

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT ONLINE MEETING OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY, 25TH JANUARY, 2021, AT 3PM.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:

Councillor M. Collins, Mayor.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Benson, Butler, Carey, Collins (B), Collins (J), Costelloe, Daly, Donegan, Egan, Foley, Galvin, Hartigan, Keary, Kiely, Kilcoyne, Leddin, McSweeney, Mitchell, Murphy, Novak Uí Chonchúir, O'Brien, O'Dea, O'Donoghue, O'Donovan, O'Hanlon, O'Sullivan, Ruddell, Ryan (E), Ryan (M), Scanlan, Secas, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (K), Sheahan (M), Sheehan (C), Slattery, Talukder, Teefy, Teskey.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive (Mr. P. Daly), Deputy Chief Executive and Director, Support Services (Mr. S. Coughlan), Director, National and Regional Shared Services (Ms. C. Curley), Director, Community Development (Mr. G. Daly), Director, Housing Development (Ms. A. Duke), A/Director, Capital Investment (Mr. S. Hanrahan), Director, Physical Development (Mr. B. Kennedy), Director, Service Operations (Mr. K. Lehaney), A/Director, Economic Development (Mr. V. Murray), Meetings Administrator (Mr. J. Clune), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services and Governance (Mr. M. Leahy), A/Administrative Officer, Corporate Services and Governance (Mr. P. Williams), Staff Officer, Corporate Services and Governance (Ms. L. Creamer), A/Senior Planner, Strategic and Forward Planning (Ms. M. Woods), Senior Executive Planner, Strategic and Forward Planning (Ms. K. Burke), Executive Planner, Strategic and Forward Planning (Ms. B. Collins), A/Executive Planner, Strategic and Forward Planning (Ms. N. O'Connell), Technician, Strategic and Forward Planning (Mr. C. O'Keeffe), Executive Planner, Economic Development (Ms. L. Bolger), Assistant Planner, Housing Development (Ms. S. O'Dwyer), Head of Property and Community Facilities (Ms. J. Leahy), A/Senior Executive Officer, Community Development (Ms. F. McCormack), A/Arts Officer, (Ms. P. Little), A/Staff Officer, Corporate Services and Governance (Ms. F. Ryan), Head of Communications and Marketing (Ms. L. Ryan), Senior Staff Officer, Kilmallock District Office (Ms. D. O'Brien).

Prior to the business of the meeting, the Mayor stated that the week before last had seen the publication of the Final Report of the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes and it had been widely publicised and that he wished to comment on the Report.

He stated that the Report conveyed a grim picture of a cold and callous Ireland that damaged the lives of tens of thousands of people by consigning them to institutions across the country. Unfortunately, mothers and babies had suffered material and emotional deprivation in the institutions, where infant mortality was rampant and where women felt they had no choice but to give up their children for adoption.

Some 56,000 unmarried mothers, and 57,000 children, had passed through the homes during the period examined by the Commission in the period 1920-1998. The Report also stated that a further 25,000 women and a larger number of children were likely to have been resident in the county homes that were not examined by the Commission. The Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary, who ran Mother and Baby Homes at Castlepollard, Bessborough and Roscrea, said they “sincerely apologised to those who did not get the care and support they needed and deserved.”

The Mayor said he, personally, knew people who were born to unmarried mothers in these institutions and some were not so lucky. He referred to the high profile case of Philomena Lee, who hailed from Newcastle West, and the suffering and pain that she and her late son, Michael Hess, endured by actions taken by others in having Michael taken from his mother and sent to the USA for adoption. How cruel and callous these actions had been on people. This was replicated right across the country and he saw it as a damning failure by Church and State on society, and unfortunately it had affected many mothers and babies across Limerick also.

He considered that the Report did not give all the facts and he hoped and prayed that children who were adopted out of the homes would have a right to information about their birth mothers, full rights as to their identity, and that a rightful and proper compensation redress scheme should be offered by the Government.

The Mayor concluded by stating that it was important to note that no mother and baby home existed in Limerick thankfully and so Limerick’s Local Authorities of those times did not feature in the Report.

The Meeting then observed a minute’s silence as a mark of respect.

1. Adoption of Minutes

Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of the following Meetings:

- (a) Budget Meeting of the Council held on 27th November, 2020.
- (b) Re-scheduled November Meeting of the Council held on 3rd December, 2020.

Proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J);
Seconded by Councillor O’Hanlon;
And Resolved:

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

2. Disposal of Land

- (a) Circulated, copy of Statutory Notice dated 19th November, 2020, concerning disposal of land at Camheen, Mungret, Co. Limerick.

Proposed by Councillor O'Hanlon;
Seconded by Councillor Galvin;
And Resolved:

"That, in accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 (as amended) and Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), the approval of the Council is hereby given to the disposal of land at Camheen, Mungret, Co. Limerick, to John O'Connell, for the sum of €195.42, the disposal to be by way of Deed of Conveyance of the interest of Limerick City and County Council in the property, particulars of which were contained in Statutory Notice dated 19th November, 2020."

- (b) Circulated, copy of Statutory Notice dated 4th January, 2021, concerning disposal of freehold title (ground rent) at 151, Mayorstone Park Upper, Limerick.

Proposed by Councillor O'Hanlon;
Seconded by Councillor Galvin;
And Resolved:

"That, in accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 (as amended) and Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), the approval of the Council be and is hereby given to the disposal of the freehold title (ground rent) at 151, Mayorstone Park Upper, Limerick, to Patrick O'Shea (Senior) and Patrick O'Shea (Junior), or their nominees, for the sum of €850.85 (including arrears and legal fees), particulars of which were contained in Statutory Notice dated 4th January, 2021."

- (c) Circulated, copy of Statutory Notice dated 5th January, 2021, concerning disposal of two derelict properties at Moore Street, Cappamore, Co. Limerick.

Proposed by Councillor O'Hanlon;
Seconded by Councillor Galvin;
And Resolved:

"That, in accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 (as amended) and Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), the approval of the Council be and is hereby given to the disposal of two derelict properties at Moore Street, Cappamore, Co. Limerick, to Patrick Slattery, for the sum of €50,000, particulars of which were contained in Statutory Notice dated 5th January, 2021."

- (d) Circulated, copy of Statutory Notice dated 7th January, 2021, concerning disposal of land at 9-10, Patrick Street, Limerick.

Proposed by Councillor O'Hanlon;
Seconded by Councillor Galvin;
And Resolved:

“That, in accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 (as amended) and Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), the approval of the Council be and is hereby given to the disposal of 9-10 Patrick Street, Limerick, to Ormston House Company Limited by Guarantee, the disposal to be by way of a lease for a period of 30 years, at a consideration of €100 per annum, and subject to the covenants and conditions contained within the lease, particulars of which were contained in Statutory Notice dated 7th January, 2021.”

- (e) Circulated, copy of Statutory Notice dated 13th January, 2021, concerning disposal of derelict property at The Square, Galbally, Co. Limerick.

Proposed by Councillor O’Hanlon;
Seconded by Councillor Galvin;
And Resolved:

“That, in accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 (as amended) and Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), the approval of the Council be and is hereby given to the disposal of derelict property at The Square, Galbally, Co. Limerick, to Anthony McCarthy, for the sum of €55,000, particulars of which were contained in Statutory Notice dated 13th January, 2021.”

3. Support Services Directorate

(a) Chief Executive’s Report

Circulated, Chief Executive’s Reports for the months of November and December 2020.

The Chief Executive’s Reports were noted by the Council.

(b) Annual Service Delivery Plan 2021

Circulated, report of the Director, Support Services, dated 20th January, 2021, enclosing Draft Service Delivery Plan 2021 for Limerick City and County Council and including, as an Appendix, a Review of the 2020 Service Delivery Plan.

Proposed by Councillor Galvin;
Seconded by Councillor O’Hanlon;
And Resolved:

“That, in accordance with Section 134(a) of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended, the Annual Service Delivery Plan 2021 for Limerick City and County Council, as circulated, be and is hereby adopted.”

(c) Strategic Policy Committee Reports

- (i) It was noted that the next Meeting of the Community, Leisure and Culture Strategic Policy Committee was scheduled for 1st February, 2021.
- (ii) Circulated, report of the Chairperson of the Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee dated 4th January, 2021, in relation to Meeting of the Committee held on 8th December, 2020.

The Report was noted by the Council.

- (iii) Circulated, report of the Chairperson of the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee dated 11th January, 2021, in relation to Meeting of the Committee held 14th December, 2020.

The Report was noted by the Council.

- (iv) Circulated, report of the Chairperson of the Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee dated 6th January, 2021, in relation to Meeting of the Committee held on 15th December, 2020.

The Report was noted by the Council.

- (v) Circulated, report of the Chairperson of the Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee dated 16th December, 2020, in relation to Meeting of the Committee held on 16th December, 2020.

The Report was noted by the Council.

4. Economic Development Directorate

Proposed Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028

Circulated, report of the Chief Executive dated 20th November, 2020, enclosing '*Chief Executive's Report on Pre-Draft Consultation Process – Report to Council under Section 11 (4) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) dated 20th November, 2020,*' together with report dated 19th January, 2021, from the A/Director, Economic Development.

In introducing this item, the Chief Executive stated that this was the first time to have a consolidated Development Plan for the City and County. The Plan would shape the future of Limerick up to 2028, providing a framework on how Limerick would live, grow and develop as a City and County, and that there would be a lot of engagement with Councillors and the public going forward.

He then asked the A/Director, Economic Development, to update the Members on the pre-draft consultation process for the proposed Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028.

The A/Director, Economic Development, with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, briefed the Members on the stages of the Limerick Development Plan to date and the 99-week process for drafting the Plan, the legal basis for the Plan and all the stages involved. He set out the timelines and pointed out that it would have a high level of public consultation. He also outlined the key issues that emerged in the public consultation.

The Mayor then asked if the Members wished to issue Directions to the Chief Executive, noting that all Directions had to comply with planning legislation.

Councillor Mitchell issued the following Direction to the Chief Executive in relation to the preparation of the Draft Development Plan:

- “That the proposed Development Plan considers future renewable energy technologies, such as hydrogen electrolysis, pumped storage and small-scale anaerobic digestion and any other source of renewable energy technologies that are viable as a means of energy security, subject to the relevant level of necessary assessment. He also stated that Ireland was an island and, as such, was surrounded by water and wind forces; there was an ample supply of both elements and this should be included in this significant Plan as it was free, and thus would reduce the carbon footprint in line with Climate Action, the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.”

Councillor Benson issued the following Directions to the Chief Executive in relation to the preparation of the Draft Development Plan:

- “That the Draft Development Plan shall include policies and objectives in relation to the development of leisure infrastructure and facilities, within Limerick City Centre, in order to enhance the vitality of the area.
- That the Draft Development Plan shall include policies and objectives aimed at ensuring that Limerick is inclusive and that there are equal opportunities for all citizens of Limerick, with particular emphasis on cohesion and connectivity.
- That the Draft Development Plan should consider all modes of sustainable transport in the formation of transport policies.”

Councillor Kiely issued the followed Direction to the Chief Executive in relation to the preparation of the Draft Development Plan:

- “That, the Development Plan consider remote working in rural areas, in light of the implications of COVID-19, as this issue was not previously considered in the National Planning Framework.”

The Members at this point referred to the five Motions on the Agenda – in the names of Councillors Keary, Ryan (E), Scanlan, Ruddle and Galvin - relating to the Development Plan and it was agreed that the five Motions, as set out below, would be taken at this time in conjunction with Item No. 4:

8. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Keary

I will move at the next Meeting, given the current placement of Level 5 restrictions on the country due to the Coronavirus pandemic and the stated position of the Government that there be no non-essential travel to work or meetings, that Limerick City and County Council call upon the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Mr. Darragh O’Brien, T.D., to allow the current Development Plans for Limerick, including the Limerick County Development Plan, to be extended again for a further 18 months; furthermore, I call upon the Chief Executive of Limerick City and County Council to engage immediately with the Secretary General of the Department of Housing and his officials to discuss the necessary provisions to allow the Development Plans to be extended.

10. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor E. Ryan

I will move at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council retain its current City and County Development Plans until 2026.

11. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will move at the next Meeting that, given the very likely workplace changes and practices, in the interest of future rural residency and the attending opportunity for our County’s environment likely to ensue consequent to the COVID-19 pandemic, we defer progressing our County and City Development Plan until normality returns.

13. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor T. Ruddle

I will move at the next Meeting to reject the current draft Development Plan in relation to the extra restriction of rural planning in relation to planning only, on a socio-economic need basis; I will move to adopt the existing 2010-2016 Development Plan in relation to rural planning instead.

14. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will move at the next Meeting that (a) this Council totally reject the National Planning Framework policy regarding once-off rural housing based on social and economic need; (b) that a meeting be arranged with the Minister responsible to highlight the issues around this policy; and (c) that this Motion be circulated to all local Authorities to discuss.

The Mayor then proposed the following amended Motion to encompass and capture the varying issues and concerns outlined in the five Motions:

“I call upon the Chief Executive of Limerick City and County Council to request the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to immediately suspend the statutory time period for the preparation of the Draft Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 until such time as (a) public health restrictions are lifted to allow for safe face-to-face engagement between the Elected Members, the public and the Executive and (b) the Department provide a definition of the ‘social and economic need’ as referred to in the National Planning Framework.

I also request that independent legal advice be made available to Councillors for the duration of the plan-making process. “

The amended Motion was seconded by Councillor O’Hanlon.

The Meetings Administrator clarified that this was an amendment to the existing five Notices of Motion on the agenda.

The Mayor then questioned whether the amended Motion constituted a Direction to the Chief Executive in regard to the draft consultation process, to which it was then clarified by the A/Senior Planner that the amended Motion was not considered a Direction to the Chief Executive.

Members expressed disappointment that only one reference was made to one-off rural housing in the presentation given by the A/Director, Economic Development, and that the Development Plan should be postponed until it could be discussed face-to-face in light of the unsatisfactory method of conducting business online when considering such an important issue – the Development Plan for Limerick. Members also felt that COVID-19 had now changed the way in which people were living and working and that the new Development Plan should account for remote working and the knock-on effects for planning policy in regard to one-off rural housing. The Members strongly emphasised that there was a need to allow people to build one-off rural houses if they so wished in the area in which they grew up and that there was more demand for rural housing now due to remote working. Members questioned whether the Planning Regulator could be allowed to decide on what Limerick’s needs were and, in particular, the needs of rural Limerick.

Members also asked who was responsible for delivering the Development Plan and what would happen if the Councillors rejected it. Clarification was also sought on what ‘social and economic need’ meant in respect of one-off rural housing and who qualified under ‘social and economic need.’

In reply to Members’ queries, the Chief Executive stated that in the event of the Development Plan not being adopted unanimously or by majority by the Council, then it would revert to the Chief Executive.

The A/Director, Economic Development, added that a number of Workshops would be held with the Members to go through each aspect of the Development Plan and address any issues from Members. The making of the Development Plan was a legal process and had statutory timelines.

In relation to queries from Members seeking clarification on ‘social and economic need’ referred to in the Development Plan, the Chief Executive stated that this query would be dealt with in the letter to the Minister as part of the amended Motion.

Members expressed concern that if national planning policy in regard to one-off rural housing were adopted, it would have a detrimental effect on rural Ireland. Members expressed concern that density in housing estates in towns and village was not acceptable as some had very little green space and sewerage systems were not fit for purpose. The Members also asked that the Limerick Oireachtas Members support them in this matter. Members stressed that there was no divide between City and County Councillors on this matter. Members pointed out that remote working, as a result of COVID-19, had resulted in an increased demand for houses in rural Ireland and this could be a potential opportunity to reinvigorate rural towns and villages. Members felt that statutory authorities needed to be cognisant of this and that the level of interference at local level was alarming, and that Councillors were trying to do their best for Limerick so that it could compete nationally and internationally in terms of future growth and development.

In the course of the discussion, all Members supported the amended Motion and said that they could not support the proposed Development Plan if their concerns with regard to one-off rural housing were not addressed. It was proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J), seconded by Councillor O’Hanlon, and agreed that the Mayor would write to the Limerick Oireachtas Members asking them if they agreed with the terminology of ‘economic and social need’ in the adoption of the National Planning Framework. It was also agreed to circulate the amended Motion to all Local Authorities for their support.

The Members also asked that, once the Chief Executive received a reply from the Minister on this matter, a copy of same would be forwarded to all Members. Members also asked that more consultation would take place with the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee in relation to the Development Plan.

The Chief Executive thanked Members for the strong and open debate on this matter. He reiterated that this was a Limerick Development Plan, not the Chief Executive’s or Planners’ Development Plan, and that the Council had to have regard to national and regional planning policy and was obliged to work with the Planning Regulator. He added that the Council would try to work its way around definitions and see what other Local Authorities were doing in regard to the issues that Members raised. He stated that the Council would challenge the thinking in current planning policy and that remote working/COVID-19 could be an aid to challenging planning definitions. He also advised Members that he would work with them over the coming weeks and months in the hope of addressing their concerns. However, he stressed that the drafting of the Limerick Development Plan was part of a statutory process and that the Plan could ultimately be made without the approval of Councillors.

Suspension of Standing Orders: The Mayor drew attention to the time which was approaching 5.30pm and on the proposal of Councillor Galvin, seconded by Councillor Sheahan (J), Standing Orders were suspended in order to complete the agenda.

5. Physical Development Directorate

Section 85 Agreement - Munster Bridges Rehabilitation Contract 2020-2021

Circulated, report of the Chief Executive dated 14th January, 2021, seeking the Council's approval to the making of an Agreement with Kerry County Council under Section 85 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended, and Section 14 of the Roads Act, 1993, for the carrying out of improvement works on the Munster Bridges Rehabilitation Contract 2020-2021.

The Director, Physical Development, outlined the background to this item.

Proposed by Councillor Ryan (E);
Seconded by Councillor Sheahan (J);
And Resolved:

"That, Limerick City and County Council agrees to the making of an Agreement, as presented to it, under Section 85 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended, and Section 14 of the Roads Act, 1993, with Kerry County Council, for the carrying out by Kerry County Council of the powers, functions and duties of Limerick City and County Council relating to the improvement works on the Munster Bridges Rehabilitation Contract 2020-2021 in the functional area of Limerick City and County Council."

6. Community Development Directorate

(a) Update on Development of Limerick Greenways

Circulated, report of the Director, Community Development, dated January 2021 entitled '*Update on Development of Limerick Greenways.*'

The Director, Community Development, briefed the Members with regard to progress on Limerick Greenways which included an update on surfacing contracts, car parking, upgrades to Ardagh and Barnagh Station Houses and bike hire provision. Based on a recommendation from the Council's Marketing Team, it was proposed to change the title of the Great Southern Greenway to the 'Limerick Greenway' as it was a more attractive visitor proposition and, from a digital marketing perspective (search engines, key words etc.), 'Limerick Greenway' was a much more preferential name. He advised that the Ardagh to Rathkeale section of the Limerick Greenway had received very positive feedback from the public and was widely used, especially during COVID times.

Members asked that the disused railway lines in the city be included for development as Greenways. In reply, the Director, Community Development, stated that the report dealt with the major Greenways running through the County and did not include small urban greenways. He added that major infrastructure projects needed to be included as objectives of the Council's Development Plan.

In response to further queries, the Director, Physical Development, said the Cycle Route from Patrickswell to Raheen was identified in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS) as an inter-urban cycle network connecting Metropolitan towns to the City. It was intended that this route would be upgraded as part of the Implementation Plan for the LSMATS.

In reply to Members, the Director, Community Development, stated that there would be no restrictions on the number of bike hire companies. However, the Council was hoping to enter into a partnership with a strong provider of the bike hire service. Members enquired why West Limerick Resources and Limerick City and County Council were both engaged in marketing of the Limerick Greenway and they were informed by the Director, Community Development, that the wider promotion of the Greenway was being led by Limerick City and County Council, with West Limerick Resources working with businesses to get Greenway-ready.

Following further discussion, Members welcomed the update from the Director, Community Development, and also agreed to changing the title of the Great Southern Greenway to Limerick Greenway.

(b) Limerick Cultural Strategy

Circulated, report of the Director, Community Development, dated 15th January, 2021, seeking the Council's approval to recommended allocations of strategic investment priorities for the delivery of the Limerick Cultural Strategy in 2021, as set out.

Proposed by Councillor O'Hanlon;
Seconded by Councillor O'Sullivan;
And Resolved:

"That, the approval of the Council be and is hereby given to the recommended allocations of strategic investment priorities for the delivery of the Limerick Cultural Strategy in 2021, as set out in the report of the Director, Community Development, dated 15th January, 2021."

7. Conferences

(a) Participation by Members at Conferences

It was noted that Conferences were deferred because of COVID-19.

(b) Reports on Conference / Seminar / Meeting / Event

Circulated, reports by Members who had participated at Conference / Seminar / Meeting / Event.

The reports were noted by the Members.

NOTICES OF MOTION

It was noted that Notices of Motion No. 8 (Councillor Keary), No. 10 (Councillor E. Ryan), No. 11 (Councillor Scanlan), No. 13 (Councillor Ruddle) and No. 14 (Councillor Galvin), had all been dealt with earlier in the Meeting in conjunction with Item No. 4 – Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028.

9. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan

I will move at the next Meeting that this Council acknowledge the oversight role played by Councils in mother and baby homes, and call on all Councils to write to the Government to establish a national day of recognition for the women and their children impacted.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor O'Donovan said she was doing so in the context that many Local Authorities had issued apologies following the publication on 12th January of the Final Report of the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes. She said that throughout the Report, there were many examples of the treatment of unmarried women and their children across Limerick city and county. Indeed, from Council minutes from Limerick County Council Meetings, it was Council policy to send unmarried mothers from the County Home to the Magdalene Laundries so as to produce an 'economical budget and to reduce county expenditure,' with the same thing applying to the County Gaol. But these Limerick women and their children were not criminals even though they were treated as such.

She continued that although the abuse of the women and their children was almost unspeakable, she considered it was owed to those women to find the words to articulate the terrible wrong that was done to them. She said every level of the system needed to be looked at, starting in Limerick and with the historical role Limerick Corporation and Limerick County Council played, so that this part of our history was known, was spoken about, and that what had happened was understood, so that people could bear witness to the experiences, grief and trauma of the women and children who went through these institutions, and reassure the people of Limerick that it would never happen again. With that in mind, she was proposing the Motion as outlined.

Councillor Kiely, in seconding the Motion, referred to the Good Shepherd Magdalene Laundry and Industrial School in Pennywell in the city.

It was proposed by Councillor C. Sheehan, seconded by Councillor Secas, and agreed that the Motion would be amended to include a proposal that the Council write to the Minister for Children asking that the survivors be given access to a written copy of the Report and that the Mayor and a delegation from the Council meet with the local survivors.

Councillor Costelloe, in supporting the amended Motion, stated that a similar Motion was passed by the previous Council and that it was a shameful chapter in the country's history and outlined his own personal experience.

The amended Motion received broad support from the Members.

12. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor D. McSweeney

I will move at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council consider appointing an Authorised Officer under Section 37(2) of the Animal Health and Welfare Act, 2013, to tackle animal cruelty in Limerick City and County.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor McSweeney said that as most Members were aware, he had brought a Motion to the recent Meeting of the Metropolitan District requesting that the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and the ISPCA, be written to seeking the reinstatement of an Animal Cruelty Inspector which was withdrawn from Limerick City and County due to several reasons. He had decided to bring the above-stated Motion to the Full Council in the hope of receiving the support of all Members to address the issue.

He stated that animal cruelty issues now rested with the Gardaí. In his correspondence with the ISPCA, it was noted that *"unfortunately, it proved very difficult to exercise our powers under the Animal Health and Welfare Act in Limerick in some circumstances and it was often difficult to get support from An Garda Síochána when required as animal welfare is not a priority for them."* He said the question was 'who did the priority of animal welfare now rest with?'

Councillor McSweeney said this was an ongoing issue in Limerick City and County and it was no secret that Limerick had serious issues with animal cruelty over the years. Over the weekend, two animal welfare cases had arisen, one in the old Greenpark Racecourse and one in Thomondgate, and this could not continue. He considered that, as a Local Authority, a stand needed to be made and that the actions of people treating animals in this manner could not be tolerated. Under the Animal Health and Welfare Act, a Local Authority could appoint an Animal Cruelty Inspector but this might not be the solution to this ongoing problem. He was now asking Limerick City and County Council to consider appointing an Animal Welfare Inspector for Limerick but, in doing so, to engage directly with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, An Garda Síochána and the local Animal Welfare organisations where another solution may arise. He concluded that it was important, as a Local Authority, to exhaust all avenues to ensure the reinstatement of an Animal Cruelty Inspector in Limerick City and County as a matter of urgency.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Sheahan (M) stated that this was a most timely and worthy Motion and he hoped that the issue would be taken on board by the Executive and the Department of Agriculture.

In reply, the Director, Service Operations, stated that the issue of animal cruelty rested with the Department of Agriculture, and the Gardai had specific powers in relation to same. He added that the Council did not want animals to be treated badly and explained that the Council did not have an Animal Cruelty Officer because the ISPCA, Department of Agriculture and the Gardaí were the main Bodies responsible in this area, as well as a lack of resources. He acknowledged the Members' frustrations in relation to the control of horses in the city and added that the issue of horse control was an urban problem. However, the Department of Agriculture was the relevant Body to address this problem and this Department dealt with rural issues. He added that the Council had regular liaison with An Garda Síochána to address

this issue and acknowledged the importance of An Garda Síochána's help in this matter. He pointed out that 120 horses were seized the previous year, and most of them were homed, with only one euthanized.

15. Correspondence

The Correspondence circulated with the Agenda was taken as read.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ORDERS:

The Register of Orders made by the Chief Executive up to the date of the Meeting was available on SharePoint and Alfresco for inspection by the Members.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

The Register of Decisions on Applications under the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, was also available on SharePoint and Alfresco for inspection by the Members.

Signed: _____

Mayor

Date: _____