

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, 16TH DECEMBER, 2024 at 9.45 A.M.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR: Councillor K. O'Hanlon, Cathaoirleach

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors Beasley, Benson, Butler, Daly, Donoghue, Doyle, Gavan, Hartigan, Hickey-O'Mara, Kiely, Kilcoyne, Leddin, McSweeney, O'Donovan, O'Sullivan, Pond, Secas, Slattery and Talukder.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Director of Service, Environment, Climate Action and Shared Services (Mr. K. Lehane), Meetings Administrator (Ms. A. Foley), Senior Engineer, Travel and Transport Strategy (Mr. H. McGrath), Executive Planner, Travel and Transport Strategy (Ms. K. McDonnell), Project Manager, LA Housing Construction and Maintenance (Mr. A. Doyle), Executive Architect, LA Housing Construction and Maintenance (Mr. B. Ranahan), Senior Planner (Ms. N. O'Connell), Senior Executive Planner, Planning Development (Mr. B. Henn), A/Senior Executive Planner, Forward Planning (Ms. C. Brislane), Executive Planner, Forward Planning (Mr. J. Griffin), Senior Engineer, Active Travel (Mr. S. McGlynn), Senior Engineer, Roads, Traffic and Cleansing (Mr. J. Gannon), Senior Executive Engineers, Roads, Traffic and Cleansing (Mr. M. Richardson and Mr. L. Browne), Senior Engineer, Environment and Climate Action (Mr. A. Finn), Assistant Staff Officer, Corporate Services and Governance (Ms. S. Carroll).

At the outset, the Cathaoirleach and Members extended their congratulations to Councillor Conor Sheehan on his election to Dáil Éireann. Members also paid tribute to the candidates who were unsuccessful in the Election and commended them for running.

1. Adoption of Minutes

Circulated, copy of draft Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick held on 18th November, 2024.

Proposed by Councillor McSweeney;

Seconded by Councillor Kiely;

And Resolved:

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

The Cathaoirleach referred to the Presentation by the City Centre Traders Association at the November Metropolitan District Meeting and the agreement at that meeting to setup an Action Programme for City Centre Forum, comprising of a representative from Fianna Fail, a representative from Fine Gael, and two other representatives from the Elected Members. He proposed to hold the first meeting of the Forum in January, 2025, and asked Members to confirm the name of their representative on the Forum to the Meetings Administrator.

The Members considered if the Forum should be expanded to include representatives from Community Groups and Residential Organisations. Following discussion, it was agreed that trader representatives only, would be invited at this time.

The Cathaoirleach stated that a number of Questions and Notices of Motion on the agenda were operational issues, and these should be dealt with at the monthly Local Electoral Area Briefings.

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 Cathaoirleach of any declaration of interest in any item due for discussion at the Meeting. No such interests were declared.

3. Disposal of Land

Circulated, Report of the Senior Staff Officer, Housing Support Services dated 12th November 2024, setting out proposals for Disposal of Freehold Interest of premises consisting of a dwelling house situate at 40 Rossa Avenue, Mulgrave Street, 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. Update on the Limerick City Transport Plan

The Senior Engineer, Travel and Transport Strategy gave an update to Members on the Limerick City Transport Plan, which included the following objectives:

- Promote and prioritise sustainable transport and promote modal shift;
- Provide active travel and public transport infrastructure;
- Improve links for people to travel to work, school and college;
- Enhance the public realm for people to live in and visit the city centre.

He outlined the status of the Plan, with public consultation to take place in Quarter 1, 2025 and the Plan to be finalised in early 2025. He advised the Members that a public survey was carried out in June 2024 to collect insights on the existing travel patterns in Limerick City Centre and to explore the views of the people of Limerick. Details of the results of the public surveys were given.

Members thanked the Senior Engineer for the Presentation and made the following points:

- Members queried the age profile of respondents to the survey and expressed concern that the survey was only online, thus excluding people who do not use online services;
- Members raised concern that a low number of responses from people with disabilities were received;
- Members highlighted that car/vehicle related questions were not included in the survey;
- Members expressed disappointment that the input of Elected Members was not sought to the design and content of the survey, and that improved communication was crucial;
- It was the view of some Members that there was a lot of positives in relation to the extension of routes in the Bus Connect Plan and the additional cycle lanes in Limerick, while other Members highlighted the need for a better bus service in catchment areas that do not have a service; or have a limited service at present;
- Members queried why the rollout of Park and Ride facilities was not included in the plan, and emphasised the need to prioritise these;

- Communication between the Council and Bus Éireann should be improved, particularly in relation to road closures and roadworks where traffic was impacted.

The Senior Engineer responded to the queries raised and confirmed that the directorate would improve communications with businesses and Elected Members. He noted the impact of the road works on the Moyross Road and agreed to bring this issue back to Bus Éireann, along with all issues raised by Members in relation to bus routes in Limerick. He also advised the Elected Members to raise these individual bus issues directly with Bus Éireann. He referred to the Rural Link Service and noted he would include this service in the next presentation.

It was agreed to include the City Transport Plan as an item on the agenda for the next Local Electoral Area Briefings to allow for more discussion per Area.

5. Housing Directorate

(a) Part 8 Procedure – Six No. Housing Units at Mulcair Drive, Rivers, Annacotty, Co. Limerick

Circulated, Report of the Senior Engineer, LA Housing Construction and Maintenance dated 4th December, 2024 and enclosed Mayor's Report dated 5th November, 2024 setting out details in relation to the proposed development of Six No. Housing Units at Mulcair Drive, Rivers, Annacotty, Co. Limerick. The report had been prepared in accordance with Section 179(3)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) and noted that it was proposed to proceed in accordance with Section 8 of the report.

Members welcomed the proposed development and thanked the Officials for their work on the Part 8.

Members raised a number of queries in relation to the timelines for demolishing the derelict cottage and the commencement of the scheme, proposals for the gated area and maintenance of the completed scheme. These were responded to by the Project Manager and Executive Architect, LA Housing Construction and Maintenance.

The report, as circulated, was noted by the Elected Members.

With the agreement of the Members, Councillor Pond took the Chair as the Cathaoirleach had to leave the Meeting, and the Leas Cathaoirleach was not present in the Council Chamber.

(b) Part 8 Procedure – Six No. Housing Units at 52 New Road, Thomondgate, Limerick

Circulated, Report of the Senior Engineer, LA Housing Construction and Maintenance dated 4th December, 2024 and enclosed Mayor's Report dated 2nd December, 2024 setting out details in relation to the proposed development of Six No. Housing Units at 52 New Road, Thomondgate, Limerick. The report had been prepared in accordance with Section 179(3)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) and noted that it was proposed to proceed in accordance with Section 8 of the report.

A number of Members referred to the historical significance of the building and raised concerns in relation to its demolition.

It was proposed by Councillor Benson and seconded by Councillor Donoghue to defer the Part 8.

It was proposed by Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor McSweeney to proceed with the Part 8.

A Roll Call Vote was taken which resulted as follows:

To proceed with the Part 8:

Councillors Butler, Daly, Doyle, Kiely, McSweeney, Pond, Slattery and Talukder. (8)

To defer the Part 8

Councillors Beasley, Benson, Donoghue, Gavan, Hartigan, Hickey-O'Mara, O'Donovan and Secas. (8)

As the result of the vote was equal, Councillor Pond, as Cathaoirleach had a casting vote, and voted in favour of the Part 8 Procedure – Six No. Housing Units at 52 New Road, Thomondgate, Limerick, to proceed.

6. Planning, Environment and Place-Making Directorate

(a) Taking in Charge of Estates - Declaration of Roads to be Public Roads

Circulated, Report of the Senior Planner, Planning and Place-Making Directorate dated 2nd December, 2024 seeking approval to the taking in charge of the roads in Belfield Crescent, Farranshone, Limerick.

Proposed by Councillor Daly;
Seconded by Councillor Hickey-O'Mara;
And Resolved:

“That the roads in Belfield Crescent, Farranshone, Limerick be taken in charge in accordance with Section 180 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Section 11 of the Roads Act, 1993”.

(b) Briefing on Part 8 – Fireplace Site, 35 – 39 Nicholas Street, Limerick

The A/Senior Executive Planner and Executive Planner, Forward Planning gave a Presentation to Members on the proposed Part 8 for the Fireplace Site, 35 – 39 Nicholas Street, Limerick, outlining the following:

- Funding of approximately €200,000 was approved under THRIVE (Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme) Strand 1 for the King's Island Area.
- Strand 2 funding of €2 - €7 million has an application deadline of April, 2025.
- A survey seeking views on King's Island and the Walled Town Framework Survey was carried out and engagement events were held.

- The Fireplace Site had been vacant for over 25 years, with a lot of dereliction in Nicholas Street.
- The space would provide a creative hub for artists and designers in a central location and increase footfall. There is a high concentration of tourists in the area and this proposed development will aim to showcase the Walls of Limerick.

Members thanked the Officials for the Presentation and welcomed the proposals outlining the positive benefits this will have for the area. They commended the team for the fantastic work they have done with the proposed design and highlighted how it will significantly revitalise the street.

QUESTIONS

7. Question submitted by Councillor M. Donoghue

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick what plans are in place to support Our Lady of Lourdes, Childers Road, in the upgrade of their existing structure and facilities.

REPLY: Following a recent meeting with Our Lady of Lourdes, a conditional assessment is being sought from their consultants after which Regeneration will review refurbishment and/or re-development options for their operations.

8. Question submitted by Councillor E. Secas

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick for an update on site acquisition for a new graveyard in the Castletroy area.

REPLY: In our reply to Question raised by Cllr Secas on this issue dated the 16th of February 2024 the response stated:

‘The Council have identified a number of sites for a new burial ground to serve the Castletroy area and have completed a desktop exercise in relation to same. Each of the sites require site investigation to determine ground conditions and general suitability of the site for a burial ground. This process is underway and a preferred site will be identified in due course.’

Since the date of our previous response, the Council have carried out further analytical assessments and discounted a number of the initial sites identified for various reasons i.e. not being either suitable or available. Of those remaining sites including one new location we are engaging with the property owners in order to obtain necessary permissions to carry out physical assessments of same.

9. Question submitted by Councillor J. Pond

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that following on from further recent acts of anti-social behaviour on Castletroy Greenway, can I have an update on the CCTV scheme that is proposed for the Castletroy Greenway.

REPLY: Limerick City and County Council’s Digital Services CCTV team submitted a Community CCTV

application for the Castletroy Greenway to An Garda Síochána on Friday, 30th August, 2024. Subsequently, on Friday, 11th October, 2024, Limerick City and County Council, in collaboration with members of An Garda Síochána from the Limerick Division, made a presentation on this proposal to the Garda CCTV Advisory Committee for their consideration. This application is currently under review by the Garda Commissioner's team. We anticipate receiving the outcome of the application within the next few weeks.

10. Question submitted by Councillor C. Slattery

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick can Limerick Council advise why people in receipt of the bin waiver have to pay a subsidy to their bin provider if they go over a certain weight. The weight allowance is very low if elderly people living alone have to pay fees towards the second half of the year.

REPLY: The weight allowance for Household Waste Subsidy Scheme is 120kg per bin, i.e. 120kg General Waste, 120kg Mixed Dry Recyclables, 120kg Food Waste Recycling, a total of 360kg.

During 2022, Limerick City and County Council tendered for the establishment of four (4) Single Party Framework Agreements for the provision of Household Waste Collection Services for a subsidised scheme in four (4) lots as follows;

- Lot 1 Limerick Metropolitan District
- Lot 2 Newcastle West Municipal District
- Lot 3 Adare/Rathkeale Municipal District
- Lot 4 Cappamore/Kilmallock Municipal District

As the Council was aware that there were increases in the provisions of these services the tenderers were asked to submit costings for three (3) options as follows;

- Option 1: 180kg, Option 2: 160Kg, and Option 3: 120kg.

A full evaluation of all the tenders received was completed and based on the quality of the tenders and the available budget, Limerick City and County Council proceeded with option 3 i.e. 120kg per bin.

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

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick if road calming measures can be installed at the junction of Willow Avenue and Woodbine Avenue, Caherdavin Heights, as this junction has been flagged as dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists by local residents.

REPLY: Active Travel will review road calming measures at the junction of Willow Avenue and Woodbine Avenue, Caherdavin Heights with Limerick City and County Council Travel & Transport Operations & Maintenance as part of NTA allocation for 2025.

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

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick if the Council has plans to improve footpaths on Caragh Avenue, Caragh Drive and Sheelin Road, Caherdavin, as part of their ongoing footpath improvement works in the Caherdavin area.

REPLY: Footpath improvements in the Caherdavin area will be prioritised based on need, resource allocations and funding from the Department of Transport, the NTA and other sources of funding such as General Municipal Allocation. The locations described at Caragh Avenue, Caragh Drive and Sheelin Road, Caherdavin may be considered if deemed a priority over other footpaths in need of refurbishment throughout the Metropolitan North area.

13. Question submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan

I will ask at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick for an update on the Mayor's Fund initiative that traditionally provides hampers from the Milk Market to Limerick families in need.

REPLY: The Mayor's Christmas Coal tradition, once a gesture of goodwill, involved distributing a bag of coal to the needy in Limerick City. This was an unadvertised gesture, offering assistance to the very needy of Limerick city.

Over time, due to environmental concerns, the tradition was adapted, and the coal was replaced by a food hamper, but the scheme remained unadvertised, restricted to Limerick City, and without any clear process for the Mayor to identify the most needy citizens, or for them to apply.

I understand that funds to purchase the coal, and more recently hampers sourced at the Milk Market, came mostly from donations by the business community in Limerick City given to the Mayor to operate the scheme.

Currently, funds allocated by the exchequer to the Directly Elected Mayor are subject to strict public sector spending rules. These rules prohibit implementing such a scheme without a fair and transparent process, as this would risk creating a perception of patronage, given that the Mayor is directly elected and the beneficiaries, who are also voters, might appear to receive benefits solely through the Mayor's arbitrary discretion. Furthermore, it would be deemed inappropriate for a directly elected Mayor to solicit donations from the business community to fund the distribution of hampers to a group of people selected based on unadvertised criteria, while excluding those residing in the County.

I nonetheless recognise the value of the tradition, and would be happy in my role as Mayor to lend non-financial support to an initiative to continue the tradition in some more appropriate form – perhaps led by the Príomh Chomhairleoir or the Chair of the Metropolitan District or any group of Councillors. If so, I would suggest that the Councillors wishing to maintain the tradition come up with rigorous and fair criteria for choosing the recipients and funding the scheme.

In any case, I would advise anyone in need of support during the festive period to contact Citizens Information or other charities supported by Council funds for sources of assistance.

NOTICES OF MOTION

14. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Kiely

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that we engage with the relevant Council Department and request that King John's Castle be lit up from the river side to enhance the vista.

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

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Kiely highlighted the benefits of additional lighting at the Castle, which would provide illumination and greatly enhance the area at nighttime.

REPLY: Specialist electrical design consultancy services have been procured and appointed by Discover Limerick DAC for the preparation of designs for the feature illumination of King John's Castle including its river facing elevation. Design proposals are currently being assessed for appropriateness. Funding will be required to support the installation of any approved illumination scheme.

15. 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 would write to An Garda Siochana to ask that every effort is made to ensure that Chestnut Close in Elm Park and indeed all estates in the area are free from illegally parked vehicles thus allowing service vehicles including bin trucks proper access to these estates.

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

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Pond highlighted the ongoing issues in the area, with emergency services, service vehicles and residents experiencing difficulties accessing the estates. Members welcomed the Motion and agreed that immediate action is required to rectify this for the residents living in these areas.

16. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor D. McSweeney

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that in light of the correspondence received from the Director General between Active Travel and the Fire Service and Building Control that a full review be carried out on all constructed and proposed Active Travel Schemes of the negative impact such schemes may have on emergency response times and a full report be furnished to the elected members of the Metropolitan District.

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

In moving the Motion, Councillor McSweeney outlined the need to take measures to ensure emergency services are not negatively impacted by Active Travel Schemes in Limerick. He requested that all constructed and planned Active Travel Schemes are reviewed, any issues identified are rectified and that the report on the review is shared with the Elected Members.

REPLY: The Active Travel Department carried out a tender process in 2022 to review projects and alignment with Emergency Responder.

Our Team has re-run this tender and awaits submission in January 2025, once this report is

completed and reviewed it will be shared with Elected Members.

Following on from discussions, it was agreed that a report on a scheme by scheme basis of Active Travel measures would be prepared for the January, or at the latest February meeting. This would be based on the submissions from the Fire Service, setting out how the schemes were modified or adjusted to address the concerns raised in the submissions received. This report would be circulated to all Members and a Briefing would be organised for the Members of the Metropolitan District.

17. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Hickey-O'Mara

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that this Council installs more public bins along the route of Cratloe Road, Sexton Street North and High Road, stretching from Thomond Park to the River Shannon.

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

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Hickey-O'Mara highlighted the need for additional bins on this important route, which had a lot of littering.

REPLY: There are currently ten Council serviced bins along the route from Moylish Roundabout to the Bishop's Palace on the eastern side of the River Shannon, including two adjacent to the Treaty Stone. In addition, there two privately serviced bins at two shops along this route and TUS service another bin at their entrance. Some bins are prone to being filled with domestic waste or may have domestic waste left beside them, these are being monitored and litter bins may be removed if they are resulting in increased litter in a particular location.

Between Thomond Park and the pedestrian crossing adjacent to the Treaty Veterinary Clinic there is a significant distance between Council litter bins. To address this the Cleansing Section will install an additional bin at the De Valera Park Bus Stop which is adjacent to the new TFI cycle station.

Members supported the Motion and queried if the bin outside the Spar Shop on Henry Street, which had been removed, could be replaced.

In response, Senior Executive Engineers, Roads, Traffic and Cleansing, outlined that the bin on Henry Street was removed due to the volume of domestic waste left around the bin. He agreed to review the area again and re-instate the bin if required.

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

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that Planning Enforcement ensure that every enforcement complaint is acknowledged and responded to within 14 days in the Metropolitan area.

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

In proposing the Motion, Councillor O'Donovan stated that responses to complaints needed to be issued as quickly as possible, particularly for those living close to construction sites.

REPLY: All complaints received by the Planning Enforcement Team are acknowledged as soon as possible, and generally within a number of days after receipt.

Thereafter, the complaint is received and investigated, and in accordance with the provisions of Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) the Planning Authority seeks to determine appropriate action within a 6 week period.

The Planning Enforcement Team is a small team and deals with a large number, and wide variety of complex cases. It would not be possible to acknowledge, investigate and respond to complaints within a 14 day period.

19. Correspondence

Correspondence was noted and taken as read.

This concluded the Meeting.

Signed: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

Dated: _____