



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**
Limerick City
& County Council

Seirbhísí Corparáideacha,
Comhairle Cathrach agus Contae Luimnigh,
Ceanncheathrú Chorparáideach,
Cé na gCeannaithe,
Luimneach

Corporate Services,
Limerick City and County Council,
Corporate Headquarters,
Merchants Quay,
Limerick

EIRCODE V94 EH90

July 8th, 2024

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MEETING OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL to be held on Monday 8th, July, 2024

Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Elisa O'Donovan

I will move at the next Meeting that this Council allow for live streaming of all Council Meetings deemed open to the public.

Reply:

Live-streaming (or 'webcasting') of meetings involves live or 'real time' audio or video streaming of a meeting's proceedings over the web so that the meeting can be viewed or listened to remotely. In addition, a record of the meeting may also be made available after the event if decided to make meeting records available on playback.

At present, Council meetings are open to members of the public through the public viewing gallery in the Chamber or through Microsoft Teams.

Key Issues:

Drawing on the experience of those local authorities that currently use webcasting and those that have examined its feasibility, there are a number of positive benefits highlighted. These include:

Greater openness and transparency – live streaming Council Meetings gives the public the ability to have accurate and immediate viewing of meetings or to use the playback facility; this helps to improve public trust in Local Government;

Promotes public understanding – live streaming meetings supports understanding of how the Council works and how and why decisions are taken;

Encourage engagement – live streaming promotes engagement with young people using mobile technology. Further the webcasting service can include a feedback page/survey that allows stakeholders to provide information and to better interact on the type of further information they require;

Raises profile of councillors – live streaming meetings will afford councillors better 'reach' into their respective constituencies and so the opportunity to raise their profiles given the accessibility of live streamed meetings for constituents.

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However the following issues need to be considered in the context of live stream meetings.

Costs/Viewership

A similar notice of motion was raised by Councillor O'Donovan in the past and at that time a number of local authorities had invested in live streaming meetings however it was apparent that viewership was quite low and as such would not support a cost benefit analysis of streaming. Since that time Limerick has made meetings accessible via Microsoft Teams, however the viewership and interest in joining meetings online via Microsoft Teams in Limerick City and County Council has rarely exceeded five members of the public.

Online streaming may place a constraint on councillors – live streamed meetings are more public by their nature and so opinions that may otherwise have been expressed in a Council Chamber may not be expressed in a live-streamed meeting. Some Members may feel constrained in the manner in which they operate.

Publishing Defamatory Statements and the potential for vicarious liability for statements made contrary to law. Elected Members do not have the equivalent protection of TDs in the Dáil and may find themselves subject to an action in defamation. Equally Members or staff may inadvertently disclose confidential or privileged material. Other local authorities who live stream have been involved in litigation in recent years as a result of their recordings.

Consideration should also be given to the Criminal Justice (Incitement to Violence or Hatred and Hate Offences) Bill. This will criminalise both intentional and reckless communication or behaviour likely to incite violence against a person or persons because they are associated with a protected characteristic. The legislation has been drafted to ensure it captures online communication and a person shall be regarded as communicating material to the public or a section of the public if the person displays, publishes, distributes or disseminates the material, shows or plays the material, or makes the material available in any other way. You may recall comments made in the chamber in Limerick City and County Council on an emotive topic led to a number of complaints to the Gardai and a subsequent investigation.

Data protection

Live streaming and recording would involve the processing of personal data of those attending meetings whose can be seen and heard as well as any individual whose personal data is disclosed. In light of the processing of personal data involved, there are a number of factors to be considered including the legal basis for the recording, as well as compliance with principles such as data minimisation, transparency, purpose limitation and storage limitation. Limerick City and County Council must demonstrate a legal basis to process personal data in addition to complying with the principles of data protection. Any processing should meet the requirement of being necessary, proportionate and justified and it would be necessary to complete a data protection impact assessment.

Grandstanding live streaming of meetings could lead to “grandstanding”. There can be a tendency for speakers to exceed their allotted time to maximise exposure when Meetings are

live streamed, particularly with regard to contentious issues.

Hacking/Editing of Content webcasts can potentially be open to hacking and being edited or manipulated by third parties. Such editing can misrepresent a Member if then broadcast on social media.

Recommendation;

Having considered the issues as outlined, weighing up the risks against the benefits it appears that on balance neither the cost nor viewership justifies introducing live streaming at this stage. Council meetings are currently managed in an open and transparent manner with the notice of meetings and agenda published online in advance of meetings, the public and press ability to attend and report on meetings in addition to the minutes of meetings published online. Should the members resolve to live stream this would entail a change to standing orders.

Signed:



Laura Flannery,

SEO – Corporate Services, Governance and Customer Services

Date: 8 July 2024



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Limerick City
& County Council

Comhshaol, Gníomhú ar son na hAeráide agus Seirbhísí Comhroinnte
Comhairle Cathrach agus Contae Luimnigh
Bothar Thuar an Daill
Tuar an Daill, Luimneach
V94 WV78

Environment, Climate Action and Shared Services
Limerick City and County Council
Dooradoyle Road
Dooradoyle, Limerick
V94 WV78

MEETING OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, 8TH JULY 2024

Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Beasley

I will move at the next Meeting of that Limerick City and County Council will work with the ISPCA to deliver a much needed Inspector to Limerick.

Response:

The ISPCA provided an inspector in Limerick for five years between 2015 and 2020. Unfortunately due to difficulties in funding and working conditions the ISPCA took the decision to stop providing an Inspector in Limerick at that time.

ISPCA Inspectors are authorised officers under the Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013 (AHWA) and have powers to enter land, seize animals (if an offence has been committed) and issue enforceable Welfare Notices. An Garda Síochána also has these powers.

Aidan Finn

Senior Engineer

Environment and Climate Action

4th July 2024



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

Comhshaol, Gníomhú ar son na hAeráide agus Seirbhísí Comhroinnte
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Environment, Climate Action and Shared Services
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Dooradoyle Road
Dooradoyle, Limerick
V94 WV78

MEETING OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, 8TH JULY 2024

Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor U. Gavan

I will move at the next Meeting that this Council immediately review the current guidelines around the control of dogs and increase the number of dog wardens currently employed in Limerick, if necessary, in order to combat the current spate of loose and uncontrolled dogs roaming our streets.

Response:

Limerick City and County Council is obliged to follow S.I. No. 442/1998 – Control of Dogs Act 1986, Regulations, 1998, as amended, and is aware that the departments is currently reviewing these regulations in light of recent events. The number of dog wardens has not been identified as a contributory factor to the current situation.

Aidan Finn

Senior Engineer

Environment and Climate Action

5th July 2024



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MEETING OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL to be held on Monday 8th, July, 2024

Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Jerome Scanlan

I will move at the next Meeting that a root-and-branch review be undertaken on our Electoral Registers locally.

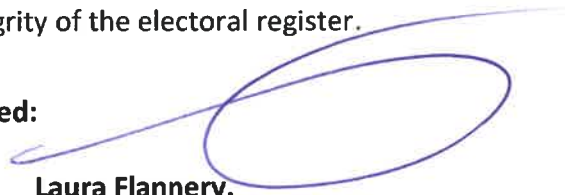
REPLY:

Limerick City and County Council will undertake a project to review and improve the accuracy of our register of electors and welcome information from our public representatives to aid this ongoing process. As elected members are aware, the provisions of the Electoral Reform Act, 2022 provide the legislative underpinning for a range of significant electoral reforms in line with commitments in the Programme for Government. The legislation provides for the modernisation of our electoral registration process to deliver greater accessibility and improved integrity. The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's Electoral Registration Modernisation Project team lead on reforms and all local authorities are undertaking data cleansing exercises in advance of moving to a new centralised system while retaining responsibility for the register at local authority level. All new applications or updates are subject to a simple identity check step to support ongoing improvements to the integrity of the register. In order to progress towards a complete and accurate register an advertising campaign was launched to support registration authorities in seeking engagement of electors, both new and existing to check and complete their information with PPSN, Eircodes and Date of Birth. Prior to these campaigns one in three electors did not have a date of birth associated with their record. This information assists in identifying duplicates, ensuring the movement or removal of the correct individual in the event of death, allowing individuals to identify and edit their own record using MyGovID.

During the recent electoral events, Limerick City and County Council and all local authorities

received an unprecedented number of applications particularly in light of multiple advertising campaigns. It was necessary to put additional resources in place to assist the team. In October 2023 the number of local government electors was 146,551. In May 2024 the number of electors increased to 157,672. The Franchise team processed 28,518 actions between January and May comprising of 13,581 additions, 11,647 modifications and 3,290 deletions. It became apparent that the checktheregister online system inadvertently caused duplicate applications increasing the workload of the Franchise team significantly during this time as did the amount of handwritten paper-based application forms. Limerick City and County Council will work with the County Registrar, the Department of Social Protection, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, An Post and the Elected Members to improve the accuracy and integrity of the electoral register.

Signed:



**Laura Flannery,
SEO – Corporate Services, Governance and Customer Services**

Date: 8 July 2024