**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT ONLINE MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK HELD ON MONDAY, 18TH JANUARY, 2021 at 09:45 A.M.**

**PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:** Councillor Sarah Kiely, Cathaoirleach

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**:

Councillors Benson, Butler, Collins, Costelloe, Daly, Hartigan, Kilcoyne, Leddin, McSweeney, Murphy, Novak Uí Chonchúir, O'Dea, O'Donovan, O'Sullivan, Secas, Sheahan (M), Sheehan (C), Slattery and Talukder.

**OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Director, Service Operations (Mr. K. Lehane), Meetings Administrator (Mr. J. Clune), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services and Governance (Mr. M. Leahy), Senior Engineer, Travel and Transportation (Mr. R. Gallagher), A/Senior Planner, Economic Development (Ms. M. Woods), Senior Executive Planner, Strategic and Forward Planning (Ms. K. Burke), Executive Planner, Economic Development (Ms. L. Bolger), Assistant Staff Officer, Corporate Services and Governance (Ms. S. Carroll).

At the outset, the Cathaoirleach welcomed Members, Officials, Members of the Press and the Public to the first Online Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick. She noted that the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Mr Darragh O'Brien TD, had signed an Order in October 2020 allowing for Local Authority meetings to be held remotely and online.
Following the signing of this Order, the Metropolitan District incorporated this change into their Metropolitan District Standing Orders at the November 2020 Metropolitan District Meeting.

The Cathaoirleach confirmed that all decisions or votes, therefore, taken by Elected Members at such meetings (whether physically or remotely present) have the same status in law as decisions or votes taken at a physical meeting.

This was especially important at this time to ensure the efficient carrying out of important Council business, while also protecting the health and safety of Elected Members and local authority staff.

**1. Adoption of Minutes**

Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick held on 21st December, 2020.

Proposed by Councillor Butler;
Seconded by Councillor Sheehan (C);
And Resolved:

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

Councillor McSweeney requested that the minutes in future, would distinguish between Councillors Conor Sheehan and Michael Sheahan.

**2. Economic Development**

**Draft Southern Environs Local Area Plan 2021 – 2027**

Circulated, copy of the Chief Executive's Report dated 17th December, 2020 on the Draft Southern Environs Local Area Plan 2021 – 2027, for consideration by Members.

The Acting Senior Planner outlined the timeline and process for consideration of the Local Area Plan. The Members noted that some suggested additional amendments had been received in relation to the Draft Southern Environs Local Area Plan 2021-2027. Following some discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Butler, seconded by Councillor O'Sullivan and agreed to defer this item to an Adjourned Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick. The Members also agreed that a Briefing Update for Members on the proposed amendments should take place before the Adjourned Meeting.

**QUESTIONS**

**3. Question submitted by Councillor A. Talukder (to be referred to the Local Electoral Area Briefings)**

***I will ask at the next Metropolitan Meeting for new walking path lights and rain shelter for Mungret Park.***

It was agreed to refer this Question to the Local Electoral Area Briefings.

**4. Question submitted by Councillor S. Novak Uí Chonchúir**

***I will ask at the next meeting for the breakdown of works under the title of funding committed to 14/12/2020 for active travel improvements in Steamboat Quay (€141,266.67 of €200,000.00).***

**REPLY**: I refer to the above Question and the following outlines the works carried out at Steamboat Quay under the July Stimulus NTA schemes. Note that these works were carried out during Q4 2020 and will continue during week beginning 18th January 2021, weather permitting;

- Macadam overlay works and road lining
- Public lighting
- Bollard replacement
- Hardwood decking
- Drainage works

**5. Question submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan**

***I will ask at the next meeting for the location of each public bin in Limerick City West Electoral Area.***

**REPLY**: The location of each litterbin in Limerick City is shown on the attached maps. A map of the location of bins in the Dooradoyle / Raheen / Mungret area will be provided in due course.

Maps showing the location of litterbins were circulated as part of the reply.

**6. <u>Question submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan</u>**

***I will ask at the next meeting for the evaluation, feedback and data collection that was carried out for the South Circular Road Covid-19 mobility plans that were implemented during July/August 2020.***

**<u>REPLY</u>**: Limerick City and County Council placed a counter on S.C.R. near Mary I campus in order to count pedestrians and cyclists during the traffic restriction measures implemented during Summer 2020. Attached find daily figures of pedestrians/cyclists recorded during this time.

The Council is now actively progressing a permanent proposal to enhance active travel measures along South Circular Road and the data recorded during the Covid-19 summer restrictions forms an important input into the development of the future proposals on this road.

The data figures will be evaluated by the appointed consultants working on the project and will inform the decision-making process. Feedback from the numerous submissions made by residents/road users during the summer restricted traffic period will be assessed in formulating decisions relating to the future active travel measures to be implemented. A formal consultation process will follow in order to ensure the best final solution will be put in place.

**<u>South Circular Road (Mary I)</u>**

August 13, 2020 12:00 AM → September 30, 2020 11:30 PM

| Time | Pedestrian | Cyclist |
|---|---|---|
| Thursday 13 August 2020 | 576 | 49 |
| Friday 14 August 2020 | 634 | 57 |
| Saturday 15 August 2020 | 452 | 61 |
| Sunday 16 August 2020 | 466 | 54 |
| Monday 17 August 2020 | 450 | 60 |
| Tuesday 18 August 2020 | 741 | 58 |
| Wednesday 19 August 2020 | 518 | 62 |
| Thursday 20 August 2020 | 440 | 78 |
| Friday 21 August 2020 | 800 | 80 |
| Saturday 22 August 2020 | 360 | 67 |
| Sunday 23 August 2020 | 589 | 78 |
| Monday 24 August 2020 | 636 | 108 |
| Tuesday 25 August 2020 | 370 | 55 |
| Wednesday 26 August 2020 | 687 | 100 |
| Thursday 27 August 2020 | 521 | 86 |
| Friday 28 August 2020 | 687 | 83 |
| Saturday 29 August 2020 | 657 | 91 |
| Sunday 30 August 2020 | 613 | 86 |
| Monday 31 August 2020 | 796 | 131 |
| Tuesday 1 September 2020 | 1027 | 112 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Wednesday 2 September 2020 | 924 | 105 |
| Thursday 3 September 2020 | 1080 | 119 |
| Friday 4 September 2020 | 985 | 102 |
| Saturday 5 September 2020 | 613 | 89 |
| Sunday 6 September 2020 | 586 | 86 |
| Monday 7 September 2020 | 1019 | 97 |
| Tuesday 8 September 2020 | 1106 | 96 |
| Wednesday 9 September 2020 | 1204 | 96 |
| Thursday 10 September 2020 | 1118 | 95 |
| Friday 11 September 2020 | 890 | 90 |
| Saturday 12 September 2020 | 627 | 97 |
| Sunday 13 September 2020 | 658 | 103 |
| Monday 14 September 2020 | 1058 | 93 |
| Tuesday 15 September 2020 | 1251 | 123 |
| Wednesday 16 September 2020 | 1220 | 127 |
| Thursday 17 September 2020 | 1206 | 124 |
| Friday 18 September 2020 | 1240 | 121 |
| Saturday 19 September 2020 | 688 | 109 |
| Sunday 20 September 2020 | 646 | 96 |
| Monday 21 September 2020 | 1265 | 117 |
| Tuesday 22 September 2020 | 1121 | 99 |
| Wednesday 23 September 2020 | 1348 | 111 |
| Thursday 24 September 2020 | 1003 | 71 |
| Friday 25 September 2020 | 1126 | 96 |
| Saturday 26 September 2020 | 766 | 91 |
| Sunday 27 September 2020 | 689 | 73 |
| Monday 28 September 2020 | 1175 | 110 |
| Tuesday 29 September 2020 | 1271 | 120 |
| Wednesday 30 September 2020 | 1221 | 98 |

**7. <u>Question submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan</u>**

***I will ask at the next meeting for an update on the locked Sarsfield House and Sylvester O'Halloran Bridge gates and if there has been any advancement by Limerick Council on the permanent opening of these gates.***

**<u>REPLY:</u>** Neither of these gates is under the control of the Council. The matter of their opening hours is an issue for owners of the property on which they are located in the first instance.

The gates are open for long periods during the working day and for quite a number of hours at the weekend. However, for valid security reasons they are closed at other times and cannot be opened permanently. This traversing pathway has to be managed by the respective owners and the Council must respect their wishes to manage their property as they see fit. The alternative route across Matthew Bridge is but a brief diversion.

**8. Question submitted by Councillor J. Costelloe**

***I will ask at the next meeting what percentage of the new housing stock for 2021 will the Council allocate to the various housing bodies.***

**REPLY**: Housing Support Services utilise the social care expertise of the Approved Housing Body Sector for dealing with a variety of housing allocations, this is executed on a license basis with AHB. All of these arrangements are reviewed in Case Management Meetings to assess the levels of support required. AHB manage their own stock and new stock are allocated via the Housing Support Services Team with Qualified Housing Applicants.

Housing Support Services do not aim or set targets in terms of a percentage to allocate to Approved Housing Bodies. The process is customer led in terms of a determination during the assessment for housing process.

**9. Question submitted by Councillor J. Costelloe**

***I will ask at the next meeting how much funding has the Council spent in total on hotel accommodation relating to homeless services provision in 2019 up to year ending 2020.***

**REPLY**: Limerick City and County Council has spent the following funding on hotel accommodation relating to homeless services provision:

2019 €1.5m
2020 €1.9m

To provide a level of the figures, during 2019 the Department of Social Protection paid for some B&B costs to the Council during that year. The monthly figure in relation to family homelessness and the Homeless Action Team, with the support of housing allocations, aim to have no families in hotels by the end of Q1 2021.

**10. Question submitted by Councillor J. Costelloe**

***I will ask the Council to list what roads will be included in the Winter plan in terms of the gritting process during the severe icy spells that are forecasted.***

**REPLY**: I refer to the above Question regarding the Winter Maintenance Programme 2020 / 2021 and will comment as follows, referring specifically to the severe weather experienced for the two-week period in late December / early January.

During this period, the nighttime temperatures dropped to between to -4 degrees and for a few days, the temperatures in the shade remained close to zero during the day.

The Winter Maintenance Plan adopted includes all the main distributary roads around the city. During the severe weather period, additional roads were included notably;
Summerville Road, Courtbrack Avenue, Rhebogue Road, Greenhills Road (due to the relocation of the fire service as result of Covid 19 restrictions) and the area around the Market at weekend. In the compilation of the Winter Maintenance Programme 2021/2022, other routes may be considered in severe weather conditions.

**11. Question submitted by Councillor O. O'Sullivan**

***I will ask at the next Metropolitan Meeting for a full and detailed explanation as to what occurred between Limerick City and County Council and P&D Lydon Plant Hire Limited in relation to the Coonagh to Knockalisheen Road, from when the contract was awarded, to when P&D Lydon Plant Hire Limited ceased work on the project, all activity that followed leading to a High Court case, and why Councillors were not informed of the situation prior to reading it in a national newspaper on January 7th 2021.***

**REPLY**: P&D Lydon Plant Hire Ltd were appointed by Limerick City and County Council on 23rd June 2017 to carry out an Advance Works contract on the Coonagh to Knockalisheen Distributor Road Scheme. The project involved the construction of 300 metres of urban dual carriageway from Coonagh Roundabout to the rear of Coonagh Cross Shopping Centre and embankment construction for a further 650 meters of future dual carriageway towards the Old Cratloe Road. The works commenced on 14th August 2017 and they were substantially completed on 8th November 2018. An adjoining landowner challenged the validity of a waste permit for the disposal of inert soil from the construction of the road. The High Court issued its judgement in December 2020 and the Council is now considering that judgement with its legal advisors.

**NOTICES OF MOTION**

**12. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Benson**

***I will move at the next meeting, that this Council extend the deadline for the bin waiver scheme, due to applicants having difficulty obtaining supporting documentation under level 5 restrictions.***

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

In proposing the motion, Councillor Benson outlined the difficulties that applicants had obtaining documentation. She acknowledged the work carried out by Council Officials.

**REPLY**: As the country is currently at Level 5 of Covid 19 restrictions, a decision has been taken to extend the closing date for applications to the Bin Waiver Scheme 2021 by two weeks.
The extended deadline for return of forms is now Monday, February 15th, 2021.
Bin Waiver Application forms were distributed the first week of December, 2020, initially allowing an eight-week period to return the application.
An issue was raised by some applicants regarding the ability to obtain proof of income. Limerick City and County Council contacted the Department of Social Protection and have been provided with a link, which will facilitate an online statement that will meet the requirements of the Bin Waiver Application requirements.
The link is as follows:
https://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/secure/OnlineStatementRequest.aspx
All Social Media communication platforms will be updated to advise of this extension. Any member of the public who requires assistance can contact Limerick City and County Council Customer Service or the Bin Waiver Team.

**13. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Benson (to be referred to the Protocol Committee)**

***I will move at the next meeting, that this Council consider erecting a memorial or place of reflection in remembrance of all those who have lost their lives to the river.***

It was agreed to refer this Notice of Motion to the Protocol Committee.

**14. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor O. O'Sullivan**

***I will move at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District that Limerick City and County Council look into the feasibility of installing a permanent panoramic or Ferris wheel at Arthur's Quay Park and work with the relevant stakeholders to build it into future plans for this location.***

The motion was proposed by Councillor O'Sullivan, seconded by Councillor Sheehan (C) and agreed.

In proposing the motion, Councillor O'Sullivan highlighted the positive impact of the Christmas lighting along the river and the Ferris wheel and these should be considered as part of the long-term development of the area.

**REPLY:** The Panoramic Wheel Company is a private company, which has successfully traded in Limerick over the past 3 years as part of the Civic Festival programme.
When bringing forward future development proposals for the Arthurs Quay Park area of the city, the Council can consider the technical and financial feasibility of a permanent Ferris Wheel as part of the development options.

**15. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan**

***I will move at the next meeting of Limerick Metropolitan Council that the National Transport Authority and Telfourth Ltd are invited to brief Council members on the current operations of the Limerick bike scheme and future plans for the scheme.***

The motion was proposed by Councillor O'Donovan, seconded by Councillor Butler and agreed.

In proposing the motion, Councillor O'Donovan highlighted a number of issues with the existing Bike Scheme and the extension of the Scheme and the urgency to meet with the National Transport Authority and Telfourth Ltd to address these concerns.

**REPLY**: The Coca-Cola Bike scheme in Limerick is operated by the National Transport Authority.
Should the members resolve to invite the National Transport Authority and Telfourth Ltd to brief Council members on the current operations of the Limerick bike scheme and future plans for the scheme, the Physical Development will request a presentation on the Coca-Cola Bike Scheme.

**16. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan**

***I will move at the next meeting of Limerick Metropolitan Council that Covid-19 mobility plans for South Circular Road and Howleys Quay be reinstated during Level 5 restrictions.***

The motion was proposed by Councillor O'Donovan and seconded by Councillor Novak Uí Chonchúir.

**REPLY**: During the Summer of 2020, Limerick City and County Council put in place COVID-19 mobility measures on South Circular Road and Howley's Quay. The purpose of these plans was to reduce the numbers of motor vehicles, create more space for pedestrians/cyclists, allow for events to be held in Howley's Quay, create more space for pedestrians/cyclists and to gather data from the trials to inform future permanent active travel enhancement at both these locations. It should be noted that, in addition to reduced lockdown transport movements at the time, the measures took place at a time when schools were closed and transportation movement in the city was reduced also due to 'holiday' movements out of the city.

The trials have informed the Council on particular issues that arose and associated problems that need to be addressed in the future long-term proposals. The Council is now progressing permanent long-term schemes for active travel at both these locations. Consultants are, and will, develop these schemes, utilising lessons learned from the trials. Consultation with affected stakeholders will take place during the coming months and a planning process will be advanced with a view to putting in place permanent active travel measures as soon as possible following the consultation and planning process.

If the Council were to re-introduce similar COVID-19 measures during the current period, where schools/businesses are likely to re-open within weeks, it could be seen as the imposition of measures without appropriate consultation. Indeed, it would be akin to trying to predetermine the outcome of the proposed consultation process and the long-term active travel needs appropriate to both locations.

The Council fully believes that active travel improvements are needed and appropriate at both locations and are engaging in the consultative procedures needed to get to the appropriate final solutions. Accordingly, the imposition of summer 2020 COVID-19 type measures is not considered appropriate at this time.

Members agreed that extensive engagement and consultation with the public, as outlined in the response to the Notice of Motion, was very important and that a planned approach was required to ensure success over the long term.

**17. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor D. McSweeney**

***I will move at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District that Limerick City and County Council write to the I.S.P.C.A. and the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine to urgently reinstate the position of an Animal Cruelty Inspector in Limerick City and County.***

The motion was proposed by Councillor McSweeney, seconded by Councillor Butler and agreed.

In proposing the motion, Councillor McSweeney stated that animal cruelty is a serious issue in the city and county and highlighted the urgency that an Animal Cruelty Inspector would be reinstated in Limerick.

The Members agreed that animal cruelty should not be tolerated and they noted that An Garda Siochana and the Dept. of Agriculture, Food and the Marine were the agencies with primary responsibility for this issue. They highlighted the importance of ongoing co-operation between these public bodies and Limerick City and County Council in trying to deal with this issue.

**18. Correspondence**

Correspondence was noted and taken as read.

This concluded the Meeting.

**Signed:** _____
**CATHAOIRLEACH**

**Dated:** _____