

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

**Chairperson's Report of the Special Meeting of the Climate Action Biodiversity and
Environment Strategic Policy Committee of 14 March, 2022.**

**Item 1: Update on Briefing with Mr Eamon Ryan, Minister for the Environment, Climate and
Communication.**

Mr Dara McGuigan, Administrative Officer, provided members with an update on the presentation given by Mr Eamon Ryan TD, to the Council at a Special Meeting of the Full Council held on 11 March, 2022.

The Minister advised that his priorities were to accelerate the delivery of actions contained in the Climate Action plan 2021, and to ensure balanced development between Dublin and the rest of the country. He acknowledged that the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine had caused us to re-evaluate our reliance on imported fuels.

The Minister advised that to speed up the delivery of climate action projects he was establishing three cross departmental Acceleration Teams at national level. He said that the areas of focus for these Teams in the next three years were sustainable transport; heating retrofit; and renewable energy.

Sustainable Transport: In the context of Limerick the Minister said that he would like to see progress on the following projects – the re-opening of the Limerick-Foynes rail line with a station at Adare; a new commuter rail station at Moyross.

The Minister said he would like to see an active travel route linking UL with TUS/LIT and MIC. He anticipated that there would be a number of bus connects and active travel routes, and sought the Council's mandate to advance these.

The minister advised that the LNDR was unlikely to advance in the next 20 or 30 years due to funding being committed to other projects.

Heating Retrofit: The Minister confirmed that there was €8bn available for heating retrofit projects, which could support upgrades to public and private housing stock under various schemes. District heating was an area he would like to advance, as was community led retrofitting.

Offshore Renewable Energy: The Minister said that offshore wind energy had the potential to generate as much electricity as ten Ardnacrusha power stations. Ireland has a competitive advantage in the area of offshore wind generation due to our geographic position. He

acknowledged that the initial phase of the programme would be focused on the east coast, but that the second phase would be focused on the west coast, with the potential to generate 1GW of energy in the Shannon Estuary. There was potential to create a centre for green energy along the estuary, possibly in Foynes.

The Mayor invited the Members to comment on the Minister's presentation. The Members raised the following items: fuel security; road projects; nuclear power; rewetting lands; rail; community engagement and just transition; hydrogen powered public transport; rural transport; liquid natural gas plants; water and wastewater infrastructure; by-passes of county towns; broadband infrastructure; the directly elected mayor; LNDR; flood defences; Roadbridge; supports for the farming community; bus shelters in rural towns and villages. In conclusion the Mayor thanked the Minister and asked him to remember that Limerick can be the driver of balanced regional growth for the mid-west; that there was strong support for the LNDR locally and at a minimum the Minister should consider addressing the traffic congestion at the Mackey Roundabout; and that the estuary had the potential to become a green digital capital.

Mr McGuigan concluded his summary.

The Chair, Cllr Scanlan, opened the floor to the committee members. The members welcomed the update and touched on a number of the items raised at the Council meeting.

Cllr Galvin proposed a Motion for the March Council meeting. Following some discussion the wording set out below was agreed:

"I will move at the next Council meeting that this Council calls on the Government to change national policy to support the liquid natural gas plant at Ballylongford."

This wording was seconded by Cllr Sheahan (J).

Item 2. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Kiely (referred from the Metropolitan District Meeting October 2021 – deferred from CABE SPC Meeting February 2022).

"I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that the possibility of litter bin sponsorship be examined as a way to provide revenue for the provision of more bins in the city and its environs and to support local businesses to be more visible on their respective streets / areas."

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

Item 3. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan (referred from the full Council Meeting January 2022)

"I will move at the next Meeting that this Authority forward-sell graves in any of its cemeteries where adequate space supports such sales."

In proposing the motion, Cllr Scanlan said that the Council's Burial Ground policy effectively prevented families native to a particular area for purchasing grave spaces in advance of need.

Several members agreed with the existing policy of not pre-selling graves stating that the policy ensured there would be grave spaces available to people at time of need.

Ms Gallagher, Director of Service responded as follows:

"In 2019, a decision was taken by the Council to cease the practice of advance sale of graves in burial grounds, to allow for the more effective management of the burial grounds and ensuring that graves spaces would be available to those at the time of need. This decision was required as there were burial grounds where graves were sold in advance, resulting in burial grounds reaching capacity and no spaces available for those in immediate need.

In order to address this Notice of Motion, the Council will carry out a review of remaining capacities in all burial grounds and determine where there is surplus capacity that would permit advance sale of graves in any of its burial grounds.

To this end, a policy on forward selling of graves in certain limited circumstances will be considered. "

Cllr Scanlan welcomed the response, and looked forward to the outcome of the proposed review.

Several members raised the recent increase in grave fees. Ms C Lynch, Senior Executive Engineer, advised that the increase in costs was to support the development of new and maintenance of existing burial grounds. Ms Gallagher advised that the increase was an Executive decision included as part of the scale of charges budget setting process and that a review hadn't been undertaken for six years.

Cllr Secas proposed the following Motion:

"I will move at the next Council Meeting that the increase in burial ground charges be reversed."

The Motion was seconded by Cllr Scanlan.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

Jerome Scanlan

Chairperson of the Climate Action Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee

Recommendation 1:

Notice of Motion proposed by Cllr L Galvin:

"I will move at the next Council meeting that this Council calls on the Government to change national policy to support the liquid natural gas plant at Ballylongford."

Recommendation 2:

Notice of Motion proposed by Cllr E Secas:

“I will move at the next Council Meeting that the increase in burial ground charges be reversed.”