

# **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT SPECIAL MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF NEWCASTLE WEST HELD IN ÁRAS WILLIAM SMITH OBRIEN, NEWCASTLE WEST, CO. LIMERICK, ON FRIDAY, 19<sup>th</sup> MAY, 2023, AT 10.00 A.M.**

**PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:** Councillor M. Collins, Cathaoirleach.

## **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councillors Galvin and Ruddle.

## **OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Meetings Administrator, Newcastle West (Mr. M. Curran), Senior Planner, Planning Environment and Place-making (Ms. M. Woods), Senior Executive Planner, Planning, Environment and Place-making (Ms. K. Burke), Senior Engineer, Transportation and Mobility (Mr. H. McGrath).

## **APOLOGIES:**

Councillors Sheahan, Scanlan and Foley.

Director, Economic Development, Enterprise and Tourism (Mr. G. Daly).

Senior Executive Engineer, Newcastle West Municipal District (Mr. J. Sheehan).

Director, Transportation and Mobility (Mr. B. Kennedy).

Director, Planning, Environment and Place-Making (Mr. V. Murray).

## **1. Planning Environment and Place-Making**

**To highlight the importance and need for the Southern Distributor Road as shown in the current Newcastle West Local Area Plan and to also ensure it is included in the new proposed Local Area Plan 2023 to 2029.**

At the outset, the Cathaoirleach welcomed everyone to the Meeting. He outlined how crucial the distributor road is to the development of Newcastle West and to ensure efficient traffic flow around the environs. He stated that if the Distributor road is kept in the new Local Area Plan then funding will be found, he also outlined that he believed that cycling and walking infrastructure could be incorporated into this road with linkages into the town. This would be more preferable than digging up streets within the town that struggle with the current car traffic not to mind cycle infrastructure.

Councillor Ruddle added that creating cycle infrastructure on streets like Maiden Street and Bridge Street is going to cost huge money and is going to inconvenience road users for roads that were originally designed for a horse and cart, not a cycle lane and a car. He outlined at the very least we should cost a distributor road as this opens up a huge pocket of land for

mixed use and development. Councillor Ruddle added that Newcastle West needs to be ambitious and we should aim to be a business hub outside of Limerick City. He stated that Raheen is full to capacity and people want to move out of the city to work, Abbeyfeale has been allocated €15 million for public realm so Newcastle West should also be getting funds.

He went on to add that in the current plan there is less car parking spaces being made available in The Square – he added that on Monday to Thursday the elderly population in the area are keeping the town going and parking spaces need to be provided for them.

Councillor Galvin added that a Ring road is required for Newcastle West, this would open up land for further development. He added that cycle lanes in the town are welcomed but questioned if there was room for them – he stated that the streets were old and may not be able to accommodate further lanes. He added that we needed to listen to public opinion with regards the layout of the streets. He also added that he was of the opinion that if the Distributor road was being progressed, it would open up the Southern Side of the town for development. He closed saying if we wanted to encourage people to do business in West Limerick following the completion of the Adare Bypass then this is a key requirement.

The Senior Planner from Planning, Environment and Place-making noted that public consultation has taken place for this Plan. Pre-draft consultation was welcomed and noted the poor attendance at the public meeting held in February.

The Senior Engineer from Transportation and Mobility outlined that Limerick City and County Council are guided by national priorities and it was felt that a bypass of the town would be more beneficial as it would take over 65% of the traffic away from the town. He outlined that the connections around the town were actually very good, just over congested at present.

He further discussed the proposed linking up of the road from the Woodfield Estate.

Councillor Collins asked if the Southern Distributor Road could be put back into the Local Area Plan. The Senior Planner from Planning, Environment and Place-making stated that it could be, but the government look for value for money and this could affect the bypass being progressed.

Councillor Collins closed stating that the District was plodding along with the understanding that the Distributor Road was being progressed in the background and now it is off the plan. He stated he believes the town needs a distributor road to the south and the north and he feels it should not be either or in relation to a bypass.

The Senior Engineer, Transportation and Mobility closed assuring the Councillors that the South West pocket of Newcastle West is crucial to Limerick City and County Council and believed a distributor road through the Woodfield estate will remove a lot of the issues.

It was agreed further consultation between the Members, Forward Planning, Transportation and Mobility and the external consultants will take place on the 14<sup>th</sup> June.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Cathairleach**

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_