



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

Draft Minutes of the Meeting of Limerick City & County Council's Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee held on Tuesday 20th April, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. by MS Teams Video Conference.

Members Present:

Cllrs. Leddin (Chair), Butler, Costelloe, Daly, Foley, Kilcoyne, McSweeney, Mitchell, Novak Uí Chonchúir, O'Donovan, O'Hanlon, Ryan (M), Secas, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (M), Teefy, Mrs. M Browne, Dr. C. Cahill, Ms. A Drake, Mr. B Harper, Mr. F. Heffernan, Mr. Pat McCarthy, Mr. T. O'Brien.

Officials Present:

Mr. B. Kennedy, Mr. P. Williams, Mr. R. Gallagher, Ms. M. Corrigan, Mr. Dan Slavin, Mr. John O'Leary, Ms. K. McDonnell, Ms. A. Leahy, Ms. M. Fitzgerald.

In Attendance:

Ms. Madeleine Lyes, Limerick Pedestrian Network, Ms. Orla Murnaghan, TPA Research.

The Chair commenced the proceedings by welcoming all attendees to the meeting.

Item 1: Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee held on the 16th February 2021 were proposed by Cllr. Butler, seconded by Cllr. Foley and adopted.

Item 2: Briefing on Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Initiative - Karen McDonnell, Assistant Planner.

Ms. McDonnell gave a Briefing to the Members on the Safe Route to Schools Initiative, outlining the aims and the key stages of the programme.

Cllr. Leddin thanked Ms. McDonnell for the presentation. He added that it is an excellent and very timely initiative, and trusted that there will be enthusiastic interest from schools. He opened the floor to questions.

Cllr. Secas welcomed the progression of the initiative. She asked if a list of submissions from schools could be circulated to the Members.

Cllr. Butler welcomed seeing the process so clearly laid out. He also asked if Ms. Mc Donnell could indicate how many schools had expressed interest in the initiative. He queried the timeline for decision and delivery and added that it would be an opportune time when schools are closed for the summer holidays. He also wished to thank and acknowledge Ms. Mc Donnell's support and work throughout the year.

Cllr. Mitchell welcomed the wonderful initiative and asked if funding would go towards increased parking especially for the rural schools.

Cllr. O' Donovan echoed Cllr. Butler's sentiments and wished to also acknowledge the work put in by Ms. McDonnell. She asked if Councillors will be notified when the schools are chosen to take part in initiative and stated community buy-in will be critical.

Cllr. Novak thanked Ms. McDonnell and asked which Directorate will be involved in the selection process. She also asked if it is a confidential selection process and what parameters will be taken into consideration.

In response to questions, Ms. Mc Donnell stated that the Dept. of Transport and Dept. of Education wrote to all schools in mid-March and asked for submissions and expressions of interest; the closing date was 16th April 2021. She has not yet received a report on the number of schools however, she will report back when the Green Schools provide the list.

Ms. McDonnell also confirmed that the Physical Development Directorate will be driving the initiative. In reply to Cllr. Mitchell, she stated the key aim of the initiative is to support active travel and parking, and traffic calming may fall within the scope.

Mr. Gallagher added that the key aim in the initiative is to try and promote active travel by improving access to schools in terms of walking and cycling. It is unlikely that improved access to parking will be the main target.

Cllr. Costello suggested a handbook introducing the whole process would be useful.

Cllr. Leddin supported the suggestion and added his gratitude to Ms. McDonnell on her work to date.

Cllr. Ryan (M) cautioned against the discounting of vehicular traffic and asked that parking and security around rural schools needs to be included as part of the initiative.

Mr. Gallagher agreed that this was a valid suggestion and added that Park and Stride may also be an option. He added that there will be a difference between urban and rural schools and everything will need to be examined.

At the request of Cllr. Kilcoyne, it was agreed to circulate the presentation to all Members.

Item 3: Update on LSMATS – Robert Gallagher, Senior Engineer

Mr. Gallagher gave an update on the Draft LSMATS and highlighted the areas which are being revised by the NTA. He added that the NTA will present the changes to the draft LSMATS at the next SPC meeting.

The Chair opened the floor to Questions.

Mr. Heffernan stated that as an advocate of the rail system, he believes the railway system should be opened up if the aim is to develop Limerick. This would lead to satellite towns and villages flourishing along the railway lines.

Cllr. Secas welcomed the re-emphasis put on more aspects of the draft LSMATS, and asked when new draft will be made available.

Cllr. Mitchell supported Mr. Heffernan's sentiments and added there is huge support from Tipperary and Kilkenny for a connection to Rosslare. He stated that there is a new scenario with Brexit and he has the support of Cllr. Ryan (M) on this issue.

In reply to Cllr Mitchell, Mr. Kennedy stated that TII are working on the Cahir to Limerick junction scheme, and this does extend just inside the Limerick border (around Oola).

Mr. Gallagher confirmed that the new draft should be made available towards the middle/late June 2021.

Item 4: Update on Public Realm Strategy – John O’Leary, A/Senior Executive Engineer

Ms. Ailish Drake stepped out of meeting before Item 4 commenced.

Mr. John O’Leary delivered a presentation on Public Realm Strategy outlining the following areas:

- Study Area Vision and Strategy
- Design, Activity and Delivery Manuals.

The Chair thanked Mr. O’Leary for the important and timely presentation and opened the floor to Questions.

Mr. Harper asked if the design manual is for the Council for developing its own projects or does it also apply to developers.

Cllr. O’ Donovan proposed that ongoing maintenance costs be factored in and made reference to the lights at Tait’s clock which were not working for a long time.

Cllr. Costelloe asked how much of a stumbling block was the non-commencement of Flood Relief Scheme (FRS), to the Public Realm Works, particularly King’s Island and the Medieval quarter.

Cllr. Butler added that the strategy is long overdue and asked what level of public engagement is in place with public utilities. He also queried the standard and quality of materials which are going to be set out in the strategy.

In response to questions, Mr. O’Leary confirmed that the design manual applies to both the Council and developers for any future projects.

With regard to FRS, Mr. O’Leary confirmed that this is outlined in CFRAMS and the appointed consultant on the main city scheme will use the public realm strategy as part of their design.

There will be significant engagement with public utilities, and fittings with high maintenance will be avoided whenever possible. There will be a full materials palette.

Mr. Gallagher added that a consultant has been appointed and work will commence shortly. Public Realm work will be ongoing and added that significant funding has been announced through URDF to enable public realm frontage along the river to be designed as part of the FRS.

Ms. Ailish Drake re-joined the meeting following the completion of Item 4.

Item 5: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Novak Uí Chonchúir (referred from Metro Meeting)

“I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that Limerick City and County Council develop and deliver a communication/education campaign about safe and appropriate parking practices, with a focus on the dangers of parking on footpaths, cycle lanes and bus stops”.

In proposing the motion Cllr. Novak referenced examples of elderly, wheelchair users, prams and buggies encountering difficulties using footpaths due to the negligence of people parking on footpaths. She asked that the Council’s Marketing dept. run a marketing campaign to raise public awareness and education.

Cllr Leddin seconded the Motion.

In a written response Mr. Kennedy stated that:

“Parking on footpaths, cycle lanes and bus stops is a recurring issue for Limerick City and County Council. While Limerick City and County Council have a role, in conjunction with An Garda Síochána, in enforcing by-law regulations, it is recognised that the problem persists and an education and training program, focusing on safe parking practices, would indeed serve a useful purpose. If the Notice of Motion is agreed, Limerick City and County Council will contact the Road Safety Authority, who are the national body for road safety educational campaigns to request that such a programme be developed in conjunction with An Garda Síochána. Limerick City and County Council will reflect any such campaign across its Marketing and Communication channels.”

It was agreed that Cllr. Novak Uí Chonchúir’s Motion would be submitted as a recommendation to Full Council from the SPC and that, if adopted by Full Council, that the executive will contact the Road Safety Authority, who are the national body for road safety educational campaigns to request that such a programme be developed in conjunction with An Garda Síochána; and that Limerick City and County Council would also reflect any such campaign across its Marketing and Communication channels.

Item 6: Question submitted by Ms. Ailish Drake

“The impact of Covid-19 is being strongly felt by city residents, performers, traders and hospitality services. Recent funding announcements by Failte Ireland and The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media could have a significant positive impact on the city and towns across the county in the short and long term. In order to benefit from these schemes this summer Local Authorities must prioritise Covid Mobility Plans. Last week Cork announced that they will permanently pedestrianise 17 streets for outdoor dining.

In order to encourage people to use outdoor space in urban areas, changes to traffic and movement of vehicles will be required. Pedestrian safety, noise pollution, air pollution all have a significant negative impact on outdoor spaces.

What plans, if any, are in progress for Limerick City Centre and county town centres for covid mobility, walking and cycling and pedestrianisation of streets for outdoor dining, performance and urban animation? How are LCCC engaging with business owners, stakeholders in the arts and culture sector and the public on plans at pre- draft stage, so that barriers to delivery are identified and resolved prior to plans being announced? Has a committee of community, arts, cultural, active travel and business representatives been set up to facilitate open discussion and if so, are representatives of Limerick PPN included”

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

It is acknowledged that the impact of COVID-19 is being felt strongly by all. This impact can be reduced to some extent by the following grants and supports for business, for which further details will be circulated as they are finalised;

- 1. Outdoor Dining Enhancement Scheme, which will aid businesses which sell food to buy tables, chairs, windbreaks, heaters, etc for outdoor serving.*
- 2. Tables and Chairs Licence and footpath buildout. This will facilitate footpath widening, where appropriate, to facilitate outdoor dining, while at same time maintaining safe pedestrian movement.*
- 3. Street Event Licensing which will facilitate street closures for on street events such as community festivals, street parties and entertainment.*
- 4. Outdoor Public Space Scheme 2021 which will allow local authorities to adapt, equip or otherwise improve public spaces for cultural and event activities.*
- 5. The Failte Ireland Urban Animation Investment Scheme which will promote public realm artistic features in central city locations for the successful local authorities following submissions for shortlisting.*
- 6. The Failte Ireland Weatherproofing and outdoor dining infrastructure scheme to support local authorities to upgrade and enhance existing pedestrianised/part pedestrianised streets and implement weather proof solutions which will facilitate year-round outdoor dining.*

Limerick City and County Council will coordinate, manage and implement all of the above schemes which will have a positive impact in the short and long term with respect to the re-opening of the Limerick economy. Pedestrianisation of streets is covered under scheme 3 above and the Council will consider applications for street closures for successful requests from applicants. Clearly pedestrianisation will have effects on traffic movement but safety of all road users will be to the fore in all instances. Engagement with relevant stakeholders will be

of prime importance for the successful rollout of the schemes and the Council will ensure that appropriate consultation will take place in relation to developing a successful re-opening of Limerick.

In addition to the measures outlined above, Limerick City and County Council are proceeding with approximately 6.5km of two-way cycleway segregation/2km of one-way cycleway to make the cycling experience safer. This segregation is located at Condell Road, Plassey Park Road, Groody Road and Dooradoyle Road. It is intended that these works will commence shortly. Active travel measures and improved public space is a fundamental part of the O'Connell St Improvement Works and the Greenway at Castletroy which are now under construction. In addition to these measures, multiple Active Travel schemes are at various stages of design for improved pedestrian and cycle facilities throughout the metropolitan area. Many of these will reach construction later this current year with a very intensive 5-year rollout plan thereafter. In this regard, it is intended that the following active travel schemes will go to public consultation in May/June 2021:

- *Mill Road;*
- *Raheen to Quinn's Cross;*
- *Shannon Bridge to Clare Street;*
- *South Circular Road;*
- *Parnell Street to Clare Street; and*
- *LIT to the City Centre*

Item 7 (a) Question submitted by Ms. Ailish Drake

“The Three Bridges Walking Route has provided residents with much needed outdoor space during lockdown. As we move toward summer this beautiful route will become even more popular. Improvements to include the addition of the Shannon Bridge cycle lane last year have been very successful. However, there are still improvements that can be made, such as widening the route at Howley's Quay which proved a popular addition last summer.

The Limerick Pedestrian Network carried out a walkability audit of the route last summer and submitted it to the Director of Physical Development in July 2020. Has the report been reviewed and if so, are their plans proposed to further enhance the route?”

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

The Three Bridges Walking Route is indeed a fabulous amenity in the heart of Limerick. The temporary cycle facility on Shannon Bridge has proved very successful and the Council hope to shortly commence consultation on making a cycle facility a long-term inclusion on the bridge. It is also hoped to widen the upstream footpath to allow more space for the many pedestrians

using this route, including those doing the Three Bridges walk. Design works on the improvements to Active Travel measures along the Quays linking to Arthur's Quay are also ongoing at the moment and it is hoped to bring these proposals to consultation later this year.

Limerick City and County Council acknowledge the very good work done by the Limerick Pedestrian Network in producing an audit of the Three Bridges Route. The recommendations of this audit form a very useful tool to consider as the various Active Travel Schemes effecting this city centre route develop. Indeed, the imminent consultation for Shannon Bridge, followed by the South Quays, will take into account this audit. A further scheme, looking at Active Travel Crossing points for the Abbey River will also consider some of issues raised in the audit, as will all other developing schemes in the area.

It is important to note that any improvements made must be consistent with a considered investment plan for Active Travel in the city centre. Limerick City and County Council are actively developing a very intensive 5-year roll-out plan, consistent with the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS). All schemes and improvements must be approved by the NTA who are fully funding sustainable travel improvements. A planned considered approach, with appropriate consultation, for all works is necessary to ensure long term viability of investment in the city centre. In this context, the recommendations of the Limerick Pedestrian Network audit is a valuable toolkit for our designers who will give due consideration to the audit proposals in developing the emerging schemes.

Item 7 (b) Presentation by the Limerick Pedestrian Network - Three Bridges Walking Route

Ms. Drake introduced Ms. Madeleine Lyes and stated that the Limerick Pedestrian Network (LPN) is a newly formed group of local volunteers, who want to make Limerick better for, and because of, everyday walking. She invited Ms. Lyes to begin the presentation.

Ms. Lyes summarised the first Walkability Assessment Report prepared by the LPN outlining the overview, findings and recommendations in each of the following:

1. Provide Safe & Continuous Pedestrian Route between Sarsfield Bridge & Arthurs Quay Park
2. Improve Pedestrian Space Allocation & Safety on the (4) Bridges
3. Reshape 'Shared Space' on South Quays as Pedestrian Space
4. Improve Pedestrian Space at Potato Market / Merchants Quay
5. Deliver Consistent Riverside Walk Opening Times

Cllr. Leddin thanked Ms. Lyes for the presentation and assured her that the Council will engage with the Limerick Pedestrian Network. The presentation will be circulated to the Members with her consent.

Mr. Heffernan stated that the presentation shows how an area can be improved. He referenced the road from the Corbally baths to Athlunkard stating that it is in need of attention.

Cllr. O' Donovan thanked Ms. Lyes for the collection of excellent and useful information. She referred to the Covid Mobility Measures last year and is hoping that they will be re-instated this year.

Cllr. Costelloe thanked Ms. Lyes for the presentation and wished to also express his gratitude to the people responsible for enhancing the lighting in Nicholas Street.

The Chair confirmed that all presentations would be circulated to Members and confirmed that the next SPC meeting is scheduled for 22nd June 2021.

This concluded the meeting.