

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MONTHLY MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK HELD IN THE OFFICES OF INNOVATE LIMERICK, ENGINE BUILDING, CECIL STREET AND ONLINE ON MONDAY, 16TH JANUARY, 2023 at 10.00 A.M.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor Olivia O’Sullivan, Cathaoirleach

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors Benson, Butler, Collopy, Daly, Hartigan, Kiely, Kilcoyne, Leddin, McSweeney, Murphy, Novak Uí Chonchúir, O’Donovan, O’Hanlon, Pond, Secas, Sheahan (M), Sheehan (C) and Slattery.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director, National and Regional SSC (Mr. K. Lehane), A/Director, Economic Development and Enterprise (Mr. V. Murray), Meetings Administrator (Mr. M. Leahy), Senior Staff Officer, Corporate Services, Governance and Customer Services (Ms. A. Foley), Senior Engineer, Roads (Mr. H. McGrath), Senior Executive Officer, Housing Support Services (Ms. M. Hayes), Senior Executive Engineer, Roads, Traffic and Cleansing (Mr. M. Richardson), Senior Executive Planner, Forward Planning (Ms. K. Burke), Executive Planner, Forward Planning (Ms. N. O’Connell), Senior Engineer, Travel and Transport Strategy (Mr. R. Gallagher), A/Arts Officer (Ms. P. Little), Assistant Staff Officer, Corporate Services and Governance (Ms. S. Carroll).

The Chairman of Innovate Limerick, Mr. J. Gleeson also attended.

At the outset, the Cathaoirleach welcomed the Members, Officials, Members of the Media and the Public to the January Meeting of the Metropolitan District, which was being held in the Offices of Innovate Limerick, situated in the heart of the city. She thanked the Staff of Innovate for their assistance in the organisation of the meeting.

The Cathaoirleach and Members extended their condolences and sympathy to the families of the following who passed away recently:

- Denis Broderick, former Member of Limerick City Council and former Deputy Mayor of Limerick.
- Andrew Faughnan, Engineer in the Environment Section.
- T.J. Madigan, Employee in the Roads Section, Newcastle West
- Jerry Flannery, Publican
- Joe Browne, Musician
- Noel Hannan, Community Activist

As a mark of respect to Denis Broderick, former Member of Limerick City Council, the Meeting was adjourned for a period of time.

Members also extended their congratulations to Monaleen GAA on winning the All Ireland Intermediate Club Hurling Championships.

The Director, Economic Development and Enterprise welcomed Members and Officials to the Innovate Offices. He gave an outline of the many facilities provided at the Offices of Innovate. Innovate Limerick assists business start-ups by providing office spaces, at the Offices of Innovate,

for entrepreneurs. He highlighted how this gives companies a great opportunity to develop their business, and to foster enterprise cultures. He noted that this support drives enterprise and innovation in Limerick City and County. The Chairman of Innovate Limerick also outlined the help and supports that has been given to a number of Companies to date. He acknowledged that this support makes a difference, and he thanked the Council for the help.

1. Adoption of Minutes

- (a) Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick held on 12th December, 2022.

Proposed by Councillor Kiely;
Seconded by Councillor Sheahan (M);
And Resolved:

“That the draft Minutes, as circulated, be taken as read and adopted and signed.

- (b) Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick held on 15th December, 2022.

Proposed by Councillor Kiely;
Seconded by Councillor Sheahan (M);

And Resolved:

“That the draft Minutes, as circulated, be taken as read and adopted and signed.

2. Disposal of Land

- (a) Circulated, report of the Senior Staff Officer, Housing Support Services dated 6th December, 2022 setting out proposals for disposal of Freehold Interest of Premises consisting of a dwelling house situate at 26 Hogan Avenue, Kileely, Limerick and the intention to bring a Section 183 Notice to Full Council in this regard, for approval.

The report, as circulated, was noted by Members.

- (b) Circulated, report of the Senior Staff Officer, Housing Support Services dated 12th December, 2022 setting out proposals for disposal of Freehold Interest of premises consisting of a dwelling house situate at 11 Singland Park, Garryowen, Limerick and the intention to bring a Section 183 Notice to Full Council in this regard, for approval.

The report, as circulated, was noted by Members.

- (c) Circulated, report of the Senior Staff Officer, Housing Support Services dated 3rd January, 2023 setting out proposals for disposal of Freehold Interest of premises consisting of a dwelling house situate at Kilbane, Ballysimon, Limerick and the intention to bring a Section 183 Notice to Full Council in this regard, for approval.

The report, as circulated, was noted by Members.

3. Economic Development and Enterprise Directorate

Draft Castleconnell Local Area Plan 2023 – 2029

Circulated, Chief Executive's Report dated 14th December, 2022 on the submissions received on the Draft Castleconnell Local Area Plan 2023 - 2029, for consideration by Members.

Proposed by Councillor Murphy;
Seconded by Councillor Hartigan;
And Resolved;

"That the Draft Castleconnell Local Area Plan 2023 – 2029 be made, in accordance with the Proposed Plan published on 1st October, 2022 and the proposed amendments outlined in the Chief Executive's Report dated 14th December, 2022, under Section 20(3) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)".

QUESTIONS

4. Question submitted by Councillor J. Leddin

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick for a copy of the Event Management Plan for the Christmas Village experience at Arthur's Quay and why the branding of the entire area was poor and uninviting.

REPLY: The Event Management Plan for the Christmas Village will be provided to the members. The branding and assessment of the site can be included in the Christmas workshop, as requested.

The Event Management Plan – Christmas in Limerick 2022 was circulated as part of the reply.

5. Question submitted by Councillor J. Leddin

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick what discussions are taking place with entertainment companies such as circus and theme park providers on dates for Limerick performances.

REPLY: Limerick City and County Council engage with entertainment companies to provide performances for events including St. Patrick's Festival, Riverfest, Culture Night, Christmas in Limerick. These discussions take place directly or through our event management companies and for 2023, these are currently being undertaken but details are yet to be finalised.

6. Question submitted by Councillor C. Slattery

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick can the Regeneration Directorate link in with the Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership (LEDP) in Roxboro to discuss the large vacant units with a view to leasing them for many groups in the area looking for a home. I am aware funding is needed to maintain the roof.

REPLY: The Regeneration Directorate will engage directly with Cllr. Slattery to ascertain the detail of the level of demand and also directly with the LEDP to ascertain their plans for any units in their control that might be vacant currently.

7. Question submitted by Councillor C. Slattery

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick can the Regeneration Directorate link in with the Parish Priest/Diocese of Our Lady Queen of Peace to discuss the option of leasing Our Lady Queen of Peace Community Centre for groups in the area and groups already there as tenants as this Community Centre needs to be revitalised and managed correctly. Obviously, community engagement is vital, as this is a Community Centre.

REPLY: Engagement with relevant stakeholders is a key part of the Regeneration process. The Regeneration Directorate will link in with the Parish / Diocese in relation to their plans for the Our Lady Queen of Peace Hall.

8. Question submitted by Councillor M. Murphy

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick have Limerick City and County Council put any measures in place to deal with the effects of Hymenoscyphus Fraxineus (Ash dieback) on roadside trees and open public spaces.

REPLY: Limerick City and County Council Roads department do not implement any control measure to deal with the effects of Hymenoscyphus Fraxineus (Ash dieback) on roadside trees. It is up to the landowner or property owner to maintain trees and hedges along their property road boundaries as per Section 70 of the Roads Act.

In the context of public trees, the Council is taking a more proactive approach to tree maintenance as cases arise through the SUGAR CRM platform. When a case is submitted for a particular tree in a housing estate, the Council inspects all trees in the housing estate. If there are ash trees present, they are checked for evidence of ash dieback. These trees will be monitored and the Council will address on a case by case basis and may carry out remedial works where necessary.

In the longer term, the tree policy, which is currently at draft stage, recognises the potential danger of ash dieback. The policy proposes to assess the threat posed to public trees from it and develop an action plan to manage the threat to public trees.

9. Question submitted by Councillor C. Sheehan

I will ask at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick for an update on the implementation of the recommendations for the Limerick - Shannon Metropolitan Area Retail Strategy 2022-2028.

REPLY: The Limerick – Shannon Metropolitan Area Retail Strategy 2022 – 2028 is a planning policy document, which forms part of the Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028 and was developed in conjunction with Clare County Council for the Metropolitan Area. The recommendations set out in the document are primarily to inform decision making on

planning applications in the area over the Plan period. Therefore, implementation of the strategy is ongoing.

10. Question submitted by Councillor C. Sheehan

I will ask at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick for an update on what engagement has taken place with Garryowen CDP and others in relation to the need for a community centre in Garryowen and if a rough estimated cost for such a development could be outlined.

REPLY: The Council has engaged with Garryowen Community Development Project regarding the need for a Community Centre. Initial engagement related to potential site options in the area and this has yet to be finalised. The Council does not have estimated costs as these will be dependent on the type of building agreed.

11. Question submitted by Councillor D. McSweeney

I will ask at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick for the following information in relation to Housing Adaptation Grants, Mobility Aids Grants and Housing Aid for Older People for the Metropolitan District:

- i. How much grant funding was allocated to the Metropolitan District for 2022*
- ii. How many grant applications were approved for the above grant schemes in 2022 and the value of same?*
- iii. How many grant applications have been approved from the 2023 budget and the value of same?*
- iv. How many grant applications are currently on hand that have not been approved and the value of same?*
- v. Taking into consideration that the Metropolitan District would receive the same grant funding for 2023 what percentage of this funding has already been committed.*

REPLY:

- i. €1,419,575.50 was originally allocated for the Metropolitan District in early 2022. We sought a further allocation of funding throughout the year from both the Department and our own resources bringing the total spend in 2022 to €2,311,315.31 (this included grant payments for grants approved in 2020, 2021 & 2022)
- ii. 466 grants were approved in 2022 to the value of €1,823,333.61
- iii. Applications where the work is not finished in 2022 are carried forward to 2023- there are a total of 224 applications currently approved from the 2023 budget totalling €1,476,771.63 this includes approvals from 2022 and new applications approved in 2023.
- iv. There are no applications on hand awaiting approval.
- v. We have not received our 2023 allocation of funding yet. Limerick City & County Councils 2023 budget allowed for a further €200,000 in funding for the year ahead and we have requested the Department to provide 80% match funding. Going on last year's budget, we have 63% of our budget currently committed. The Department allowed all local authorities to approve up to 65% of last year's budget.

12. Question submitted by Councillor D. McSweeney

I will ask at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick for a breakdown of the anticipated costs that will be incurred by Limerick City and County Council for Limerick 2030 projects during 2023.

REPLY: Limerick Twenty Thirty DAC (LTT) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Limerick City and County Council. Limerick 2030 as an independent company with its own Board of Directors and carries out a wide range of work and these can be split into two categories as follows;

1. Work carried out by Limerick Twenty Thirty to develop its own assets and these are funded by Limerick Twenty Thirty DAC's own resources that they make from rental income on its property portfolio, grants i.e. URDF and income from commercial partnerships and loans agreements.
2. Work carried out by Limerick Twenty Thirty on assets owned by Limerick City & County Council for which a Service Level Agreement (SLA) is put in place each year and a fee is agreed for the works.

At this stage of the year it is not possible to advise on what the breakdown of the anticipated costs that will be incurred in 2023 will be for Limerick City and County Council as the overall work program of Limerick Twenty Thirty for 2023 has to be agreed and approved by its Board. I anticipate that we will have a clearer picture of these costs later in Quarter One.

13. Question submitted by Councillor D. McSweeney

I will ask at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick for the number of general operatives (Roads, Traffic & Cleansing) working out of each depot in the Limerick Metropolitan District to be presented in tabulated format for the years 2015-2022.

REPLY: Limerick City and County Council Roads Traffic and Cleansing Department currently employs 72 outdoor staff operatives including Supervisors with 3 current open vacancies in the Limerick Metropolitan district. The number of outdoor staff in this area has remained relatively consistent from 2015 to 2022. The current breakdown of numbers in tabulated form is as follows:

Roads Traffic & Cleansing Area	Current Number (end of 2022)	Numbers from 2015
Road operations – based from depots in Park Road, Clarina and Annacotty	26	23
Cleansing operations – based from depots in Park Road and Carr Street	36 + 2 vacancies	40
Traffic operations – based from depots in	10 + 1 vacancy	11

Merchants Quay and Rathbane		
Total	75	74

It is also important to consider Limerick City and County Council also employ specialised contractors procured through the Limerick City and County Council's contractor framework policy to complete any specialised roads maintenance repairs, cleaning operations and road upgrades where required.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Following a request from Councillor Kilcoyne and with the agreement of the Cathaoirleach, the following Notice of Motion was taken at this stage of the Meeting:

19. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor F. Kilcoyne

I will move at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that Limerick City and County Council will explore the purchasing or leasing of land for railway stations with park and ride facilities in the Adare, Patrickswell, Raheen and Dooradoyle areas for commuter rail travel to Limerick city.

The Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Kilcoyne, seconded by Councillor Leddin and agreed.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Kilcoyne referred to the proposed upgrade of the Foynes to Limerick Railway line and the positive benefits this would bring to Limerick and in particular the city centre area. He highlighted the need to market this line for passengers, as well as commercial use purposes, and the importance of having park and ride facilities.

Councillor Secas proposed that the Motion be amended to include the Castletroy / Annacotty area. This was agreed.

Members supported the Motion acknowledging the importance of it. Members also referred to the works being carried out on the railway line in the Raheen / Dooradoyle area, and expressed disappointment at the lack of communication received from Iarnród Éireann by Members, and residents in the areas, on the proposed upgrade works. Members requested that Iarnród Éireann be contacted to request that they provide a Briefing on the upgrade works and what communication had taken place with the local residents.

REPLY: The recently published LSMATS identifies proposals for rail transport development. It identifies specific measures as short-term delivery aims, including the reinstatement of the Limerick to Foynes railway line to provide a freight service. It also commits to examine the feasibility of providing a commuter rail network for the LSMA, including the re-use of the Foynes and Mungret lines. However it identifies this as a longer-term rail planning aim, which requires land use policies identifying potential rail stations locations requiring more intensive population development in future Limerick Development plans. This will have to be explored in conjunction with RSES from a forward planning perspective.

LSMATS has a specific objective for rail based Park and Ride provision at Ballysimon and an

objective of investigating the potential for further Park and Ride facilities where the strategic road network meets high frequency rail services.

With this in mind, LCCC propose to work with the NTA to develop a Park and Ride facility at Raheen. This site will primarily be a road based facility but could potentially double up in time as a dual Rail/Road Park and Ride, depending on the commuter rail progression in the area. Progression of the other potential rail sites mentioned (Adare, Patrickswell and Dooradoyle) is primarily a responsibility of Iarnrod Éireann and the governing authority, the NTA, but will be dependent on the outcome of the commuter rail feasibility study that will be carried out. LCCC will of course support both Iarnrod Éireann and the NTA in the development of viable sustainable rail proposals.

14. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Leddin

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that Limerick City and County Council provide Members with an update on the progress of implementing the objectives of our Tourism Development Strategy 2019-2023.

The Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Leddin, seconded by Councillor Kilcoyne and agreed.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Leddin referred to the current Tourism Development Strategy, which had four key themes, and its importance to Limerick, especially with events such as the Ryder Cup due to take place in 2027. Members agreed the importance of maximising the potential for tourism opportunities in Limerick City and County.

REPLY: The Council will organise a workshop to update Members on the progress of the Tourism Strategy 2019-2023.

15. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Leddin

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that a Workshop be arranged for Members by Limerick City and County Council to consider and discuss measures to ensure that our Christmas festival activities for 2023 and future years maximises our potential in increase visitors to our city and county.

The Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Leddin, seconded by Councillor Sheehan (C) and agreed.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Leddin referred to the various events that took place in the city during the Christmas period and the importance of marketing the events, for families and the many visitors that returned to Limerick for Christmas. He referred to the success of Christmas festivals in Waterford and Galway, and elsewhere.

Members supported the Motion and highlighted the success of the Milk Market at Christmas time and the Christmas Event, 'A Christmas Tale at the Castle', held in King John's Castle. They noted that the Milk Market also attracts big numbers at Christmas time. Members agreed the importance of identifying what worked well previously and what aspects needed to be improved, in order to enhance the experience at future Christmas events in Limerick.

REPLY: The Council will organise a workshop with Members to consider and discuss measures for Christmas in Limerick 2023.

16. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor C. Slattery

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that Limerick City and County Council write to the Health Service Executive regarding the out of hours Limerick Doc based in Dooradoyle, asking them to upgrade this important service, because at present it is not a satisfactory service for its users.

The Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Slattery, seconded by Councillor Benson and agreed.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Slattery referred to the large number of people who had difficulty accessing the out of hour's services in the past number of weeks and the need for additional staff to be allocated to this service. Members supported the motion, and acknowledged the need to add additional resources to this service.

17. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Kiely

I will move at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that we write to the Minister for Social Protection to ask if widows / widowers can be considered for half rate illness benefit, once the applicant meets the criteria set out under the current scheme.

The Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Kiely, seconded by Councillor Sheahan (M) and agreed.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Kiely outlined the financial difficulties that widows / widowers can encounter, and discrepancies in the interpretation of rules regarding eligibility for same, which needed to be addressed urgently. Members supported this motion, and agreed that this would give widows/widowers some extra financial support at a time when they need it most.

18. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor E. Secas

I will move at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that footpaths in the city centre and around key locations, such as schools, shops, post offices, etc., as well as roads in certain housing estates where their landscape warrants it, are included in the Winter Maintenance Plan.

The Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Secas, seconded by Councillor Sheehan (C) and agreed.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Secas referred to the importance of gritting roads and footpaths as part of the Winter Maintenance Plan, in particular around key locations such as hospitals and schools. Members welcomed this motion, and agreed there is a need to grit important areas in the City and surrounding areas. Members noted that the Milk Market is a key area, and pointed out that it needs to be added to the Winter Maintenance Plan as a priority area, along with any other highly trafficked pedestrian areas.

REPLY: With approximately 4,000 kms of roadway in County Limerick, it is not possible to treat all the County roads as part of Limerick City and County Council's normal Winter Maintenance programme. Priority is given to the National Strategic Regional Road Network, which carries the most intensive volumes of commuter traffic.

Typically, Limerick City and County Council treat up to 20% of the road network for a given weather event. It is not possible to include all footpaths and housing estates in the winter maintenance programme.

In more severe and/or, prolonged cold snaps the District Engineers review the need for additional treatments. Such actions are dealt with on a case-by-case basis and the extent of such additional measures will relate to the availability of resources.

It was agreed that a Briefing on the Winter Maintenance Plan would be arranged for Members.

20. **Correspondence**

Correspondence was noted and taken as read.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

Dated: _____