

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE, LIMERICK, AND ONLINE, ON MONDAY, 8TH JULY, 2024, AT 3.00 P.M.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:

Príomh Chomhairleoir, Councillor D. McSweeney.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Moran;

Councillors Beasley, Benson, Butler, Carey, Collins (B), Conway, Daly, Donoghue, Doyle, Foley, Galvin, Gavan, Hartigan (S), Hartigan (T), Hickey-O'Mara, Keary, Kiely, Kilcoyne, Leddin, O'Donoghue, O'Donovan, O'Hanlon, O'Sullivan (O), O'Sullivan (T), Pond, Ruddle, Ryan (E), Ryan (M), Scanlan, Secas, Sheahan (J), Sheehan (C), Slattery, Stokes, Talukder, Teefy, Teskey, Ward.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director General (P. Daly), Deputy Director General and Director, Economic Development, Enterprise and Tourism (Mr. G. Daly), A/Director, Support Services (Mr. J. Clune), Director, Housing (Ms. C. Curley), A/Director, Regeneration, Sports and Recreation (Mr. D. White), A/Director, Rural, Community and Culture Development (Mr. S. O'Connor), A/Director, Transportation and Mobility (Mr. H. McGrath), A/Director, Environment, Climate Action and Shared Services (Ms. S. Reidy), Director, Planning and Place-Making (Mr. V. Murray), Meetings Administrator (Ms. L. Flannery), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services and Governance (Mr. M. Leahy), Senior Staff Officer, Corporate Services and Governance (Ms. A. Foley).

At the outset and with the permission of the Príomh Chomhairleoir, the following were raised:

Limerick Senior Hurling Team

The Príomh Chomhairleoir expressed commiserations to the Limerick Senior Hurling Team following their All Ireland semi-final defeat to Cork at the weekend. He highlighted all the team's achievements over the past 6 years and all they had done for Limerick. He outlined the sacrifice and commitment the players and background team gave, and thanked them sincerely, noting they will be back again stronger than ever. He welcomed the Mayor's proposal to hold a reception for the Limerick Team and agreed to revert to Members once discussions on same have taken place.

Vote of Sympathy

A Vote of Sympathy was extended to the family of the late John O'Mahony, RIP, former TD and Senator for Mayo, and a well-known sports man. Members remembered John as a true gentleman and a great GAA person who was very well respected for all he achieved.

1. Adoption of Minutes

Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of the following Meetings:

- (a) Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 27th May, 2024.
- (b) Annual Meeting of the Council held on 21st June, 2024.

Councillor Benson proposed an amendment to Page 11 of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 21st June, 2024, with the penultimate paragraph to be amended to read as follows:

“All Members associated with the Príomh-Chomhairleoir’s comments. Councillors O’Donovan, Leddin, Benson, Teefy and O’Donoghue J spoke on behalf of their respective parties and advised that they were looking forward to the year ahead.”

The amendment was seconded by Councillor O’Donovan and agreed:

Proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J);

Seconded by Councillor Slattery;

And Resolved:

“That, the draft Minutes, as circulated, be taken as read and adopted and signed, subject to the amendment outlined above in relation to the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 21st June, 2024.”

Councillor Keary expressed dissatisfaction with the response included under ‘Correspondence’ - received from the Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage - in reply to resolution adopted by the Council at the March Meeting seeking a full and up-to-date report on wind turbines in relation to likely health effects on adjacent residents, noise levels, shadow flicker and damage to residential amenity.

It was agreed to write to the Minister again expressing the Council’s dissatisfaction with the response and requesting a further update on the issues raised.

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, she was inviting those present to notify the Meeting of any declaration of interest in any item due for discussion at the Meeting. No such interests were declared.

3. Disposal of Land

Circulated, copy of Statutory Notice dated 20th May, 2024, concerning disposal of property at 9, Boherbue, Rathkeale, Co. Limerick, together with map outlining property details.

Proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J);
 Seconded by Councillor Slattery;
 And Resolved:

“That, in accordance with the provisions of Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 (as amended) and Section 211 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), the approval of the Council be and is hereby given to the disposal of 9, Boherbue, Rathkeale, Co. Limerick, to Mary Sheridan, for the sum of €195.42, the disposal to be by way of Deed of Conveyance of the freehold interest of Limerick City and County Council in the property, particulars of which were contained in Statutory Notice dated 20th May, 2024.”

4. Support Services

(a) Chief Executive's Report

Circulated, Chief Executive's Report for the month of May 2024.

The Report was noted by the Council.

(b) Standing Orders – Limerick City and County Council

Circulated, report of the Meetings Administrator dated 3rd July, 2024, enclosing a proposed revision of Standing Orders giving effect to the changes in structure and the operation of meetings in order to align with the Local Government (Mayor of Limerick) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 2024.

The changes reflected the role of the Príomh Chomhairleoir as Chair of the Meeting and provided for the Elected Members to submit Questions to the Mayor of Limerick for oral answer during Plenary Meetings. A resolution of the Council was required should Members wish to adopt the revised Standing Orders.

On the proposal of Councillor Sheahan (J), seconded by Councillor O'Hanlon, it was agreed to defer this item pending the holding of a Workshop.

Special Adviser to Mayor - Update

Mayor Moran gave a brief update to the Council outlining that discussions have taken place with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to progress the appointment of his Special Adviser, and advised he would revert to the Members with updates on the matter as it progressed.

The position was noted by the Members.

(c) Mayoral Programme

Mayor John Moran gave a PowerPoint presentation on the draft Mayoral Programme. He advised the Elected Members that he had a statutory obligation to prepare and publish his Mayoral Programme within 4 months from his commencement date.

He highlighted that finalising his programme early will give him the opportunity to bring his plan for Limerick to relevant Ministers, to look for funding and support for this long term plan for Limerick. He believed there was a willingness from the Government to interact with Limerick, following the Local and Mayoral Elections in June.

He outlined the process in drafting his Mayoral Programme through engagement with local communities, meetings of the Advisory Committee, discussions with Director of Services and relevant staff, and through the proposals received from Elected Members of the Metropolitan and Municipal Districts. The Mayor believed that the Programme gives a very strong direction of where Limerick is going pointing out it is a plan to progress Limerick City and County further, across a range of areas, and he needed support from the Elected Members in delivering his Programme for the betterment of all the people of Limerick.

Members thanked the Mayor for his presentation and welcomed a plan to progress Limerick further. However, Members raised concerns around the timeline to draft this programme and encouraged the Mayor to meet with the Members of the Districts to agree priorities for each area. Some Members emphasised the importance of addressing issues in the City and County in a balanced way so that all of Limerick would be improved where possible. It was also the view of some Members that some of the proposed plans in the Draft Mayoral Programme were outside the role of the local authority, while other Members welcomed many of the proposals contained within the draft programme.

In response, the Mayor confirmed that timelines were tight having regard to the national Budgetary Process and the importance of finalising the proposed Mayoral Programme as soon as possible to increase the possible funding opportunities for Limerick. He advised the Members of each District to finalise the priorities for their areas, for possible consideration in the Draft Mayoral Programme.

The position was noted by the Members.

(d) Strategic Policy Committee Scheme 2024-2029

Circulated, report of the Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services, Governance and Customer Services dated 3rd July, 2024, enclosing Draft Strategic Policy Committee Scheme 2024-2029, prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 48 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by Section 41 of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014.

A resolution of the Council was now required to adopt the Draft Scheme. Following adoption of the Draft Scheme, it would be placed on public display for a period of one month with any submissions received to be considered by the Corporate Policy Group before final adoption of the Scheme by the Council.

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor O'Donovan, seconded by Councillor Sheahan (J), to defer this item pending consideration at the Workshop being arranged to consider Standing Orders.

(e) Deferred Filling of Committees from Annual Meeting

(i) Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee:

The Meetings Administrator stated that Limerick City and County Council was required to consider the nomination of four Members to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J);
Seconded by Councillor Teefy;

"That, Councillors O'Sullivan (T), Slattery, Hartigan (S) and Daly be appointed to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee."

As there were no other nominations, the Príomh Chomhairleoir declared Councillors O'Sullivan (T), Slattery, Hartigan (S) and Daly appointed to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee."

(ii) Limerick Market Trustees

The Meetings Administrator advised that the Council was required to consider the nomination of the Mayor, and Cathaoirleach of the Metropolitan District of Limerick (both ex-officio), together with a further 16 Members of the Council, as members of the Limerick Market Trustees. This was an annual appointment.

Proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J);
Seconded by Councillor Teefy;

"That, Councillors Sheahan (J), O'Sullivan (O), Kiely, Butler, McSweeney, Doyle, Ward, Kilcoyne, Talukder, Slattery, Pond, Hickey-O'Mara, Daly, Donoghue, O'Donovan and Beasley be appointed to the Limerick Market Trustees for the ensuing year."

As there were no other nominations, the Príomh Chomhairleoir declared – in addition to the Mayor and the Cathaoirleach of the Metropolitan District of Limerick who were ex-officio members – the following appointed to the Limerick Market Trustees for the ensuing year - Councillors Sheahan (J), O'Sullivan (O), Kiely, Butler, McSweeney, Doyle, Ward, Kilcoyne, Talukder, Slattery, Pond, Hickey-O'Mara, Daly, Donoghue, O'Donovan and Beasley.

(iii) PAUL Partnership

The Meetings Administrator advised that the Council was required to consider the nomination of the one remaining Member representing Limerick City East to the Board of PAUL Partnership - Members representing Limerick City West (Councillor Talukder) and Limerick City North (Councillor Hickey-O'Mara) having been appointed at the Annual Meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J);
 Seconded by Councillor O'Hanlon;

"That, Councillor Slattery (Limerick City East) be appointed to the Board of PAUL Partnership."

As there were no other nominations, the Príomh Chomhairleoir declared Councillor Slattery (Limerick City East) appointed to the Board of PAUL Partnership.

(iv) Innovate Limerick

The Meetings Administrator advised that the Council was required to consider the nomination of 4 Members of Limerick City and County Council to the Board of Innovate Limerick.

Proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J);
 Seconded by Councillor Teefy;

"That, Councillors O'Sullivan (O), Leddin, Kilcoyne and Donoghue be appointed to the Board of Innovate Limerick."

After a discussion it was agreed that the Executive would seek legal advice to clarify in respect of the single shareholder role of the Mayor and the acceptance of nominations.

(v) Audit and Risk Committee:

The Meetings Administrator advised that the Council was required to consider the nomination of the one remaining Member to the Audit and Risk Committee - 2 Members {Councillors Sheahan (J) and Benson} having been appointed at the Annual Meeting.

This item was deferred to the September Meeting.

(vi) Limerick 2030 Strategic Development DAC:

The Meetings Administrator advised that the Council was required to consider the nomination of 4 Members of Limerick City and County Council to the Board of Limerick 2030 Strategic Development DAC.

Proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J);
 Seconded by Councillor Slattery;

“That, Councillors Butler, Sheahan (J), O’Hanlon and O’Donoghue be appointed to the Board of Limerick 2030 Strategic Development DAC.”

After a discussion it was agreed that the Executive would seek legal advice to clarify in respect of the single shareholder role of the Mayor and the acceptance of nominations.

(vii) Discover Limerick DAC

The Meetings Administrator advised that the Council was required to consider the nomination of 4 Members of Limerick City and County Council to the Board of Discover Limerick DAC.

Proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J);
 Seconded by Councillor Teefy;

“That, Councillors O’Sullivan (O), Kiely, Collins (B) and Daly be appointed to the Board of Discover Limerick DAC.”

After a discussion it was agreed that the Executive would seek legal advice to clarify in respect of the single shareholder role of the Mayor and the acceptance of nominations.

(viii) LECP (Local Economic and Community Plan) Steering Group

The Meetings Administrator advised that the Council was required to consider the nomination of the second nominee to the LECP (Local Economic and Community Plan) Steering Group, the nominees consisting of the Chair of the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning SPC (Councillor Doyle) and one other Member.

Proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J);
 Seconded by Councillor O’Hanlon;

“That, Councillor Slattery be appointed to the LECP (Local Economic and Community Plan) Steering Group.”

As there were no other nominations, the Príomh Chomhairleoir declared Councillor Slattery appointed as the second nominee to the LECP Steering Group, the Chair-Designate of the Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee having been appointed at the Annual Meeting.

(f) Strategic Policy Committee Reports

- (i) Circulated, report of the Chairperson of the Home and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee dated 30th May, 2024, in relation to meeting of the Committee held on 30th May, 2024.
The report was noted by the Council.
- (ii) Community, Leisure and Culture Strategic Policy Committee - it was noted that no meeting had been held since the last Chairperson's report.
- (iii) Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee - it was noted that no meeting had been held since the last Chairperson's report.
- (iv) Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee - it was noted that no meeting had been held since the last Chairperson's report.
- (v) Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee – it was noted that no meeting had been held since the last Chairperson's report.

5. Rural, Community and Culture Development

Strategic Fund for Culture and Arts Scheme 2024

Circulated, report of the Arts Officer I Creative Ireland Co-ordinator dated 25th June, 2024, seeking the Council's approval to recommended allocations under the Strategic Fund for Culture and Arts Scheme 2024.

Proposed by Councillor O'Sullivan (O);

Seconded by Councillor Slattery;

And Resolved:

“That, the approval of the Council be and is hereby given to recommended allocations under the Strategic Fund for Culture and Arts Scheme 2024, as set out in the report of the Arts Officer I Creative Ireland Co-ordinator dated 25th June, 2024.”

6. Transportation and Mobility

Traffic Calming Policy 2024

Circulated, report of the Mayor of Limerick, John Moran, dated 24th June, 2024, attaching the updated Limerick City and County Council Traffic Calming Policy 2024 (dated April 2024). It was recommended that the Council adopt the Policy.

The A/Director, Transportation and Mobility, gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Members outlining the objectives of the Traffic Calming Policy 2024 as follows:

- Improve safety on our roads;
- Improve driver awareness of vulnerable road users;
- Improve comfort and accessibility for public transport, cyclists and pedestrians;
- Reduce noise, disturbance and anxiety.

He advised Members that the current Traffic Calming Policy 2018 needed to be reviewed due to limitations in the scope of the policy. He confirmed that the existing policy does not apply to all roads and pointed out that this was one aspect under review, along with the existing assessment criteria, availability of funding and to ensure consideration is given on guidelines to facilitate public transport.

The following amendment to Section 7.1 of the Traffic Calming Policy 2024 was proposed by Councillor Kiely and seconded by Councillor O’Sullivan (O):

“Any such request, for residential areas, must be accompanied by a plebiscite of residents in which two thirds of all the residents on the street affected have indicated that they are in favour of the proposed measures. Alternatively, evidence of a site notice should be submitted to the Engineer. Details of the site notice are outlined below.

- Housing Estates - Limerick City & County Council or applicants can, in place of the Plebiscite, install site notices either side of each entrance of the housing estate. Site notices shall also be installed at the proposed location of traffic calming measures notifying residents of the proposed scheme and location.
- Through Road - Limerick City & County Council can, in place of the Plebiscite, install site notices at the proposed location of traffic calming measures notifying residents of the proposed scheme and location.

Plebiscites/Site notices are only required for physical traffic calming measures (vertical or horizontal deflection traffic calming measures) which will alter the road alignment. Site notices shall remain in place for a period of three weeks and evidence of the site notice in place each week should be submitted to the Local Authority.”

On the proposal of Councillor Kiely and seconded by Councillor O’Sullivan (O), the circulated report of the Mayor of Limerick, John Moran, dated 24th June, 2024, attaching the updated Limerick City and County Council Traffic Calming Policy 2024 (dated April 2024) was adopted subject to the above amendment.

Suspension of Standing Order 4: The Príomh Chomhairleoir drew attention to the time which was approaching 5.30 p.m. and on the proposal of Councillor Sheahan (J), seconded by Councillor Slattery, Standing Order No. 4 was suspended in order to complete the agenda.

7. **Conferences**

Reports on Conference / Seminar / Meeting / Event

Circulated, report by a Member who had participated at Conference / Seminar / Meeting / Event.

The report was noted by the Council.

QUESTIONS

Replies to the following Questions on the agenda were circulated to all Members prior to the Meeting and the Questions were therefore taken as having been dealt with:

8. **Question submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan**

I will ask at the next Meeting of Limerick City and County Council for a detailed breakdown of expenditure for Riverfest 2024.

REPLY: The expenditure budget for Riverfest 2024 is as follows:

Riverfest 2024	
Item	Amount incl.Vat
Grooveyard Events Management Fees	€18,634.50
Fashionfest	€14,089.65
Riverfest Village	€144,211.35
Zipline	€35,055.00
Fidget Feet Bingo	€15,000.00
National BBQ Competition	€35,854.50
On Water Activities	€21,217.00
Fireworks	€51,284.65
Street Party	€5,000.00
Pegasus Parade	€64,821.00
ASD sensory Area	€5,775.00
Launch	€400.00
St. Michael's Rowing event	€1,000.00
Rogu	€450.00
Hunt Museum	€2,500.00
St. Mary's Cathedral	€500.00
Milk Market Trustees	€2,000.00
TG4 and RTE	€615.00
Licensing	€5,879.00

Garda Charges	€10,209.00
Insurance	€3,570.00
Grooveyard Communications	€8,610.00
Limerick City and County Council Communications	€1,860.00
Site Crew, Accommodation and Subsistence	€27,060.00
Site Manager	€6,088.50
Event Controller	€4,920.00
Health and Safety Officer	€7,749.00
Production Manager	€4,981.50
Programme Coordinator	€6,088.50
Project Manager	€6,088.50
Water Liaison	€3,198.00
Miscellaneous	€146.50
Total Inc. VAT @23%	€514,856.15

9. Question submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan

I will ask at the next Meeting of Limerick City and County Council if this Council can enforce developers to open crèches in new residential developments when people are now living in estates but childcare facilities have not opened.

REPLY: The responsibility to ensure that planning permissions, including the attached conditions, are complied with and implemented in accordance with the permission rests with the applicant/developer. Where it comes to the attention of the Planning Authority that there is non-compliance with a permission or unauthorised development, including failing to construct a crèche that formed part of a permission, the Planning Authority initiates an investigation in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

10. Question submitted by Councillor S. Beasley

I will ask at the next Meeting of Limerick City and County Council how many Council houses are vacant at the moment and further, have been empty for each of the last 5 years.

REPLY:

Year	No of Vacant Units	% of vacancy	End of Year Stock
2019	349	6.41	5,385
2020	201	3.7	5,475

2021	223	4.01	5,549
2022	292	5.15	5,675
2023	231	4.03	5,751
01/07/2024	227	3.76	6,038

The 227 vacant units are at various stages in the refurbishment/re-let process. 73 units currently have contractors on site with 82 units at design/procurement stage.

11. Question submitted by Councillor S. Beasley

I will ask at the next Meeting of Limerick City and County Council what is the average cost of refurbishment of vacant homes over the last 5 years per property.

REPLY:

Year	Average Cost of Refurbishment
2019	€32,442.19
2020	€21,832.93
2021	€27,185.23
2022	€21,736.34
2023	€35,623.00
2024	€41,781.30

The Table includes the average cost of refurbishment for a vacant unit refurbished through the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Voids Programme and Own Resources. Note that €11,000 grant is provided per unit via the Voids Programme.

12. Question submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will ask at the next Meeting (a) the number of affordable homes delivered by our Authority in 2022, 2023 and 2024 to date, and (b) the number of Local Authority Mortgage Loans that were provided in each case.

REPLY:

(a) The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage issued formal Affordable Housing targets to the Council on 30th March, 2022. The Council spent 2022 recruiting an Affordable Housing Team and launching campaigns seeking advance purchase turnkeys from private developers/builders to deliver affordable homes. Therefore, no affordable homes were delivered in 2022. Limerick City and County Council delivered 46 affordable homes in 2023. A further 50 affordable homes will be delivered by the end of 2024. In addition to the above Local Authority-led schemes, the Approved Housing Body Sector and the Land Development Agency delivered 38 affordable homes in 2023. A further 116 affordable homes will be delivered by the end of 2024. The pipeline is increasing month on month as developers and builders begin to understand the range of Government subventions available for the delivery of affordable homes.

(b) 95% of successful and eligible affordable housing applicants obtained mortgage approvals from Commercial Banks for affordable home purchase. One household to date required the Local Authority Home Loan and their application was approved in principle. The mortgage will be drawn down once legal work is completed.

13. Question submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

I will ask at the next Meeting as to the number of hours spent by field workers updating the Electoral Register in Limerick over the 53 months from December 2019.

REPLY: In 2019, Limerick City and County Council carried out an assessment on the continuation of the use of fieldworkers. The global pandemic in early 2020 superseded the decision on the use of fieldworkers as the country experienced a number of periods of lockdown whereby any interaction outside of the home was discouraged in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Since that time, the Electoral Reform Act, 2022, has been enacted and a number of other measures have been in use to update the electoral register, including the onboarding of checktheresister.ie which facilitates electors to update and change their information online on a continuous basis. Further developments are being undertaken on a national basis, led by the Department of Housing, to move to a centralised system and work will continue to cleanse data held on the current register. The phasing out of fieldworkers aligns with the approach taken in Kerry County Council, Tipperary County Council, Clare County Council, Cork City Council and all Dublin Councils.

14. Question submitted by Councillor M. Donoghue

In relation to the Night-time Economy Survey, I will ask at the next Meeting is the online survey the only research that Limerick City and County Council will carry out in relation to the city centre in terms of economy and quality of life.

REPLY: The online survey is only one of a range of methods used to ensure extensive consultation and a data driven approach is used in the development of a Night Time Economy Action Plan (pursuant to the requirements of the NTE pilot). The following methods of research and consultation are planned over the next three months, with an Action Plan expected to be finalised and launched by early November:

- An external consultant has been engaged to assist with data gathering/local research, survey development and analysis, and facilitation of stakeholder engagement. Research and data collection/analysis is underway and will be presented together with survey outcomes in due course. There is no specific NTE data sets, however this will be built from relevant data from a variety of publicly available sources.

- Two online surveys were launched on 25 June 2024 (a business survey and a public perception survey), with a closing date of 17 July
- Development of stakeholder relationships (representing various cohorts), pursuant with the required objectives of the pilot have commenced (i.e. Youth, Students, Older People, Safety, Hospitality including Hoteliers & Vintners, Venues, Active Cities, City Centre Business Owners, Tourism Sector incl. Failte Ireland & Creative Ireland). Internal networks have also been established with the NTE Advisor attending the Gateway Forum, the Market Quarter Working Group and various other projects as required. These internal and external networks will continue to evolve throughout the pilot.
- Night-Time Audits will take place (dates not yet confirmed), with specific cohorts (this may include, but is not limited to, Youth, Multicultural community, Women's groups, Residents, LGBTQI community). The audits will incorporate a night walk in the city centre at a specific time, followed by a focus group discussion. Local Councillors will be invited to attend these.
- A Stakeholder Workshop will be held in September 2024, to explore the data collection/analysis and survey results, consider existing and emerging challenges and opportunities, discuss strategies and brainstorm ideas. The meeting outputs will be collated and a report subsequently prepared for consideration of the NTE Advisory Committee (to be established thereafter).
- A series of six thematic/targeted roundtable-style meetings to be held with 'Subject Matter Experts' (approx. six to eight representatives at each meeting). Themes will be adopted according to outputs and identification of key priorities from both the surveys and the Stakeholder Workshop.
- A NTE Advisory Committee will be established, which the Mayor has indicated he will chair – the Committee will consider and provide feedback on the Action Plan framework. The Committee will be formed on the basis of individual's acceptance of responsibility for various actions and recommendations. The Committee will meet quarterly to review and monitor implementation of the Action Plan and consider any alterations if required.

15. Question submitted by Councillor S. Hickey-O'Mara

I will ask at the next Meeting of Limerick Council for an update on the use of chemical pesticides by Council staff and Council contractors.

REPLY:

Plant Protection Products (PPP), Herbicides and Pesticides are used on a limited basis by Limerick City and County Council. At all times, only EU-approved licensed Plant Protection Products (PPPs) are used. Council Operatives are trained in the correct application procedures. Any use of products containing glyphosate is subject to the appropriate risk assessment and compliance with safety requirements in relation to their use and application. Limerick City and County Council is committed to reducing its use of PPP across the organisation.

The Parks and Recreation Section of the Council is leading the way with PPP use, having been phased out over the last few years. Parks staff or contractors working on the Council's behalf are not permitted to use PPP in any parks or recreation areas. Alternative methods such as strimming are employed.

The Cleansing Section of Limerick City and County Council employs a contractor to treat weeds on public footpaths and roads throughout Limerick City. The Contractor has carried out a risk assessment, which evaluated alternative treatments to chemicals. The risk assessment concluded that the use of the most suitable plant protection product (PPP) applied at the appropriate rate, under the correct conditions, by qualified operatives, was necessary. Three overall applications take place each year, one in April/May, another in July and a final application in September/October, all dependent on weather conditions. The Council's contractor uses a compact tractor mounted sprayer using photosynthetic detectors and operated by registered professional users. This system can target individual weeds without blanket spraying a surface, this ensures that chemical treatment is only applied where plant life is present and minimises usage of chemical pesticides.

Encouragement of biodiversity, including the growth of wildflowers and the promotion of initiatives like "No Mow May," emphasise the importance of minimising the use of PPP. Roadside margins are now becoming better managed for pollinators; more Council-owned amenities and recreational areas are being managed for biodiversity. Limerick City and County Council is a committed Council partner to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, and Council Action 19 states that Councils reduce or eliminate pesticide use so as to help pollinators.

"Guidance for Local Authorities to ensure compliance with the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive," issued by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, has been circulated to relevant staff so as to ensure compliance with said Directive.

In relation to Invasive Alien Plants, the use of PPP is also limited and only used where necessary. In the Loobagh Hogweed removal programme, plants are removed manually with pesticide use only employed in inaccessible areas or extreme infestations. However, PPP is essential for the control of Japanese Knotweed and must be retained as an option.

The combination of measures outlined above will have the overall impact of reducing the dependency on, and usage of, pesticides.

NOTICES OF MOTION

With the permission of the Príomh Chomhairleoir, the Motions on the agenda were taken in the following order:

18. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor E. 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.

The Motion was proposed by Councillor O'Donovan and seconded by Councillor Hickey-O'Mara.

Councillor Sheahan (J) proposed that the Motion be deferred pending the outcome of the LGMA sector-wide review of live streaming of Council Meetings. This was seconded by Councillor Slattery.

The following Reply was read:

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. 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.

Following some discussion, the Príomh Chomhairleoir declared that a vote be taken on the proposal to defer the Motion and the result of the voting was as follows:

For

Councillors Beasley, Butler, Collins (B), Conway, Daly, Doyle, Galvin, Hartigan (T), Keary, Kiely, Kilcoyne, Leddin, McSweeney, O'Donoghue, O'Sullivan (O), O'Sullivan (T), Pond, Ruddle, Ryan (M), Sheahan (J), Slattery, Stokes, Teefy, Ward. **(24)**

Against

Mayor Moran, Councillors: Benson, Carey, Donoghue, Gavan, Hartigan (S), Hickey-O'Mara, O'Donovan, Ryan (E), Secas. **(10)**

Abstentions

(0)

The Príomh Chomhairleoir declared the proposal to defer the Motion pending the outcome of the LGMA review of live streaming of Council Meetings as carried.

19. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Sheahan

I will move at the next Meeting that Directly Elected Mayor, Mayor Moran, make immediate contact with the Minister for the Environment to get the D Maps for offshore wind published immediately so that Foynes Port can put plans in place to develop its infrastructure in advance of what is planned in the Mid-West for renewable energy.

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J) and seconded by Councillor Collins (B).

The Mayor confirmed that he has made contact with the Minister for the Environment to get the D Maps for offshore wind published and he agreed that a formal response is required. He discussed the views of the Council with the Minister and acknowledged it was extremely important to progress this matter.

26. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor B. Collins

I will move at the next Meeting that the Mayor and relevant officials of Limerick City and County Council update the Members on what measures have been taken to date on the following Commitment from the Mayor's "Pillar 3-Policy Plan for a More Healthy Limerick"- : (Quote) "If elected, I shall get straight onto the issue of boil notices in our county and the solutions needed to sort these out and have a report weekly to the people impacted about progress and a plan to sort this out.

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Collins (B) and seconded by Councillor Keary.

The Mayor acknowledged the concerns of the people of Limerick currently living in areas under a boil notice and the difficulties they are experiencing. He outlined how he has raised the water issues with the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and the Mayor outlined his plan to keep Members and the people of Limerick up to date on the progress of the matter. The Mayor also urged Members to continue to raise this issue with their party Ministers.

16. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor L. Galvin

I will move at the next Meeting that this Council call on the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to make a grant available to dispose of Asbestos from the roofs of dwelling houses.

On the proposal of Councillor Galvin, seconded by Councillor Sheahan (J), the Motion was adopted.

17. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor C. Slattery

I will move at the next Meeting that we, as a Council, write to the Minister for Justice and ask that the law be changed for victims of violent assault.

The Motion was amended to include 'all' victims of violent assault and was adopted by the Council, on the proposal of Councillor Slattery, seconded by Councillor Collins (B).

20. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Beasley

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

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Beasley and seconded by Councillor O'Donovan.

REPLY: 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.

21. 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.

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Gavan and seconded by Councillor Benson.

REPLY: 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 Department 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.

Members welcomed this Motion and agreed it was an important issue that needed to be addressed. In response, the A/Director of Support Services advised the Members that once the Department have completed their review of the Regulations, a workshop will be arranged in due course to discuss the proposed outcomes with the Elected Members.

22. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Scanlan

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

With the permission of the Príomh Chomhairleoir and in Councillor Scanlan's absence, the Motion was proposed by Councillor Ryan (E). Councillor Teefy seconded the Motion.

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 checktheresister 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.

23. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Hickey-O'Mara (to be referred to Community, Leisure and Culture Strategic Policy Committee)

I will move at the next Meeting of Limerick City and County Council that this Council begins the process of identifying a suitable location for a new arts space for youth groups throughout the city and county.

This Motion was referred to the Community, Leisure and Culture Strategic Policy Committee for consideration.

24. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Hartigan

I will move at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council write to Minister Darragh O'Brien to express dissatisfaction with his approval of plans to abstract water from the River Shannon to supply Dublin and other counties.

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Hartigan, seconded by Councillor Secas and adopted.

25. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor E. Secas

I will move at the next meeting that Limerick City and County Council calls for an independent evaluation of the Shannon Water Supply Project, and writes to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and to Uisce Éireann to request that no planning application is submitted until the independent evaluation is completed.

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Secas, seconded by Councillor O'Donovan, and adopted.

27. Correspondence

The Correspondence circulated with the agenda was taken as read.

MAYOR / DIRECTOR GENERAL ORDERS:

The Register of Orders made by the Mayor or the Director General up to the date of the Meeting was available on SharePoint for inspection by the Members.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

The Register of Decisions on Applications under the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended was also available on SharePoint for inspection by the Members.

Signed:

Príomh Chomhairleoir

Date: _____