NTA is to assist in upgrading active mode infrastructure. He advised that staff are working 100% as the allocation has to be spent before the end of the year.

Item 5: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Leddin

"I will move at the next Meeting that Limerick Metropolitan Council consider the placement of signalised pelican crossings and / or zebra crossings on both the Dooradoyle Road close to Huntsfield Roundabout and also on the Mulcair Road near Stoneyhurst to facilitate the safe crossing of elderly and school children living in the area".

In proposing the motion Cllr. Leddin stated that representations have been made to him regarding safety issues particularly at the Huntsfield roundabout, Kilteragh and also on Mulcair Road. Cllr Secas seconded the Motion.

In a written response Mr. Kennedy stated that the need for crossing on Dooradoyle Road will be investigated in the NTA Sustainable Transport Project, now at initial design stage.

With regard to the proposal on Mulcair Road, the Limerick City and County Council Traffic Department will examine whether or not the warrants are met for the provision of an additional controlled pedestrian crossing.

In the meantime, Limerick City and County Council will upgrade the road markings on all approaches to the Huntsfield Roundabout, including markings advising motorists to exercise extreme caution.

Cllr. Leddin welcomed the response.

Cllr. O'Donovan advised that she asked at the September Metropolitan District meeting for speed ramps on Mulcair Road, which is not yet completed. Mr. Kennedy in response advised that the matter will be referred to the Operations Directorate.

Cllr. Novak commented that pelican crossings have a flashing green man and an amber light for cars, and in her opinion puts pedestrians and cars in direct conflict. She asked if signalised crossings could be considered in the future instead of pelican crossing.

In response, Mr. Gallagher advised that the common practice is that zebra crossings with flashing beacon are used close to roundabouts and push button ones are used elsewhere. He added that the flashing beacon is a good traffic calming facility and does not give wrong information to the pedestrian or motorists.

Cllr. Butler stated that the Council needed to get prepared for social distancing requirements in the run up to Christmas.

Item 6: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor D. Butler (referred from Metro Meeting)

"I call on Limerick City and County Council to create a parking permit system for vans used by construction workers and trades people carrying out works in city centre buildings. This is to support the renovation and re-imagining of our city centre buildings as without this it makes it unattractive for those trades to take up work in the city centre".

In proposing the Motion, Cllr. Butler referred to difficulties facing people living in the city getting the services of a tradesperson, due to difficulties with parking outside the premises.

In a written response Mr. Kennedy stated that currently in the Metropolitan area the Traffic Management Unit may temporarily suspend the on-street parking regulatory requirement in respect of tariff and the requirement to remove from the street after 2 hours, where extensive building operations necessitate the delivery of materials or the use of plant and equipment over periods of up to seven days.

Thereafter where Traffic Management is satisfied that construction vehicle parking or regular delivery is warranted, a permit may be issued at the rate of €8.00 per day for a period agreed relating to a building programme. This provision is called a Construction Access/Parking Permit.

Such permits are not issued in respect of regular deliveries to building fit out professions, or trades requiring unnecessary on street parking at the expense of the parking requirements of shoppers and visitors to the city.

Mr. Kennedy added that there is a balance required between trying to get people in to spend money in the city and trying to ensure they have space to park. He added that Limerick has a very reasonable tariff for parking.

Cllr. Butler argued that this is prioritising people coming into the city but the Council is not supporting people living in the city centre and suggested €20 charge for a small contractor for a 2-week period to park outside a premises is reasonable.

Mr. Kennedy advised that he will discuss it further with Traffic Management and will revert to Cllr. Butler.

Item 7: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Novak Uí Chonchúir (referred from Metro Meeting)

“I will move at the next meeting that Limerick City and County Council prepares and adopts a footpath standard to guide all publicrealm interventions, with a purpose to have a consistent and uniform approach in terms of finish and safety, and to only install infrastructure that is safe and accessible for people of all ages and all abilities”.

In proposing the Motion, Cllr. Novak stated that it is challenging for those walking on poorly maintained surfaces, especially for people with disabilities and for parents with small children and buggies. She would like to see a design manual completed and standards adopted.

Mr. Gallagher advised that some of the problems are down to poor repair of footpaths. He added that Operations are currently working very hard to improve those footpaths and will give a better standard all around.

In a written response Mr. Gallagher stated that Limerick City and County Council endeavours to provide 2m wide footpaths, where feasible, in new construction projects. These footpaths are constructed to ensure that they are safe and accessible, with the provision of appropriate blister paving at crossing points and appropriate dropped kerbing.

The materials used are predominantly concrete but other materials - typically paving blocks and stone sets - are sometimes used if appropriate for the overall public realm. It should be noted that the Council is currently in the early stages of preparing a Public Realm Strategy for Limerick City and a recommended framework palette of footpath materials will form part of that work. A lot of the problems that have occurred in non-concrete footpaths have been down to poor construction practice. That has now become a much-improved skill set amongst contractors.

Mr. Gallagher added that footpaths will comply with Health and Safety requirements and will meet the 2m standard to allow proper distancing where feasible. There will be areas where it may be appropriate to put in a concrete footpath and it will depend on the area. He referred to the public realm on the O’Connell Street project which will not be concrete but a higher-level type. In all cases the material put down will be done to a very high standard.

Cllr. Secas wished to highlight that a lot of work has been carried out on footpaths recently and she would like to commend the work of Operations.

Cllr. O’Hanlon wished to draw attention to an issue with the surface on Catherine Street which he raised before, that when it got wet people slipped and there were a number of claims as a

result. He suggests sourcing the material locally and he would like assurance that when the O'Connell Street project commences that the materials used will not get slippery when wet.

Cllr. Novak thanked Mr. Gallagher for the response and stated that the question has more to do with the consistency / approach that is in place, and asked who is responsible for the development of the public realm strategy. She suggested a lot of the problems on paving is that heavy vehicles are driving on them.

Mr. Gallagher assured the members that the materials to be used on O'Connell Street will be skid/slip resistant and will not be an issue when wet.

In relation to the public realm the Physical Development Department is now preparing the tender documents and will be going to market before Christmas 2020.

Item 8: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Novak Uí Chonchúir (referred from Metro Meeting)

"I will move at the next meeting that the Council develop a School Streets Pilot Initiative, which would identify and include at least two primary schools with an aim to address and tackle the health and physical safety problems associated with traffic congestion around schools; road safety risks caused by cars driving near the school and inconsiderate parking; car dependent, less physically active children; and the damage to children's lungs from cars parked with their engines running".

In proposing the Motion, Cllr. Novak stated that she submitted the Motion at the Metro July Meeting and was hoping that the Council would take a more proactive role with children returning to school in September. She added that parking and driving on footpaths with engines running is happening in most schools. She is asking today that the Council commits to produce a pilot for 'school street Initiative' and work with the green schools, principals and local residents to make it happen as soon as possible.

In a written response, Mr. Kennedy stated that in August 2020 assistance was requested by a collective group of secondary schools concerned with safe access for their students, having regard to social distancing requirements. On Wednesday 2 September 2020, an initiative, similar to 'School Streets' was commenced in the South Circular Road area of Limerick City.

Limerick City and County Council in conjunction with the management of St. Clement's College, Laurel Hill Secondary School, Laurel Hill Coláiste and An Garda Síochána Community Policing Unit implemented traffic restrictions on Laurel Hill Avenue from 08:00 – 09:00 and 14:30 – 16:00 daily Monday to Friday for an initial trial period of 3.5 weeks. During this trial period, students were strongly encouraged to walk and / or cycle to school and parents encouraged to do drop offs and collections away from Laurel Hill Avenue / South Circular Road where possible, to avoid congestion at the school gates.

During the initial trial period, a barrier was put in place at the junction of Laurel Hill Avenue with South Circular Road during the stated hours; with access only available to residents during those hours.

The second phase of the trial commenced on Tuesday 29 September 2020. The barrier was removed from the junction with the South Circular Road and the three schools communicated with all parents and students strongly encouraging them to continue obeying and respecting the road closure and appealing to them to not drive down the avenue. The schools continue to have a staff member present at the school gate to act as a deterrent to those who may try to drive down the avenue to the school gate. To date, the trial has been positively received by all stakeholders.

The Council are now evaluating this scheme to determine the success of the trial and to determine if it could be continued on a voluntary basis with school support.

Requests for similar assistance from other schools will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Kennedy added that a number of other schools have been in touch with the Council and that the Transport Planner, Karen McDonnell, is engaging directly with the primary and secondary schools.

Cllr. Novak argued that the majority of the schools mentioned in the response are secondary schools and asked if this can also apply to primary schools. She would ask that rather than waiting for the schools to contact the council, to be proactive and engage with the Green Schools and develop an actual initiative of school streets similar to the Fingal County Council Scheme.

Mr. Kennedy advised that Ms. McDonnell had been engaging with the green schools. She welcomes any suggestions and is open to meeting with anybody to provide assistance. She has met schools who have already implemented some changes. He agreed to ask her to contact Cllr. Novak directly.

Cllr. O'Donovan commented that the Laurel Hill Avenue has worked out very well and the feedback she has received from the school and parents was very positive. She visited a number of schools in Dublin, who have put very simple measures in place. She met the Director of Services in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council who said he would be happy to meet anyone from Limerick to give advice. She hopes someone might take him up on the offer.

Cllr. Leddin suggested that there should be greater collaboration between the Council and the LCETB on these matters and that Ms. McDonnell could explore this with the Director of Schools in the ETB.

Cllr. Butler wished to inform the meeting that he has been liaising with Ms. McDonnell regarding a number of schools and the feedback from schools on their interaction with Karen has been hugely positive. He would ask Mr. Kennedy to support her and increase her capacity to develop plans when funding becomes available. He suggested getting a few schools done first and then get other schools to buy in.

Item 9: Any Other Business:

Mr. Harper asked if it is possible to get drawings on the cycle plans and if Council can share quality audits. He added that under DMURS, Quality Audits need to be completed taking into account cycling, walking and safety.

Mr. Gallagher advised that drawings are not available at present as different options are being examined. They can be shared for any scheme when an Options Report is completed and as soon as they go through consultation.

Mr. Gallagher confirmed that any design completed will be in compliance with DMURS. With regard to including quality audits as part of the consultation package, Mr. Gallagher advised that the Council will keep the matter under consideration.

The Chair thanked the members for their participation and as we enter into level 5 restrictions for 6 weeks, he wished everybody well and declared the meeting closed.