

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MONTHLY MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MERCHANT'S QUAY, LIMERICK AND ONLINE ON MONDAY, 15TH APRIL, 2024 at 9.45 A.M.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor Azad Talukder, Cathaoirleach

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors Benson, Butler, Collins, Collopy, Daly, Hartigan, Kiely, Kilcoyne, Leddin, McSweeney, Murphy, O'Donovan, O'Hanlon, O'Sullivan, Pond, Secas, Sheahan (M), Sheehan (C) and Slattery.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director of Service, National and Regional Shared Services (Mr. K. Lehane), Meetings Administrator (Mr. M. Leahy), Senior Staff Officer, Corporate Services, Governance and Customer Services (Ms. A. Foley), Senior Executive Engineer, Roads, Traffic and Cleansing (Mr. M. Richardson), Administrative Officer, Property Management (Ms. T. Knox), Senior Executive Officer, Tourism (Ms. E. Coleman), Staff Officer, Corporate Services and Governance (Ms. E. Cousins), Senior Engineer, Travel and Transport Strategy (Mr. H. McGrath), Senior Executive Officer, Housing Support Services (Ms. M. Hayes), Senior Staff Officer, Housing Support Services (Mr. J. McDonald), Senior Engineer, Active Travel (Mr. S. McGlynn), Senior Executive Engineer (Ms. T. Flanagan), Executive Engineers (Mr. J. O'Callaghan and Mr. B. Barrett), Communications Officer (Mr. J. Prenderville), Project Liaison Officer (Ms. B. Kilroy), Assistant Staff Officer, Corporate Services and Governance (Ms. S. Carroll).

1. Adoption of Minutes

Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick held on 20th March, 2024:

Proposed by Councillor McSweeney;
Seconded by Councillor Sheehan (C);
And Resolved:

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

2. Declaration of Interest

The Meetings Administrator stated that, in line with Part 15 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended, and the Code of Conduct, he was inviting those present to notify the Cathaoirleach of any declaration of interest in any item due for discussion at the Meeting. No such interests were declared.

3. Disposal of Land

(a) Circulated, Report of the Head of Property Management dated 2nd April, 2024, setting out proposals for Disposal of Derelict Property at Rathurd, Drombanny, Co. 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.

4. Community Initiative Scheme 2024 - General Municipal Allocation (GMA)

Circulated, Report of the Director of Service, National and Regional Shared Services dated 10th April, 2024, setting out the proposals for the Community Initiative Scheme 2024, which allowed for the sum of €4,500 for each Member. The Meetings Administrator confirmed that the following comprised the remaining nominations under the Community Initiative Scheme 2024:

LIMERICK CITY EAST

45 th Ahane Scout Group	€900
26 th Limerick / Castleconnell Scout Group / St. Josephs	€900
Limerick City Traveller Health Programme	€900
Lisnagry F.C.	€900
Mulcair Men's Shed	€900

LIMERICK CITY NORTH

Geraldines Football Club	€500
Shannon RFC Girls Rugby	€500
St. Mary's Adult Education, Island Road	€500
St. Mary's National School	€1000
St. Mary's Prize Band	€500
St. Mary's RFC	€500
St. Patrick's GAA Club	€500
Star Rovers Football Club	€500
St. Munchin's Community Centre	€500
Thomondgate Residents Association	€500

It was proposed by Councillor Kiely, seconded by Councillor O'Hanlon and agreed, to approve the proposals under the Community Initiative Scheme 2024, as follows:

LIMERICK CITY EAST

45 th Ahane Scout Group	€900
26 th Limerick / Castleconnell Scout Group / St. Josephs	€900
Limerick City Traveller Health Programme	€900
Lisnagry F.C.	€900
Mulcair Men's Shed	€900

LIMERICK CITY NORTH

Geraldines Football Club	€500
Shannon RFC Girls Rugby	€500
St. Mary's Adult Education, Island Road	€500
St. Mary's National School	€1000

St. Mary's Prize Band	€500
St. Mary's RFC	€500
St. Patrick's GAA Club	€500
Star Rovers Football Club	€500
St. Munchin's Community Centre	€500
Thomondgate Residents Association	€500

5. Economic Development, Enterprise and Tourism

Briefing on Riverfest 2024

The Senior Executive Officer, Tourism briefed the Members on the content of the Riverfest 2024 programme. She confirmed that a large programme of events was planned for Riverfest 2024, which is celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the Festival. She highlighted details of the Pegasus Parade which will be held on Friday night along the River Shannon and the fireworks display which will take place on Sunday night. Members welcomed the programme of activities and agreed that this was a significant event for the city.

6. Support Services

Presentation on the Voter Registration Process.

The Staff Officer, Corporate Services and Governance gave an overview to Members on the Electoral Register, outlining the numbers on the Register to date, the process for registering and deadlines for Postal Vote Applications and close of Register.

Members thanked the Staff Officer for her presentation and made the following observations:

- They highlighted the importance of adequate staffing resources to deal with the volumes of people registering to vote;
- Field Workers should be engaged in the future to assist with the workload in managing changes to the register;
- The importance of publicising details of closing dates for registering, postal voting, who is entitled to vote, etc.;
- Highlight the fact that anyone outside Ireland and Europe, who registers to vote, is able to vote in the Local Elections and also the DEM Election and this information needs to be conveyed to non-English speaking communities;
- Stressed the importance of removing those who are on the Register, and who have passed away, in a timely manner to try and avoid upset for families;
- Raise awareness of the fact that you do not need a PPSN to vote, once you get your form and ID certified at a Garda station.

The Staff Officer, Corporate Services and Governance responded to the queries raised by Members.

QUESTIONS

7. Question submitted by Councillor J. Leddin

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick what level of engagement

is taking place to progress the provision of residential units in Mallow Street arising from the difficulties being experienced by the Peter McVerry housing association.

REPLY: Regular engagement is taking place between Limerick City and County Council and the Peter McVerry Trust on the 2-3 Mallow Street Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) project. This project is currently on site with handover of the 12 no. units scheduled for Quarter 3, 2024.

8. Question submitted by Councillor J. Leddin

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick why the former tourist office in Arthur's Quay is being left to decay and become a complete eyesore in our city and what plan is there to demolish and clear the building.

REPLY: The future of the former Tourist Office building in Arthurs Quay Park is currently under consideration as part of the wider Arthur's Quay Framework Plan. The emerging options were presented recently in committee to the Elected Members of the Metropolitan District and are being developed in consultation with stakeholders with the objective of bringing forward a transformative plan for this key strategic area of the City Centre.

It is expected that the Draft Arthur's Quay Framework Plan, with a recommended option for the development of the overall study area, will be published for public consultation later in the Summer.

9. Question submitted by Councillor J. Leddin

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick what funding is available to increase the number of street lights within housing estates to help improve the safety of residents as the new LED lights are not adequately providing sufficient lighting.

REPLY: Limerick City and County Council does not have a budget to install additional street lighting within specific housing estates. Funding sources such as GMA may be utilised at the Member's discretion to install addition lighting, provided the additional lighting proposal is warranted and deemed suitable by the Roads maintenance and Public Lighting teams.

10. Question submitted by Councillor E. Secas

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick for an update on the provision of a dog park in Castletroy Park.

REPLY: An area has been identified for a Dog Park in Castletroy Park. However, the site needs further consideration as it is very wet and will require drainage works to be undertaken. There is €7,000 funding available for the Dog Park, further funding of approximately €15,000 will be required to complete the fencing required and drainage works.

11. Question submitted by Councillor E. Secas

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick why the lane between Numbers 1 and 2 Clansfort Terrace, Janesboro has not been taken over by the Council to-date and if there are any plans to take it in charge.

REPLY: The laneway between Numbers 1 and 2 Clansfort Terrace, Janesboro would be deemed a private entrance to the rear of individual properties and is not in council charge. Any request to take a private laneway into council charge should be requested through the Planning Department. A budget would be required to upgrade the laneway in question to the necessary standards and to also regularly maintain when required.

12. Question submitted by Councillor E. Secas

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick if there are any plans to develop the footpath linking the back of Kilbane estate to Monaleen Road as per the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028.

REPLY: Objective TR08 of the Development Plan sets out as an objective of the Council to ‘provide clear safe and direct pedestrian linkages’ between areas such as employment, shopping and residential zones. Furthermore, LSMATS sets out a commitment under a number of measures to address permeability of neighbourhoods.

Measure WK1

‘Retrofit neighbourhood infrastructure to enhance walkability and increase the attractiveness of walking such as permeability and passive surveillance’

Measure WK5

‘Deliver permeability projects throughout urban areas which reduce the distance required to travel on foot to key destinations and to public transport services’

Also, In conjunction with the committed investment in Bus Improvements which will see a 70% increase in service over the next 2 years there will be a requirement to invest in permeability measures such as the one outlined to facilitate ease of access to sustainable transport and access between services, retail, amenity and residential areas to help reduce the dependency on car use.

Approval of funding permeability measures will be prioritised based on the most significant return in investment to benefit the community considering the funding available at the time.

13. Question submitted by Councillor S. Kiely

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick how many Council owned properties:

- 1. Are on the waiting list for a window / door upgrade;***
- 2. What is the average wait time for a tenant to receive a window / door upgrade?***

REPLY: On receipt of CRM cases requesting windows/doors, the property is inspected and assessed for suitability.

Approximate timelines, subject to budget constraints and availability are as follows:

- If replacement is deemed necessary and priority, windows and/or doors are added to planned list – expected delivery 3 to 6 months.
- If replacement is deemed necessary but not priority, windows and/or doors are added to planned list – expected delivery 3 to 24 months.
- If replacement is deemed not necessary, the property is not included on the planned maintenance list.

Replacement windows and doors

Year	Numbers completed
2021	145
2022	197
2023	188

Please note, a total of €991,169 was spent over the three years on replacement doors and windows, this figures does not include minor repairs under €1000.

14. Question submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick for an update on potential bathing areas in Metropolitan District including Corbally baths and Verdant place.

REPLY: The potential of bathing areas in the locations of Corbally and Verdant place/ St. Marys Park has been highlighted recently. The future development of these areas is dependent, in the first instance, on site specific feasibility study being undertaken. Funding will have to be allocated to enable this task to commence.

15. Question submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan

I will ask at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick are large trees to be planted outside the boundary wall of the Irish Rail track in Springfield's Estate which is now very exposed to the Limerick to Foynes railway track.

REPLY: Irish Rail were contacted in relation to the above question and they gave the following response:

'Iarnród Éireann are developing a re-planting plan with suitable native species along the railway corridor in consultation with our in-house ecology experts. The request to consider specific planting at Springfield estate is noted and will be considered as part of the re-planting plan.'

16. Question submitted by Councillor S. Kiely

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick when will a planning permission be lodged for the Guinness site in Carey's Road, what is the breakdown of social, affordable and cost rental and when can we expect to have the first keys to homes delivered.

REPLY: Limerick City and County Council referred this question to the Land Development Agency to provide a detailed response. The response received is as follows:

The Land Development Agency, together with Limerick City and County Council, are

currently finalising the scope of the development of the Guinness site as part of the wider Carey's Road project. The Land Development Agency will appoint a design team later this summer and is working towards submitting a planning application in the first half of 2025.

In line with Land Development Agency Act 2021, the scheme will deliver public housing through social, affordable for sale and cost rental tenures.¹

The Land Development Agency is working with Limerick City and County Council to agree the breakdown of social, affordable and cost rental homes for the Carey's Road site in line with the Land Development Agency Act and the Limerick Development Plan.

Based on other Land Development Agency Direct Delivery projects, delivery of the first homes is likely to be in the region of 18-24 months after construction begins.

Colbert Quarter Projects	No. of Units	Targeted Submission	Planning
Carey's Road (of which the Guinness site is part)	Circa 250	Q2 2025	

¹ Section 75(11)(b) of Part 9 of the Land Development Agency Act 2021 states that 50% of housing provided on sites outside of Dublin and Cork will be designated and leased as cost rental dwellings or transferred on completion to the ownership of the Council, or to the ownership of eligible applicants nominated by the Council in accordance with a direct sales agreement within the meaning of the Affordable Housing Act 2021.

17. Question submitted by Councillor A. Talukder

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick for an update on the taking in charge of the roadway at Steamboat Quay street car parking area.

REPLY: Parking areas at the western end of Steamboat Quay were approved to be taken in charge at the Metropolitan District Meeting of 16th October 2023. All redundant signage and equipment from the previous parking control operator will be removed by w/e 19th April 2024.

NOTICES OF MOTION

18. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Leddin

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that the Council consider the introduction of a customer text line to provide additional options to the public to communicate with the Council in the delivery of an efficient public service.

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

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Secas highlighted the benefits of introducing a customer text line, which could provide a faster and more convenient method of communication with the public.

REPLY: The public currently communicate with Customer Services through a number of channels such as in person at our customer services desk in Merchants Quay, Dooradoyle and the municipal district offices. We respond to phone calls on a daily basis receiving approximately 2000 calls per week. We monitor the email and My Limerick channel on a daily basis and process approximately 850 emails per week.

Currently the ICT service would not be set up to operate a texting service however Limerick City & County Council are in the initial phases of introducing Microsoft Dynamics and future developments in dynamics which would be subject to budget availability and appropriate staffing levels could be looked at further enhancing the way we communicate with the public including online customer service help bots with interactive messaging.

19. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Kiely

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that a request be sent to the Land Development Agency (LDA) to request an update on all housing projects in Limerick at the next meeting of this Council.

The Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Kiely, seconded by Councillor McSweeney and agreed.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Kiely referred to the current housing crisis and the urgent need to provide housing. She stated the Carey's Road site was a key location with huge potential for development. She highlighted the importance of the Land Development Agency providing a full update to Members on the timescale for delivery of housing.

Members welcomed the Motion and noted the following:

- Delivery of homes too slow for those who need housing. Full update and timescale required from LDA.
- Carey's Road site is key location and should have been developed before now. Site in deplorable condition.
- An office and delivery team is required in Limerick, only one person is assigned at present.
- LDA website is inaccurate and misleading.
- LDA not delivering for Limerick.
- Land in Rosbrien-dispute between LDA and ESB, but Members only hearing about it in the media?
- What progress has been made in Colbert Quarter?

Members also agreed that the Land Development Agency should be invited to update Members on a quarterly basis.

20. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Pond

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that Limerick City and County Council put in place measures to address increased traffic congestion issues in the general Castletroy / Annacotty / Lisnagry area so as to improve the traffic flow in this area of the City.

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

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Pond highlighted the large increase in traffic volumes in the area over the past number of years, which has led to major traffic congestion. He referred to the number of construction projects ongoing in the area.

REPLY: Limerick City & County Council is actively developing a number of initiatives in Limerick City East to address improved transport planning and reduce congestion which will benefit this area.

In an overall context road use on main routes in and out of the city will be assessed in the Limerick City Transport Plan to identify improved measures to reduce congestion. This plan is to be progressed this year.

We are progressing planning stages of a project at Junction 28 Mackey (Lisnagry) that will specifically look to address congestion on the approaches to this junction as well as facilitating a Park and Ride & mobility hub near Junction 28 in line with LSMATS to facilitate sustainable travel.

It is an aim under LSMATS to increase, promote and facilitate Active Travel & Public Transport & sustainable travel to reduce congestion. In this context we are engaging with employers and institutions to facilitate their targeted modal changes to reduce congestion at organisational level and geographic around key clusters in the localities mentioned.

We expect to complete construction of the Dublin Road Cappamore Junction improvements as well as completing the outstanding section of the New Bloodmill Road by year end.

Finally, under the Final new Bus Connects Network redesign there will be a 70% improvement in Bus Services for Limerick City. Limerick City East in particular will see significant improvements including increased routes and more frequent services to Annacotty, Castletroy and UL over the next 2 years. This will see 10min services to Annacotty and parts of Castletroy with the Park & Ride in Mackey ultimately expected to facilitate a terminal for these high frequency services.

21. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that this Council will widen the junctions along the Father Russell Road active travel scheme.

The Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor O'Donovan, seconded by Councillor McSweeney and agreed.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor O'Donovan referred to the ongoing works on Father Russell Road which have resulted in the narrowing of a number of the junctions and have caused some issues for motorists.

REPLY: The Father Russell Road scheme was passed by Council in September 2022. A construction contract was issued in October 2023 to build the scheme which has been designed in line with current design standards and guidelines including DMURS and the Cycle Design Manual.

One of the principal design elements employed to deliver road user safety is the tightening of junctions. This measure slows motorists wishing to turn at junctions to a speed that

greatly reduces the risks to cyclist's pedestrians and drivers.

The design has undergone a Road Safety Audit and is designed with the highest standards of safety.

Construction works are currently ongoing, junctions on the scheme are incomplete and do not reflect how the junctions will ultimately operate. When complete the junctions will have more turning space for vehicles than is currently available. The completed construction will deliver junctions that reduce speed and maximises cyclist and pedestrian safety.

Suspension of Standing Orders

On the proposal of Councillor Kiely, seconded by Councillor O'Hanlon, Standing Order 4 was suspended in order to complete the agenda.

22. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Hartigan

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that Limerick City and County Council considers making available loan facilities to people who wish to refurbish a house as their own residence under the Vacant Home Refurbishment Scheme.

The Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Hartigan, seconded by Councillor McSweeney and agreed.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Hartigan stated that the Vacant Home Refurbishment Scheme was an excellent scheme but it was difficult for applicants to have the additional finance and obtaining a short term loan would be of huge assistance.

REPLY: The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant is a payment available to a person who is looking at turning a vacant house or building into a permanent home or rental property. This is for those who already own a property or is in active negotiations to buy a property and that has been vacant for at least 2 years.

The grant is €50,000 which is subject to eligibility criteria and can be topped up by €20,000 in certain conditions. The grant is paid retrospectively. The scheme is administered by the relevant Local Authority.

The Local Authority Home Loan (LAHL), aimed at first time buyers, launched in January 2022 replaced the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan scheme. It is made available to eligible applicants who wish to purchase a new or second hand house or self-build. Prior to proceeding to loan draw down a property is subject to an engineering inspection by a council engineer who based upon the inspection will recommend final loan approval or not. The minimum standard considered by the engineer is that the property is habitable and be ready to move into. It must have a functioning kitchen, bathroom and bedroom. Other rooms in the house can be renovated over a period of time but the property must be ready to move into within a short reasonable time post loan drawdown. In certain situations the engineer may recommend minor works be carried out prior to habitation. These would primarily be safety related, i.e. ventilation, upper floor window locks and smoke/carbon monoxide alarms

It should be noted that as per Section 11 of the Housing Policy Loans (Credit Policy) Guidelines 2023 states *'Applications for a Local Authority Home Loan for the purposes of funding a self-build property will only be considered in circumstances where the security property in question is a new construction, i.e. properties that are part-built or otherwise*

commenced at the time of making a Local Authority Home Loan application will not be eligible for consideration'.

The supporting authority for this is Section 5 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 and is further supported by SI 701 of 2021 Housing Loans Regulations 2021; Amendment Regulations 76 of 2023 and Circular 07 of 2023.

Limerick City and County Council have no discretion in deviating from this.

There is early stage departmental level consideration being given to extending the LAHL to people looking to finance the purchase and renovation of derelict or non-habitable properties.

Councillor Hartigan proposed an amendment to the Motion to write to the Minister asking that the extension of the Local Authority Home Loan Scheme be progressed as soon as possible. This was seconded by Councillor Kiely.

23. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor K. O'Hanlon

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that bus stops would be erected in the vicinity of Ted Russell Park, Condell Road. These would facilitate buses going in and out to the city to stop and provide a service for the many people living in the area. In addition, the students attending the Villiers School could use these and this would in turn remove the requirement for buses to go down the North Circular Road, causing traffic congestion in front of the school.

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

In proposing the Motion, Councillor O'Hanlon highlighted the benefits of providing an improved bus service in the area, which could be used by students attending Villiers School and residents of Condell Road and the surrounding area.

REPLY: Active Travel will assess the feasibility of installing bus stop infrastructure in the vicinity of Ted Russell Park, Condell Road as part of the Bus Shelter Enabling Works Programme which requires approval from the National Transport Authority.

24. Correspondence

Correspondence was noted and taken as read.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed:

CATHAOIRLEACH

Dated:
