



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Limerick City and County Council's Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee held on 25th October 2022 at 3:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Dooradoyle and ONLINE by MS Teams Video Conference.

Members Present: Cllrs. Novak (Chair), Butler, Collopy, Daly, Foley, Kilcoyne, Leddin, McSweeney, Mitchell, O'Donovan, O'Hanlon, Ryan, Secas, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (M), Teefy. Ms. M. Browne, Mr. B. Harper, Mr. D. Lillis, Mr. D. O'Shea, Mr. T. O'Brien.

Other Invitees: Cllr. S. Benson.

Officials Present: Mr. B. Kennedy, Mr. A. Finn, Ms. A. Leahy, Mr. B. Kidney, Mr. D.E. Leahy, Mr. D. Slavin, Mr. J. Cregan, Mr. J. O'Leary, Ms. K. McDonnell, Ms. N. McGarry, Mr. S. McGlynn, Ms. S. Kennedy, Mr. S. Jennings, Mr. S. O'Reilly, Mr. T. Fitzgerald, Ms. T. Flanagan, M. Fitzgerald.

Item 1: Minutes

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee held on the 27th June and the 12th July 2022 were proposed by Cllr. Mitchell, seconded by Cllr. Sheahan (M) and adopted.

Item 2: Update on MWRDO TII Projects – Mr. Tim Fitzgerald, S.E.

Mr. Kennedy introduced Mr. Tim Fitzgerald and Mr. David E. Leahy from the MWRDO. Mr. Fitzgerald gave an overview of the TII projects outlining the Road and Greenway schemes at planning stage and schemes at construction.

The members thanked Mr. Fitzgerald for the presentation. A discussion took place and the main points were:

Cllr. Secas raised two points as follows:

1. She asked if the Blackbridge could be included in the Limerick to Montpelier Greenway
2. She has concerns for Health and Safety on the Mackey Roundabout and asked if Mr. Fitzgerald could bring this up with TII.

Cllr. O'Donovan welcomed the works on the N69 Mungret and Boland's Cross. She was disappointed that the Limerick Rathkeale Greenway might be in jeopardy due to Irish Rail and that it is still with Community Tourism & Culture directorate and not TII. It is not just a tourist attraction; it is about connectivity to Patrickswell and Limerick.

Cllr. Butler asked if the Rathkeale to Limerick City Greenway would be transferred to TII once it connects to Limerick City and asked what is the agreed timeline for the scheme. He also asked if the Cement factory line could be examined.

Cllr. Teefy acknowledged the great progress made. She referenced the Limerick to Cahir project and asked if Cahir/Oola/Brooksbridge is the exact route. She agreed with Cllr. Secas in relation to the traffic at the Mackey Roundabout and advised the issue has been raised with TII. She asked for the presentations to be circulated.

Cllr. Leddin referenced the campaign regarding disused railway lines. He stated that the railway network is one of our hidden gems and a line from Mungret by Ballykeefe and into the heart of the city would be very positive. He expressed disappointment that there was no reference in LSMATS to look at feasibility for potential routes for passengers. He added that it is a missed opportunity and who is taking ownership of it. Mr. Kennedy, in response confirmed that passenger rail was identified in LSMATS and the executive will continue to discuss this element with the NTA.

The Chair acknowledged that it takes time in terms of greenways and would like to see more connection with Clare and Shannon and that the railway lines would be used for light rail.

Cllr. Sheahan (M) wished to know if the Foynes to Limerick rail scheme would have sufficient demand, taking into account the enhanced road services when the Adare bypass is completed.

Cllr. Mitchell asked if it is a good thing that Greenway schemes are transferred to TII. He welcomed the Beary's cross and Oola works on the N24, and the bypass of Tipperary town.

Cllr. Foley acknowledged the work at Wards cross. He asked when will the Abbeyfeale and Newcastle West corridors be narrowed down. Mr. Fitzgerald confirmed that a design update for both Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale is scheduled for Q1 2023.

Cllr. McSweeney thanked Mr. Fitzgerald for the informative presentation and stated the extension of the greenway to Patrickswell and the City needs to be a priority. He particularly feels that landowners in Patrickswell are in limbo as they cannot get planning permission for house or extensions.

In response to members Mr. Fitzgerald added the following:

- He acknowledged the issues at the Mackey Roundabout.
- He confirmed that TII is the approving authority for all Greenways since September 2021 and they have developed new guidance documents and procedures in relation to Greenways.
- The Black Bridge is not included in the UL to Montpelier scheme; it falls within the Limerick to Scarriff scheme, which is being administered by Waterways Ireland and Clare County Council.
- He advised that it is difficult to give a timeline in relation to the Rathkeale to Limerick Greenway, as currently working on the feasibility phase. National code of practice requires the investigation of locating greenways on state-owned lands where possible.
- In relation to the Cahir project, Mr. Fitzgerald stated that work was progressing to reduce the 300m wide corridor identified in May 2022, and a design update was programmed to be published in Quarter 2 2023.
- In relation to the Foynes to Limerick rail scheme, Mr. Fitzgerald added that Foynes is a Core Port and in accordance with EU TEN-T regulations, is to be served by high quality road and freight rail line.

Item 3: Proposed 30k Speed Limits in the core business district – Seamas O’Reilly, S.E.E.

Mr. Seamas O’Reilly delivered a presentation on the proposed 30kp/h speed limits in the core business district.

The members thanked Mr. O’Reilly and the Chair opened the floor to questions.

Cllr. Mitchell referred to a recent Motion he submitted at the Cappamore Kilmallock District Meeting. He welcomed the engineering measures in junction tightening and raised ramps. He asked about the speed limit review.

Cllr. Secas agreed it is a great proposal and will make a big difference regarding road safety. She asked about enforcement and if lower than 30kp/h was considered

In response to Cllr. Mitchell, Mr. O’Reilly confirmed that a number of submissions were received and he will be managing the speed limit review and will be holding workshops. Mr. O’Reilly confirmed that he is in consultation with An Garda Siochána regarding enforcement, and once implemented, a speed survey will be undertaken, which will assist in informing LCCC of required engineering measures. 30kp/h is the lowest available to the Local Authority.

The Chair stated she would agree the design and signaling is more important than the speed limits. She asked if there were any other measures, like traffic management or circulation plans. Mr. O’Reilly stated that at a number of locations, engineering measures may be deemed necessary. It is currently a work in progress and will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Kennedy advised Bus Connects has started and traffic management will be part of the Bus Connects project.

Item 4: Health Benefits arising from implementation of a low noise road surface - Mr. Simon Jennings, Executive Scientist

Mr. Kennedy introduced Mr. Simon Jennings to deliver presentation and acknowledged his experience in the area of noise monitoring.

Mr. Jennings delivered the presentation and described how works in the area between Junction 28 and 30 were completed for the TII under a pilot project. The project is designed to inform the development of TII policy for addressing road traffic noise issues on the national road network.

The Chair thanked Mr. Jennings for the presentation and added that Environment and Transport are intrinsically linked and she welcomed the road surface noise reduction. She asked if a paper would be published from this research and if a reduction in speed reduces noise. She also asked if reduction in speed limits in certain periods would be effective.

Cllr. Secas acknowledged the work of Mr. Jennings and team, adding that this work was introduced 7 to 8 years ago and it was a long process to get to this point today. She acknowledged TII and thanked them for listening and providing funding. She asked if it would be possible to monitor the impact of noise level over next couple of months.

Cllr. McSweeney asked about the scheme for Glencairn and Belgard Grove. Cllr. Sheahan (M) thanked Mr. Jennings for his enthusiasm and professionalism.

Cllr. Ryan enquired about the change in materials from HRA to SMA and what is the change in friction and stopping distance.

Cllr. Butler referenced the WHO Health impacts and agreed the results are very encouraging. In relation to Glencairn, he expressed his disappointment at the lack of information. 30-40 residents, close to the motorway have received no communication or update and this now needs action.

Mr. Harper referenced the UK Noise Association, adding that the reduction in speed is the cheapest way to reduce noise. He asked if a reduction to 30 kp/h will have an effect on noise.

Cllr Mitchell raised the following queries:-

1. Should Noise Mitigation be introduced in future residential developments
2. What type of fencing would help reduce noise.

Mr. Jennings thanked the members for their questions and added the following: -

In relation to a published paper, a report on the M7 is completed, which looks at various mitigation measures. With regard to applying periodic speed limits, he has not seen any applied in the Irish context to reduce impact of noise.

TII in recent weeks has carried out surveys and will be in a position to compare and measure output of noise to monitor the impact.

In response to Cllr Mc Sweeney, Mr. Jennings confirmed that he has completed a report on Glencairn and Ballycummin hotspot and also Patrickswell. He understands the areas are works in progress. He added that Cost benefit Assessment is completed for the Ballycummin hotspot and was prepared at the same time as the Monaleen (M7) hotspot

In response to Cllr. Butler, Mr. Jennings confirmed that he has been updating residents and working to get TII to move on the Glencairn project. He is speaking to residents where he has carried out noise monitoring. Mr. Kennedy also advised that he will liaise with Mr. Jennings to work closely with TII.

Mr. Jennings added that a reduced speed to 30kp/h in the core business district will most likely have a positive effect on reducing environmental noise and he will be undertaking noise modelling again in the future

There are currently no national guidelines in relation to the construction of new residential developments. TII has responsibility for the Technical guidance in relation to materials. Mr. Jennings confirmed that barriers need to be of sufficiently high density material with no gaps along their length.

The Chair thanked Mr. Jennings for his expertise and stated that he would be welcome to future SPC Meetings.

Item 5: Update on LSMATS – Mr. Brian Kennedy, D.O.S.

Mr. Kennedy delivered an update and confirmed that LSMATS is approved by the board of the NTA and is now with Minister Malcolm Noonan for 6 weeks. It is anticipated that the final document will be published by the end of November 2022.

Cllr. Secas expressed disappointment at the omission of the LNDR. Cllr. McSweeney concurred and added that it is disappointing that there is no mention of cycle connects at this SPC. Cycle connect is out to public consultation and there has been no briefing or engagement with members. The closing date is the 11th November 2022.

Mr. Kennedy confirmed that the Minister of Transport made the decision to exclude LDNR and he assumed this continues to be the case. He added that the Executive agrees it is important to the region. He will bring the comments on cycle connects to the NTA.

Cllr. O'Donovan agreed with Cllr. McSweeney and added that there is no consistency between cycle lane schemes and referenced the S.C.R. / Fr. Russell Road scheme. She asked what the plan was with regard to Part 8's and what traffic surveys are being done at present.

Cllr. Mitchell concurred with Cllr. Mc Sweeney, adding that the LNDR is an important piece of infrastructure and was unanimously decided on by the Members.

Mr. Kennedy advised that the LSMATS is a strategic document and has more emphasis on networks as opposed to schemes. In relation to the connectivity of cycle schemes, the LSMATS will connect all schemes that the Council has been working on through the Pathfinder project.

Cllr. McSweeney thanked Mr. Kennedy adding that this is really important. He asked what mechanism is used to connect the LNDR. Mr. Kennedy stated that the proposed congestion improvement works on the Corbally Road and on Junction 28 are all in an effort to progress into the future.

The Chair welcomed the strategy. She added that the omission of the LNDR does not diminish other works and we need to keep the focus on Active Travel and Public Transport.

Item 6: Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. S. Benson (referred from Full Council Meeting)

I will move at the next Meeting that this Council consider the introduction of specifically designated autism parking spots outside the Dóchas Centre in Parnell Street, Limerick, and that this Council work with ASD Ireland with a view to identifying other suitable locations across the city and county.

In proposing the Motion, Cllr. Benson stated that Autism friendly parking is required for people with additional needs. 130 children are using the facilities at the Dóchas Centre for speech and drama classes etc. and parking is required.

Cllr. Collopy seconded the Motion adding he is wholeheartedly in support. The Chair and Cllr. Mitchell also supported the Motion. The Chair referenced Waterford where autism parking spots are identified.

Reply:

In a recent written response by the Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan it was advised that there is no authorised Disabled Parking Badge specifically relating to autism. This creates a difficulty when considering the introduction of specific parking spots in this regard.

We reviewed best practice elsewhere and are aware of arrangements in place in some locations, which are dependent on an honesty policy for effective operation. The system involves marking a specific parking area with a recognised hidden disability emblem and depends on user honesty for subsequent parking on this spot.

It should be noted that that this is a very busy city centre location with paid parking. We will liaise with ASD Ireland and the local Dóchas Centre to gauge their views on the matter and determine a course of action following these discussions.

Cllr. Benson welcomed that the Council will engage with ASD and the local Dóchas Centre and was satisfied with the response.

Item 7: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor M. Ryan (referred from Cappamore/Kilmallock MD Meeting)

I will move at the next meeting of the Cappamore-Kilmallock Municipal District that the use of averaging Speed cameras in towns and villages be considered in the Municipal District where speed is a concern.

In proposing the Motion, Cllr. Ryan stated that speed is a concern and suggested a pilot project would encourage motorists to be more alert going through towns and villages.

Cllr. Teefy seconded the Motion and suggested looking at a pilot on certain sections of road of the R513. Cllr. Mitchell concurred with Cllr. Teefy and fully supported the Motion.

Reply:

The Average Speed Safety Camera System is governed by an agreement under Section 81 (7) of the Road Traffic Act, 2010, entered into between An Garda Síochána, the Dept. of Justice and Transport Infrastructure Ireland. A pilot was launched on March 8th on the M7 in Tipperary between Junction 26 (Nenagh West) and Junction 27 (Birdhill) to commence installation and testing of an Average Speed Safety Camera System. The operation of the system is very complex from a data handling perspective and is still under evaluation by An Garda Síochána and the Dept. of Justice at this Co. Tipperary site. Note that a similar system has been in operation in Dublin Tunnel and has resulted in a reduction in speeding incidents by about 80% in the Tunnel.

However, it should be noted that both of the above locations have a defined speed measuring entry point and a defined speed measuring exit point, with no entry or exit points in between. Essentially, traffic entering the system have no choice but to continue on to exit point, which means that the averaging system will get an accurate reading of the speed of the vehicle as it, traverses this defined path.

This requirement is not replicated in a typical town/village scenario where, invariably, there will be multiple exit/entry/destination or speed interruption points between the sampling points in question. Consequently, there could be no confidence that the system will give an accurate representation of the vehicles speed because of this likelihood of exposure to journey interruptions along the route.

Cllr. Ryan stated that many local residents in Abbington Murroe area of the R516 have raised concerns in relation to speeding. In response, Mr. Kennedy added that the Council will write to

the Department of Justice on the matter. Cllr Ryan stated that it was important to keep working on the issue and he welcomed the response.

Item 8: Notice of Motion submitted by Mr. Dean Lillis

We move to ask Limerick City and County Council to write to the Road Safety Authority to revise the content of the Category B Essential Driver Training syllabus and the Category B Approved Driving Instructor Training syllabus to result in greater awareness of the illegality of parking on any footpath and/or footway, as per *Article 36(i) of S.I. No. 182/1997 - Road Traffic (Traffic and Parking) Regulations, 1997*.

In proposing the Motion, Mr. Lillis on behalf of the Community / Voluntary PPN Representatives stated that the Road Traffic Regulations 1997 makes no reference to parking on footpaths. As an approved driving instructor himself, he requested that explicit reference should be made to parking on footpaths in the essential driver and driving instructor training syllabuses.

Cllr. Ryan seconded the Motion. He confirmed that the Step Forward Disability Group, delivered a presentation at a recent Municipal District Meeting, at which they outlined the obstacles on footpaths which make it difficult for people with disabilities. He added that it would be well worth getting them to do a presentation at this SPC.

Cllr. Teefy supported the Motion adding she is very familiar with Step Forward Group who outline the challenges for people with buggies, wheelchairs and who are visual impaired.

Cllr. Secas supported the Motion adding that parking on footpaths was discussed at the Metro meeting. She referenced cars parked on footpaths on both sides of road can cause an obstruction to emergency services. She stated that education, enforcement and awareness will help to a certain degree. Cllr. Mitchell agreed with Cllr. Secas adding that there was consistent traffic congestion in Hospital. Other issues need to be address like the provision of car parks.

The Chair supported the Motion adding that the underlying cause is not addressed and a strategic approach is required as there are many layers. It requires deeper thinking, i.e. examining fines and enforcement. Maybe a special meeting with An Gardaí Síochána and stakeholders may be required.

Reply:

The Council will write to the Road Safety Authority to revise the content of the Category B Essential Driver Training syllabus and the Category B Approved Driving Instructor Training syllabus.

Mr. Lillis thanked Mr. Kennedy for the reply

The Chair advised that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, the 20th December 2022. The meeting then concluded.