



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 16th February, 2021 at 3:30 p.m. by Webex Video Conference.

Members Present:

Cllrs. Leddin (Chair), Benson, Butler, Collins (B), Collins (J), Costelloe, Daly, Donegan, Foley, McSweeney, Mitchell, Novak Uí Chonchúir, O'Dea, O'Donovan, O'Hanlon, O'Sullivan, Ruddle, Ryan (E), Ryan (M), Secas, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (K), Sheahan (M), Talukder, Teefy, Dr. C. Cahill, Ms. A Drake, Mr. B Harper, Mr. T. O'Brien, Mr. P. McCarthy.

Apologies: Mrs. Maureen Browne.

Officials Present:

Mr. B. Kennedy, Mr. D. McGuigan, Mr. R. Gallagher, Ms. M. Corrigan, Mr. Dan Slavin, Mr. John O'Leary, Ms. K. McDonnell, Ms. B. Quinn, Ms. A. Leahy, Ms. M. Fitzgerald, Ms. Maria Woods, Ms. K. Burke.

In Attendance:

Mr. Hugh Creegan, Deputy C.E.O., NTA
Mr. David Clements, Transportation Planner, NTA
Mr. Michael MacAree, Head of Integrated Planning, NTA
Owen Shinkwin, Chartered Town Planner, NTA

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all SPC members, Elected Members and NTA representatives.

Mr. Kennedy stated that a number of submissions were made following public consultation on the LSMATS and a number of issues were raised as part of those submissions. He handed over to Mr. Hugh Creegan and his team from the NTA to address those issues as part of the presentation.

Mr. Hugh Creegan introduced three colleagues from the NTA, Mr. David Clements, Mr. Michael MacAree and Mr. Owen Shinkwin. He handed over to Mr. David Clements to deliver the presentation.

Item 1: Presentation on draft LSMATS following Public Consultation - the National Transport Authority (NTA):

Mr. Clements gave an outline of the Public Consultation process and confirmed that 112 submissions were received. He went through the issues raised and the action responses from the NTA, grouped into 11 categories as follows:

	Issues raised:	Action Responses:
1	COVID-19	-New section will be within the report setting out and addressing issues around COVID-19. -LSMATS will be retested using 2 future demand scenarios and validated to function in both.
2	Consultation and Engagement	Face to face consultation had to be cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions. A second round of public consultation will occur.
3	Targets	Model outputs had been misinterpreted as targets. Target for Walking and Cycling for the LSMA and Limerick City and Suburbs to be put in LSMATS – Practical and Realistic.
4	Delivery	-The Strategy is a long-term framework, and not a delivery plan. -The Final LSMATS will inform the NDP funding requirements currently under review. -The finalisation of the strategy is required before details of a delivery plan are examined.
5	The Modelling Process	-Confirmed that NTA modelling was appropriate, and model is peer reviewed and updated regularly. -Further functionality and updates to the model are now available. -Additional modelling to be undertaken on Rail, Covid-19 and a full re-run of LSMATS modelling.
6	Vision and Ambition	There was a vision set out in the LSMATS, which will be updated with more information drawn from the MASP.
7	Rail	-Confirmed that there is insufficient demand to justify light rail.

		- Analysis of Heavy Rail undertaken for Draft LSMATS to be augmented and a number of additional rail scenarios will be examined.
8	Climate Change	Clarification required and the NTA propose significant changes to Context, Approach and Text of LSMATS document.
9	Accessibility	Changes to Context, Approach and Text of LSMATS.
10	Limerick Regeneration	New section in LSMATS under land use. Highlight some schemes in regeneration area that are of strategic importance. NTA already implementing service improvements – frequency of the 303-bus service from Moyross to Southill has been doubled.
11	City Centre Consolidation	Clarification required and a more explicit support for the city centre will form part of a revised LSMATS.

In conclusion, Mr. Clements confirmed that there has been a lot of strong feedback on the LSMATS and the NTA has identified a significant mandate in Limerick city and Shannon for a change in transport culture, which is very positive. He advised that the next steps are for the NTA to undertake the additional modelling, and that the draft Strategy would go out to Public Consultation in April/May, with a view to finalising the document in September/October.

The Chair thanked Mr. Clements for the presentation and opened the floor to questions.

Cllr. Mitchell welcomed the fact that the NTA is consulting with Tipperary County Council and added that the most important thing facing us in the future is dealing with freight following Brexit. He will be engaging with Tipperary County Council in relation to the N24 in the context of getting freight out direct to Europe. He added that this connectivity and connectivity to Shannon light rail should be added to the presentation as exports are very important for the economy.

Mr. Bruce Harper asked if the strategy will meet the carbon emission reduction targets to net-zero by 2050, and also if the new consultation will list the baseline emissions and annual reduction resulting from the strategy.

Ms. Drake queried if the bus route on O'Connell Street will be reviewed as part of the revised strategy.

In response to Cllr. Mitchell, Mr. Creegan advised that he was happy to confirm the engagement with Tipperary County Council. He acknowledged Cllr. Mitchell's comments on the importance of dealing with freight for economic growth and this will be considered in the strategy.

Referring to Mr. Harper's question, Mr. Creegan confirmed that the strategy will be compliant with the 2030/2050 emission reduction. It is not clear as yet how the overall emissions targets are going to be distributed however, confirmed that they will be met in the strategy.

In response to Ms. Drake's question on the bus route on O'Connell Street, Mr. Clements advised that the Part VIII was agreed. Mr. Creegan added that he can commit to members that a more detailed Bus Connects network redesign will be completed, similar to Dublin and Cork. All bus routes will be re-examined as part of this redesign. Ms. Drake asked if this commitment can be written into the strategy. Mr. Creegan responded that he would give this consideration. Ms. Drake added that this is a very important issue for the city in terms of Limerick being a destination and O'Connell Street is Limerick's premier street.

Cllr. Leddin echoed Ms. Drake's sentiments and added that he has concerns regarding the quantity and frequency of buses going through the main thoroughfare.

Cllr. O'Donovan welcomed the new section in relation to COVID as it is important to acknowledge changing circumstances. She also welcomed the fact that there will be targets for walking and cycling as they are important measures to see how the strategy is progressing. The important thing will be the actual implementation of the plan, as this will show results. Both Cllr. O'Donovan and Cllr. Butler wished to know who makes up the Limerick Transport Forum.

Cllr. Collins (J) welcomed the review of the draft LSMATS and wished to add his voice to the Limerick Pedestrian Network in regard to the bus route on O'Connell Street. He outlined that Members were advised to vote for Part VIII when it came before them, as it was included in the LSMATS. He disagreed that a main street in a Georgian city would be used for a bus route, when there are better alternatives that could be used.

In relation to using existing rail network, Cllr. Collins (J) stated that focusing future development around stations would be a good thing, and asked what other locations were considered for stations besides Corbally and Moyross. He also asked if any consideration had been given to linking the substantial rail infrastructure in the county into the metropolitan area and to Shannon.

In relation to Cllr. O'Donovan's comments, Mr. Creegan agreed that this strategy needs to translate into investment and into projects on the ground.

In response to Cllr. Collins (J) Mr. Creegan stated that the O'Connell St. route was identified as it is the preferred bus corridor by the NTA. He confirmed that as part of the implementation process, a more granular examination of the whole network would be completed as part of the Bus Connects project. He added that it is not unusual in a city that public transport does go through part of the central areas, as that is where people want to get to. He acknowledged the different viewpoints.

On the heavy rail system, Mr. Creegan confirmed that 11 different stations in the region were tested in the first strategy preparation. He confirmed that different scenarios need to be examined in more detail.

In response to the makeup of the Limerick Transport Forum, Dr. Cahill stated that it is facilitated by the Chamber to encourage discussion, debate around the LSMATS and is made up of the following groups:

- Limerick Cycling Campaign
- Georgian Society
- Limerick and Clare Education Training Board
- Shannon Chamber
- The City Centre Trader's Group
- UL Hospitals Group

She added that the Forum itself did not make a submission, but the individual representatives would have made submissions through their own organisations.

Cllr. Michael Sheahan referred to the articulated buses in Limerick and stated that they are tremendously disadvantageous in that they take up the space of two buses, are uncomfortable to travel in and are dangerous to pedestrians in negotiating bends. Mr. Creegan stated that a solution is outside the scope of the NTA, as this is a private operator who is fully licenced and has the appropriate certification for road worthiness. He assured Cllr. Sheahan that no further carriages can be added due to the regulated maximum length of 18.5-metres approx.

At the request of the Chair Mr. Creegan gave an overview of the public consultation process in view of COVID-19 and the regulations. He advised that it is anticipated to go to public consultation around April/May. The NTA will ensure a robust consultation process where people have the maximum opportunity to contribute however, due to restrictions it is not possible to define the process at this stage.

Mr. Kennedy thanked all for attending the meeting and for their input into the discussion, and thanked the NTA representatives individually for the presentation. He added that the NTA has identified the issues raised, and given a commitment to consider these issues in the revised document. The Council will work very closely with the NTA over the coming months to prepare the revised strategy.

Item 2: Minutes:

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee held on the 15th December 2020 were proposed by Cllr. O'Donovan, seconded by Cllr. Secas and adopted.

Item 3: Question submitted by Ms. Ailish Drake

"A 25KPH advisory speed limit was introduced in the core city centre and county towns as part of the Guiding Limerick through Covid Plan. It was proposed that this would be monitored with a view to a permanent speed limit reduction.

How has it been monitored and what are the outcomes of same?

How will the new limit be voted upon and is there a proposed time frame?"

A response to Question was circulated to all members prior to meeting as follows:

“Limerick City and County Council introduced a 25kph advisory speed limit as part of the Guiding Limerick through COVID Plan, in the summer of 2020. As the name indicates, this is not an enforceable speed limit, but has the purpose of encouraging compliance.

It appears to have been successful in achieving its aims to some extent, but it should be noted that traffic patterns have been significantly impacted by the pandemic restrictions.

It is the Council’s intention to introduce a permanent 30kph speed limit in the core city area subject to compliance with relevant departmental guidelines and the relevant procedures/consultation will take place later this year with a view to introducing the new limit on successful completion of these procedures.

As regards our county towns, the process of introducing amended speed limits is complicated by the presence of national and regional roads running through or close to the core of some of the towns, for example Adare, Newcastle West, Abbeyfeale and Kilmallock. It may be more appropriate that these centres be considered as part of the next countywide review of speed limits, at which point it is hoped that the learnings from the city could inform the process in the county towns.”

A.O.B.

Cllr. Butler wished to raise the issue of the video conference platform for meetings going forward, stating the Webex Cisco does not work well for members and drains broadband quite heavily. The executive agreed that MS Teams video conference platform will be used for future meetings.

The Chair reminded all members that the next Travel and Transportation SPC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, the 20th April 2021. He thanked all for attending and thanked the NTA representatives individually for their presentation and declared the meeting closed.