



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 17th October 2023 at 3:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Doooradoyle and ONLINE by MS Teams Video Conference.

Members Present: Cllrs. Novak (Chair), Butler, Collopy, Daly, Foley, Leddin, McSweeney, Mitchell, O'Donovan, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (M), Teefy, Mrs. M. Browne.

In Attendance: Cllrs. Benson, B. Collins, J. Collins, L. Galvin, Keary, S. Kiely, M. Murphy, J. O'Donoghue, O. O'Sullivan, J. Pond, E. Ryan, T. Ruddle, J. Scanlon, K. Sheahan.

Officials Present: Mr. B. Kennedy, Ms. A. Leahy, Ms. C. Mulcahy, Ms. C. Power, Mr. D. Slavin, Mr. J. Cregan, Ms. K. McDonnell, Mr. H. McGrath, Ms. M. Hennessy, Ms. M. Corrigan, Ms. N. McGarry, Ms. M. Fitzgerald, Mr. S. McGlynn, Ms. S. Kennedy, Ms. T. Flanagan, Mr. Tom Hayes.

Other Invitees: Mr. David E. Leahy, Mr. D. Boland, Mr. J. Prenderville.

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Mr. David E. Leahy, Mr. D. Boland and Mr. J. Prenderville to the Meeting. As requested at a recent plenary meeting of the Council, all Limerick City and County Councillors were invited to the briefing for Item 1.

Item 1 : Presentation: MWRDO Greenway Projects Update – David E. Leahy, A/S.E.E.

Mr. Kennedy introduced Mr. David E. Leahy and invited him to deliver the Presentation on Greenway projects. He added that the presentation was in response to requests from Members for an update at a previous council meeting.

Mr. Leahy gave an overview of the MWRDO Greenway projects and confirmed that TII is the approving authority and they have developed new guidance documents and procedures in relation to Greenways.

The Chair thanked Mr. Leahy for the presentation and opened the floor to questions.

Cllr. Galvin stated that Abbeyfeale railway station is in need of a revamp and asked for an update on its renovation. He is not in favour of CPO for greenways as it brings big challenges and the condition of rural roads are not fit for greenways. He also added that a deer stag entered the Limerick greenway recently and a user had to take shelter inside timber railings. He asked that this be brought to the attention of the Department of Agriculture.

Cllr. B. Collins raised concerns regarding the Rathkeale to Limerick Greenway. She referenced a 2019 report in which it stated that the Railway was not to be part of Greenway. Limerick to Foynes was not to be considered in 2019 as the carriageway was not wide enough. She asked why the Council is not looking at the N21 and added that it is non-productive spending time on a railway line that cannot be procured.

Cllr. E. O'Donovan stated that the Limerick Greenway is marketed for Tourism and added that if there was a direct cycle route from Rathkeale to Patrickswell, it could be used for commuting functionally to get from Patrickswell into the city. She suggested looking at an adjacent Greenway to N21.

Cllr. O'Sullivan highlighted that there was no discussion around north Limerick on the map shown in the presentation.

Cllr. J. Leddin referenced the disused railway from Mungret by Ballinacurra. Formerly owned by Irish Cement, it is on public land and no CPO would be required. It has great potential as there is significant growth in the area. He asked why there is no progression with Iarnrod Éireann.

Cllr. Teefy stated the Limerick greenway is a great success. She asked what the route is for the Limerick to Oola Greenway and when is it likely to begin.

Cllr. O'Donoghue stated that the N21 is still a busy road with a lot of agricultural vehicles/school buses etc., and parts have no hard shoulder. In his opinion, the noise level is a concern for cycleways on roads and there are too many junctions on the N21 for greenways. He asked at what point we decide we have enough greenways.

In response to Cllr. O'Donoghue, Mr. Leahy stated examples such as the Dunkettle to Carrigtwohill Greenway in Glounthaune in Cork which was constructed along the downgraded N25 road. Substantial segregation with the existing road was provided to provide a safe walking and cycling environment.

Cllr. Keary stated that it is 5 years since Members asked for a greenway from Rathkeale to Adare. it is too piecemeal and he is disappointed that a corridor has not been identified. Mr. Leahy agreed that this has taken more time than was expected but the announcement that Irish Rail was reopening the line has delayed the greenway project.

Cllr. Benson referenced the Coonagh towards Bunratty route. She knows that the majority of works would be on Clare side. She asked if it was an Active Travel project or a Greenway Project. Mr. Kennedy confirmed that it is within the LSMATS area and would be considered as an Active Travel project.

Cllr. Scanlon agreed that connectivity is very important and the Great Southern Trail is a superb product. He added that safety on the greenway is very important and suggested that gate numbers/markers be installed to identify where users are in case of an Emergency services requiring location.

Cllr. K. Sheahan asked about the possibility of a spur from Rathkeale to Foynes and a spur to Askeaton.

Cllr. Mitchell stated that we are at the behest of Irish Rail. He asked if these greenways are going to become pathways to work as we try to reduce traffic. He queried the width of greenways.

Cllr. B. Collins outlined that Members attended a presentation by first responders and Markers & Defibrillators were requested for the greenway and have not been delivered.

Cllr. Galvin agreed and stated that there should be a written report which Cllr. B. Collins referenced. Mr. Kennedy advised that this has become a TII approved scheme. The Council has to comply with the Public Spending Code and TII guidelines in relation to these type of schemes. Accordingly all options have to be considered at this stage.

Cllr. Keary asked if the money spent on Feasibility came from the Rural Development Fund and asked how much has been spent to date.

In response to questions Mr. Kennedy added the following: -

- The Dooradoyle to Mungret line was identified in the Transport strategy (LSMATS) as a commuter rail route. Mr. Kennedy advised that he will discuss the matter with Irish Rail & NTA going forward.

- The objective is to create connectivity. LCCC will go as far as the county bounds with Clare at Coonagh. The continuation of Eurovelo Route 1 into Clare is a matter for Clare County Council and the Council will liaise with them in this regard.
- Mr. Kennedy will bring the matter of distance markers and the matter of Abbeyfeale Railway station to Director Gordon Daly's attention.
- He will also bring the issue of safety on the greenway to the attention of the Department of Agriculture and National Parks & Wildlife Services regarding deer stag.
- There is now a funding stream and all options will have to be appraised as a requirement of TII guidelines.

In response to questions, Mr. Leahy also added the following: -

- It is hoped that greenways could be delivered outside of CPO through agreements with landowners.
- Discussion with Irish Rail is ongoing on sharing the IR corridor for the Rathkeale to Limerick Greenway. Whether the railway is ruled in or out, it has to be documented to show transparency.
- The Limerick to Scarriff scheme is being administered by Waterways Ireland and Clare County Council. The projects undertaken by MWNRDO come from TII only.
- Limerick to Oola Greenway is at stage 0 and there is no clear route has been determined as yet. Consultants will be procured early next year to progress the project.
- Modal shift has to be promoted and we have to be able to attract commuters. It is a trade-off between leisure and commuting functionally. On the UL to Montpelier greenway, students living in Castleconnell will be able to commute into city.
- The width of greenway can go up 4.5 meters. Design must be based on predicted usage.
- Mr. Leahy will check the money spent to date on Feasibility and circulate the information to Members.

Item 2 Minutes:

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee held on the 20th June 2023 were proposed by Cllr. McSweeney, seconded by Cllr. Mitchell and adopted.

The Chair agreed to move to Item 4 on the Agenda.

Item 4: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor D. McSweeney (referred from June Metro Meeting)

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that in light of the many active travel improvements taking place in this district that we draft and implement a public engagement policy which sets out best practice for engagement with local stakeholders when this district is advancing Part 8 Planning Applications and Section 38s.

In proposing the Motion Cllr. McSweeney referenced the Metropolitan Meeting yesterday, the 16th October 2023 at which Members were asked to approve a Part 8 in relation to the Corbally Road Safe Routes to School. As not all Members were briefed on the Part 8, he had concerns about transparency and the possibility of being subject to judicial review. He requested that the response to the motion sets out how LCCC is going to engage with Members going forward.

Cllr. O'Donovan seconded the Motion agreeing that guidelines are needed with clear communications. She added that consistency is required and referred to the five briefings held for Members for the Part 8 for S.C.R., while only one district was briefed on another project.

In response, Mr. Josh Prenderville delivered a presentation on the non-statutory consultation communication template outlining the guide to phases proposed by Active Travel (AT). The aim for the final phase is for Councillors to be furnished with information/report 2 weeks ahead of Part 8 presentation where possible.

Cllr. Mitchell stated that over €60m has been allocated for Active Travel projects over the last few years. The work on footpaths, the Safe Routes to School etc. is all very positive. He welcomed the template, adding that it is all about proper two-way engagement.

The Chair directed the meeting that the discussion is about policy, not individual cases. Cllr. O'Donovan asked if Phase 5 (Start of the statutory process) can be in the form of a briefing.

Cllr. McSweeney thanked Mr. Prenderville for the presentation. He added that an in-depth review of the pre consultative report is required, and the policy should set out a process of how Active Travel engages with Councillors before the Part 8 process and how Councilors engage with people. He asked for comments from the Director and head of Active Travel.

The Chair referenced the private briefing which Mr. Prenderville delivered to all elected Members on Friday, the 13th October. She very much welcomed this document and added that it is important that we have flexibility with the guidelines and all stakeholders.

With reference to Cllr. O'Donovan and Cllr. McSweeney's input, Mr. Kennedy advised that he will discuss internally with the AT team . He advised that the executive wants to ensure that all elected Members are fully briefed and will aim to improve the interaction going forward.

Mr. McGlynn also stated that the AT team is still evolving, and all comments and concerns will be taken on board.

Item 3: Presentation on Traffic Calming Policy (Review of Bye laws) - Mr. Hugh McGrath, S.E.

Mr. Hugh McGrath delivered an update on Traffic Calming Policy around residential areas and housing estates on local connector roads and access roads with a significant movement of pedestrians and cyclists. He confirmed that the Council is commencing a review of the Limerick City and County Traffic Calming Policy for Urban Areas and will be presented to the SPC and the elected Members for approval.

Cllr. Mitchell referenced a Road Safety Report in which it stated that 70% of accidents occur on rural roads and he suggested that speed limit should be reduced from 80 km/h to 50 km/h. He added that a lot of rural roads do not have footpaths and also suggested that a review of hedgerow cutting during the summer months be examined. Education at schools is very important especially in relation to the use of drugs and alcohol.

Cllr. O'Donovan stated that Limerick has no standardisation of ramps and asked if there is a new policy on the standardisation of speed ramps. Mr. McGrath agreed that ramps vary and agreed on the standardization.

In response to Cllr. Mitchell, Mr. McGrath advised that while the Council does carry out hedge cutting on national and main regional roads, however landowners are responsible under the Roads Act 1993 for hedge cutting on all roadside boundaries. He suggested contacting the Council if hedge cutting is required and LCCC will contact the relevant landowner.

Mr. McGrath advised that he will circulate the existing Traffic Calming Policy to the committee and elected members for review and comment.

The Chair asked if we can move this item as a Presentation for the next SPC Meeting. She thanked the presenters and members for their contribution. She confirmed that the next SPC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, the 12th December 2023. The meeting then concluded.