



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

Draft Minutes of the Meeting of Limerick City and County Council's Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee held on the 27th April, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Dooradoyle and ONLINE by MS Teams Video Conference.

Members Present:

Cllrs. Leddin (Chair), Butler, Daly, Kilcoyne, Novak Uí Chonchúir, McSweeney, O'Hanlon, Secas, Sheahan (M), Teefy, Mr. D. O'Shea, Mr. B. Harper.

In Attendance:

Cllrs. Benson, Collins (B), Collins (M), Galvin, Hartigan, Kiely, Murphy, O'Brien, O'Donoghue, O. O'Sullivan, Sheehan (C), Slattery, Teskey.

Officials Present:

Mr. B. Kennedy, Mr. A. Finn, Mr. B. Kidney, Ms. C. Corry, Ms. C. Mulcahy, Ms. C. Curley, Mr. D. Slavin, Mr. D. White, Mr. J. Cregan, Mr. J. Howard, Mr. J. O'Leary, Mr. J. Delaney, Mr. J.B. O'Callaghan, Ms. K. McDonnell, Ms. K. Burke, Mr. L. Kennedy, Ms. S. Kennedy, Ms. M. Corrigan, Ms. M. Hennessy, Mr. M. Leahy, Ms. M. Woods, Ms. N. Gallagher, Ms. N. Wilson, Dr. P. Daly, C.E., Mr. R. Gallagher, Mr. R. Gorey, Mr. S. McGlynn, Ms. T. Flanagan, Mr. T. Brennan, Ms. A. Leahy, Ms. M. Fitzgerald.

In Attendance:

Mr. Hugh Creegan, Deputy C.E.O., NTA
Mr. David Clements, Senior Transport Planner, NTA
Mr. Michael MacAree, Head of Integrated Planning, NTA

Apologies: Cllr. E. O'Donovan, Mrs. M. Browne

The Chair opened the Meeting and welcomed Mr. Hugh Creegan, Mr. David Clements and Mr. Michael MacAree from the NTA.

Item 1: NTA Briefing on the second draft of the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS).

Mr. Creegan outlined the LSMATS engagement to date confirming that 112 submissions were received on the first draft LSMATS and 11 events took place in 8 weeks. He added that there was more detail modelling in relation to rail transport and more emphasis on Regeneration areas within Limerick city. He introduced Mr. Clements to brief the members on the second draft of the LSMATS.

Mr. Clements outlined the main issues raised in the Public Consultation as follows:

1. Covid-19
2. Consultation and engagement
3. Targets
4. Delivery
5. Modelling process
6. Vision and ambition
7. Rail
8. Climate change
9. Accessibility
10. Regeneration
11. City Centre consolidation

He also gave a summary of the key changes and the Outcomes Assessment. He confirmed that the next steps will be online information webinars to be held on the 10th May and the 17th May, and submissions can be made up to the 10th June 2022.

The Chair thanked Mr. Creegan and Mr. Clements and commended the report, particularly connecting places and people in the Regeneration areas. He added that one can see the significant investment in the city in bus services and Active Travel and welcomed the proposed reinstatement of the Limerick to Foynes freight rail services. He also added that Limerick is waiting several years for some of the Active Travel routes to proceed and queried if more autonomy could be given to the Active Travel staff in approving these schemes.

Mr. Kennedy thanked Mr. Creegan and Mr. Clements adding that there has been substantial investment in Limerick with €18m in 2021 and over €24m allocated for this year. The Active Travel Team, which currently has a compliment of 17 staff, has been set up to implement the plan.

Mayor Butler referred to the absence of support for the LNDR in the new draft and stated that a solution to the traffic congestion is required if the full LNDR is not an option, particularly the chronic issues in Corbally and at the Mackey Roundabout. He added that an increase in student growth over the coming years will exasperate the situation.

Cllr. Sheehan (C) agreed with the Mayor adding that if the LNDR is not an option, an alternative is required. He also stated that he would welcome a train station in Corbally as something to build on going forward.

Mr. Cregan suggested that a road does not necessarily solve the congestion issue; it is more a case of providing better public transport. In response to Mayor Butler, Mr. Cregan confirmed that he will make explicit reference in the final document on the need to address congestion and safety issues at Junction 28 (Mackey Roundabout). In relation to a railway station in Corbally, Mr. Clements confirmed that additional stations on the existing rail network will be kept under review, including Corbally, possibly linked to park and ride provision.

Mr. Harper welcomed the new ambitious vision and was pleased to see climate change and reducing emissions emphasised in the document. He added that it is the perfect opportunity to enhance Limerick's reputation and brand. However, he saw two major risks as follows:

1. Climate ambition, reduce carbon emissions by 30% - What do we need to do now in order to achieve our 2030 and 2050 targets.
2. Absence of real governance and accountability – not sufficient reviews of progress included in the document.

He added that infrastructure will take a long time to put in place and mitigation measures must be put in place now.

Cllr. Sheahan (M) welcomed the positive vision and saw the strategy as a great win for Limerick. He was particularly interested in the railway proposals in Killonan, Castletroy, which is very much a rural area. He stressed that issues such as access roads, road widening and park and ride facilities need to be discussed, and the need for engagement with Councillors and communities in the area is crucial. Mr. Cregan agreed that there needs to be sensitive engagement with communities by all relevant stakeholders when undertaking a major project.

Mr. Cregan acknowledged the concerns raised by Mr. Harper in relation to reaching carbon reduction targets and emphasised that achieving this goal will be a challenging task. Governance will continue to be monitored for effectiveness as the strategy progresses.

Cllr. O'Brien asked what the timetable was for the rail line and station for Foynes. Cllr. Kilcoyne also queried if the railway line would be completed by 2027 for the Ryder Cup and referred to the continual bottlenecks in Adare. The Chair also agreed with Cllr. Kilcoyne's comments.

Mr. Creegan advised that the initial concentration for the Foynes line will be to develop it for freight purposes. Current indications are that passenger services are not viable at the moment to justify provision of passenger services. This element will be kept under periodic review during the strategy in line with Measure RL3.

Cllr. O'Brien stated that land would not be required for passenger upgrade and hopes works will be future proofed and easy to upgrade to a passenger service at a future date.

Mr. Harper stated that the Metro can decarbonise faster as opposed to rural areas which may be more difficult and asked if the NTA needs to be more ambitious. In response, Mr. Creegan agreed that the City and Metro can achieve positive change more easily. It is a more difficult task in rural areas where long distance journeys can be a matter of necessity.

Mr. Delaney wished to acknowledge the revisions on a number of projects and welcomed the additional changes which will create a better future for Limerick and the Regeneration areas.

Item 2: Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee held on the 22nd February 2022 were proposed by Cllr. Sheahan (M), seconded by Cllr. Kilcoyne and adopted.

Item 3: To agree dates for Travel & Transportation SPC Meetings for 2022

The Chair proposed the following meeting dates for 2022

Monday, 27th June 2022 @ 3:30 p.m.

Tuesday, 25th Oct 2022 @ 3:30 p.m.

Tuesday, 20th Dec 2022 @ 3:30 p.m.

Item 4: 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 establish a multidisciplinary suburban rail task force for Limerick, with a purpose to engage with the relevant stakeholders and agencies to develop a suburban rail strategy for Limerick and establish a channel of communication between the local authority, Iarnród Éireann, OPR and other relevant agencies.

In proposing the Motion, Cllr. Novak stated she was pleased that her Notice of Motion is being dealt with at this meeting, as it has been the subject of discussion over recent days. She added that Limerick has a good network of railway lines and there should be appropriate development around stations to benefit from the rail transport. While she welcomed the Phase 1 Rail network, she would have like to have seen the Phase 2 run parallel with Phase 1.

Cllr. Secas seconded the Notice of Motion adding that it was a very important and timely Motion and commended Cllr. Novak.

Mr. Kennedy added that the Notice of Motion is very relevant and the NTA have committed and identified a number of measures and referred to RL1, RL2, and RL3 in the draft strategy.

In a written response Mr. Kennedy stated that a comprehensive sustainable transport strategy, which includes for significant detail on suburban rail proposals for Limerick, is currently in progress in the form of Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS). This strategy includes for significant public/stakeholder participation. The first Public Consultation has been completed (2020) and the second Public Consultation is now underway. The Strategy is led by the NTA, with support from TII, Limerick City and County Council and Clare County Council. There is significant engagement with the relevant stakeholders, in particular Iarnrod Éireann with regard to rail issues. Full public consultation will again be sought during LSMATS Draft 2 consultation on all aspects of the strategy, including suburban rail proposals in Limerick. It should be noted that the LSMATS study, currently in draft format, forms a significant supporting strategy to the Limerick City and County Council Development Plan, hence the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) are appraised of the developing strategy.

As the subject of the Notice of Motion is adequately dealt with in the context of the emerging LSMATS, it is not proposed to set up a task force to duplicate a study already well advanced.

The Chair supported the spirit of the Notice of Motion but accepted the matter is adequately dealt with Mr. Kennedy's reply

Mr. Gallagher stated that while he understood the spirit of the Motion, the development of a suburban network in the short term would require significant land use changes. Under the current Development Plan as per national guidance, the emphasis is on compact population growth, with the concentration of population based in city centre areas.

Cllr. Novak accepted the response and Mr. Gallagher's comments, adding that engagement is required with relevant stakeholders and agencies like the OPR and Irish Rail for this mode of transport to work. She highlighted that there may not be time to wait for the next Development Plan.

Cllr. Sheahan (M) added that a railway station would not be viable without population growth and these areas will have to be allowed to grow.

Item 5: Question submitted by Mr. Bruce Harper

Limerick Travel and Transport Linkage Group would like to know the following;

- When did LCCC last review its policy on disabled parking in the city? Some allocated spaces have been replaced and others are difficult to access.
- What ratios in relation to the allocation of disabled parking spaces are being applied?
- Is there monitoring of the current allocation and if so, what has LCCC learned from its monitoring?
- How has LCCC liaised with disability groups in relation to its policy on parking place allocation for disabled drivers?
- When will the next review take place?

A written response to Question was circulated to all members as follows:

“Policy\Allocations

Regulations for the provision of disabled persons parking bays are implemented under Article 44 of the Road Traffic (Traffic and Parking) Regulations 1997 (S.I. No. 182/1997). For all planned developments we refer to and are guided by the current County Development Plan (under review) and the recently revised document ‘The Irish Wheelchair Association Best Practice Access Guidelines, (4th Edition).

In regard to requests for on-street provision of designated disabled parking spaces (DDPS), these are allocated on a case by case or needs basis following an assessment by our technical team.

Proportion of allocation for disabled parking spaces

For on street parking we have approximately 3500 parking spaces available in Limerick City Centre within which there are 132 designated disabled parking spaces (DDPS). Within this allocation 78 are in the central or core business district. In addition we have provided 73 no. residential disabled parking spaces in the extended urban centre. As DDPS are provided on a needs basis for on-street warrants, we do not operate based on a minimum proportion unlike that of planned development applications.

Real-time Monitoring – Spacefinder App

In November 2021 Limerick City & County Council was the first Local Authority in Ireland to launch the Spacefinder App. This App uses technology developed by our eParking partners to give real-time availability to users of selected disabled spaces in the City allowing the driver to confirm what spaces are free. We are still in the early stages of this initiative but we hope to expand the technology where the initiative can justify such a measure. The SpaceFinder service, developed by Limerick firm ParkMagic, has been supported and endorsed by the Disabled Drivers Association of Ireland (DDAI).

In addition authorised badge holders are entitled to use standard spaces available throughout the city where this is necessary.

Liaison \ Consultation

Limerick City & County Council's approach to provision of disabled parking spaces, provides for the retention or allocation of existing Disabled Parking based on their use. New requests\ applications are considered on a case by case basis and provided in general where a warrant can be justified as close to the desirable location as possible. Existing spaces are retained until or unless their use is no longer warranted or in some cases relocated where a more suitable location is determined.

We engage with representative groups such as DDAI & Irish Wheelchair Association as well as individual citizens\drivers in respect of this service on an ongoing basis and we will continue to do so where improvements can be made to provision of facilities to disabled drivers”.

The Chair thanked all members for attending and confirmed that the next SPC Meeting will be held on Monday, 27th June 2022.

The Meeting then concluded.