



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

Stiúrthóireacht Forbartha Eacnamaíochta,
Comhairle Cathrach & Contae Luimnigh,
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14th January 2022

To the Mayor and Each Member of Limerick City and County Council

**Chairperson's Report for the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning
Strategic Policy Committee Meeting of 13th December 2021**

A Chomhairleoir, a chara,

A blended meeting of the above SPC was held on 13th December 2021. The following is an account of the principal items that were considered at the meeting.

Item 1

Update on Development Plan Process

Maria Woods, Senior Planner, informed members that following public consultation on the Draft Development Plan 2022-2028; 285 submissions were received, which were divided into various themes, with the majority relating to City and Environs. The Forward Planning Team were currently reviewing all submissions received prior to preparing the Chief Executive's Report, which will be presented to Elected Members at Council Meeting in February 2022. Any material alterations to the Draft Plan will go on public display and a Chief Executive's Report will be prepared on submissions received and presented to Elected Members in May 2022, when it is hoped to adopt the Development Plan. Invitations will be issued to hold a number of workshops early next year.

While members welcomed the update on the Development Plan process, they queried the possibility of extending the period to adopt the Development Plan and was informed by M. Woods that an extension could only be granted if the process had been impeded due to Covid reasons. She stated that Forward Planning had not been affected by Covid-19 in progressing the Development Plan process, which was now at a very advanced stage and the granting of an extension would not be beneficial in the completion of the Development Plan process.

Members also expressed concern at the number of planning decisions for private housing, which had been referred to An Bord Pleanála and the guidelines used by ABP in making their decisions and suggested that their policies should be in line with Limerick City and County Council policies.

On the proposal of Cllr. S. Keary, seconded by J. Scanlan, it was unanimously agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to bring forward legislation that An Bord Pleanála have regard to policies in the Limerick Development Plan, along with National Policy, taking account of habitual objectors.

Members also expressed concern at the delay by An Bord Pleanála on making a decision on the Limerick-Foynes Road which has now been deferred to 28th January, 2022.

Item 2

LCETB / LEO Training Skills Supports for Business

Ms. Eimear Brophy, Further Education & Training Manager, Limerick, Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) informed members that LCETB is the state education and training authority for the Limerick and Clare region. It was created following the amalgamation of three Vocational Education Committees (VEC's) in Limerick City, County Limerick and County Clare.

In July, 2014, it assumed responsibility from SOLAS of 2 former Training Centres in Raheen, Limerick and Shannon, Co. Clare.

LCETB employs 2,500 staff, has an average annual budget of €130m across all its divisions and its capital programme will see an investment in excess of €90m in the region over the next four years.

Ms. Brophy informed members of the following training skills/supports for businesses, provided by the LCETB: Apprenticeship training and work-based learning, and skills to advance, which provides upskilling and reskilling to employees in jobs undergoing change and to those currently employed in vulnerable sectors. The LCETB also works closely with the Mid-West Regional Skills Forum, who provide training in the following clusters: manufacturing, logistics, retail, hospitality, film and IT.

While members thanked Eimear for the very comprehensive presentation, they expressed concern at the lack of qualified trades available in various sectors and particularly in the area of construction. She informed members that SOLAS are networking with the Construction Industry Federation (CIF) and other agencies in redressing the timescale involved in the provision of training for various trades. She also pointed out that apprenticeship training is now included as an option on the Central Applications Offer (CAO) Form and that representatives from Companies are visiting schools in the region, encouraging students to follow the apprenticeship route in taking up employment.

Ms. Brophy also referred to a programme to tackle unemployment in Regeneration areas, where training is provided to local youths in blocklaying, kerbing and paving and once completed, each participant gains meaningful employment with sub-contractors.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE (LEO)

Ciara Farrell, LEO gave a presentation on the Measure 2 Business Supports provided by LEO. The supports include Start Your Own Business Courses, Mentoring Programmes, Management Development courses, Trading Online Vouchers, Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters, Micro Finance Ireland Loans, Client Stimulus Schemes and Green for Micro consultations.

Ciara informed members that a Review of the Limerick Food Strategy was underway and a half day course for new food producers would take place in early 2022 and she asked members to invite anybody interested to get in touch.

Members thanked Ciara for the presentation and acknowledged the support provided to businesses, especially to food producers and looked forward to the roll-out of the Limerick Food Strategy.

Item 3

Items raised by the PPN

- **Proposed Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) at University of Limerick**

“Limerick PPN wishes to request that Limerick City and County Council through its Executive and the Planning Department enters urgent discussions with the University of Limerick, Clare Co. Council and the Mid-West Regional Authority to clarify matters with those parties in relation to the proposed development of a new town on the Clare side of the University of Limerick Campus and to report on these discussions to the next meeting of this committee. These discussions should seek to clarify the following in relation to the development:

- a. Does the development have the formal support of the University?**
- b. Have there been any consultations held by the Planning Authority (Clare Co. Council) with the proposers?**
- c. Have there been any consultations held by the proposers or the Planning Authority (Clare Co. Council) with Limerick City and County Council or the Mid-West Regional Authority in relation to the impacts that the proposals would have on the ongoing welfare of Limerick City Centre?**
- d. Has any study been carried out to see whether this development is consistent with the objectives of the Limerick Draft Development Plan 2022-28 or the Mid-West Area Strategic Plan 2012-30 in relation to Limerick City Centre?”**

Members expressed concern that the proposed development of a new town on the Clare side of the University of Limerick campus could inhibit/delay the development of the campus in the city centre. They also raised concerns in relation to the existing road network, the risk of flooding and public transport in the area.

V. Murray confirmed that Limerick City & County Council have been in discussion with representatives from UL and Clare County Council, who are looking to establish a Strategic Development Zone(SDZ) of a

200 acre extension of the existing campus. The development will include residential, academic and retail opportunities, including a marina in the area.

UL have assured that prioritisation will be given to development of the former Dunnes Stores building at Sarsfield Street and they hope to progress development on this site over the next 12 months.

V. Murray also pointed out that the proposed SDZ was not located in a flood zone area and that works were progressing on the Limerick Northern Distributor Road and that the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS) would be completed in April, 2022.

Item 4

Any Other Business

Directly Elected Mayor

Members queried the delay in the implementation of legislation required for the election of the Directly Elected Mayor (DEM) and was informed by V. Murray that such legislation was currently under review at National Level.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Limerick City & County Council forward a letter to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to bring forward legislation that An Bord Pleanála have regard to policies in the Limerick Development Plan, along with National Policy, taking account of habitual objectors.

Signed: ***Eddie Ryan***

**Councillor Eddie Ryan,
Chairperson**