

**To: The Mayor, Príomh Chomhairleoir and Each Member of Limerick City and County Council**

**20th March 2025**

**Chairperson's Report of the Travel & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee Meeting  
of 19<sup>th</sup> February 2025.**

**A Chomhairleoir, a chara,**

A blended meeting of the above Strategic Policy Committee took place on 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2025. The following is a summary of the business transacted at the meeting.

**Item 1: Minutes:**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024 were proposed by Cllr. E. O'Donovan and seconded by Cllr. John O'Donoghue and adopted.

**Item 2: Presentation: Community Hedge cutting Scheme – John Gannon, S.E.**

Mr. Gannon delivered a presentation outlining the Community Hedge cutting scheme and how it will be administered. The application is currently in draft form with €50,000 revenue budget secured for 2025.

The members thanked Mr. Gannon and the Chair opened the floor to Questions –

In response to queries, Mr. Gannon added the following: -

- The District office Engineers will carry out the process including inspections
- The aim of the Grant Scheme is to encourage people to be responsible for their hedge cutting and to formulate a group together.
- Application process will remain open and will be on a first come basis with equal distribution throughout the county.
- The budget is an inaugural budget, and it is hoped to secure more funding in the future.
- The minimum application is 5km and does not have to be a continuous length of road.
- It is the responsibility of the community not the Council to ensure certification of a contractor.
- There will be a media campaign for the scheme.
- The SPC and elected members will be updated on the scheme in advance of next year's budget in November 2025.

It was proposed by Cllr. Eddie Ryan and seconded by Cllr. Jerome Scanlon that the Community Hedge Cutting Grant Scheme be recommended to the March Plenary Meeting of the Council and adopted.

Two Notice of Motions (a) & (b) were addressed as part of Item 2

**a) Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Kiely (referred from September Council Meeting)**

I will move at the next Meeting that this Local Authority examine the possibility of a Community Hedge Cutting Grant

**Reply:** Limerick City & County Council is proposing to introduce a Community Hedge Cutting Grant in Q2 of 2025 for application within the hedge cutting period between the 1st of September 2025 and 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

Limerick City & County Council intend to provide a grant up to a maximum of €50 per km of roadside hedge/overhanging trees to be cut with a minimum length of road network to be incorporated in any application of 5km.

**b) Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Pond (referred from September Council Meeting)**

I will move at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council would adopt a policy of cutting Hedges/Trees between the months of September to March that are a danger to all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles owners, thus preventing serious accidents from occurring on all our roads.

**Reply:** Landowners and occupiers of land are obliged to take all reasonable care to ensure that trees, ditches, hedges and other vegetation growing on their land are not or could not become a danger to people using or working on a public road. Examples of hazards might be dead or dying trees, ditches or hedges interfering with traffic, blocking footpaths, obscuring road signs or obscuring a view of the road ahead.

Limerick City & County Council is proposing to introduce a Community Hedge Cutting Scheme and grant which will be open to the public in Q2 of 2025 for application within the hedge cutting period between the 1st of September 2025 and 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

Limerick City & County Council intends to provide a grant up to a maximum of €50 per km of roadside hedge/overhanging trees to be cut with a minimum length of road network to be incorporated in any application of 5km

**Item 3: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. O'Donoghue (referred from Adare-Rathkeale September Municipal Meeting)**

I will move at the next meeting that a plan for verge trimming on a year-round basis be implemented by L.C.C.C on all roads under the control of the Local Authority.

The Notice of Motion was proposed by Cllr John O'Donoghue and seconded by Cllr. J Scanlon.

In proposing the motion Cllr. O'Donoghue highlighted areas around schools where weeds and vegetation hinder and make it difficult for pedestrians and cyclists. The cutting should start earlier as it is too late when vegetation is well established.

**Reply:** Landowners and occupiers of land are obliged to take all reasonable care to ensure that trees, ditches, hedges and other vegetation growing on their land are not or could not become a danger to people using or working on a public road. Examples of hazards might be dead or dying trees, ditches or hedges interfering with traffic, blocking footpaths, obscuring road signs or obscuring a view of the road ahead. The maintenance of verges or margins on regional and local roads is the responsibility of the local authority.

Works on regional and local roads are funded by local authorities' own resources and State grants. Within the overall resources available to Limerick City & County Council, the Council carry out a selection and prioritisation of these works including the maintenance of road verges. The council limits the extent of verge cutting during the months of March to August in order to protect the environment and biodiversity. Any verge cutting is carried out for road safety reasons.

Limerick City & County Council's has the following priorities for verge trimming/hedge cutting:

- All national routes.
- Where safety issues are identified at
  1. Approaches to towns and villages on regional and local roads,
  2. Strategic routes linking towns and villages.
  3. Bus routes and important school bus routes.
  4. Roads being strengthened/surface dressed on the roadworks programme.

Cllr. J. O'Donoghue advised he understood the process and accepted the response.

**Item 4: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor P. Doyle (referred from September Metro Meeting)**

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that free parking for one hour be allowed for cars on street parking currently designated as loading bays from 14.00 PM to 18.00 PM Monday to Friday on a trial basis for three months. The objective of this measure is to encourage shoppers into Limerick City and increase footfall in William Street and Cruises Street and surrounding areas. The only cost to this measure is amending signage on the poles with appropriate stickers.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. P. Doyle and seconded by Cllr. T. Ruddle.

**Reply:** Most drivers are likely to opt for free parking in loading bays, which could force commercial vehicles to double park and could have significant impact on businesses' ability to get deliveries. The Transport Strategy team is working on installing sensors in loading bays to help commercial drivers locate and book a bay to make it easier to facilitate deliveries. The City Transport Plan is currently underway and is incorporating a Delivery Strategy and this Notice of Motion will be considered as part of that.

Cllr. P Doyle accepted the response and proposed to remove the word 'free' from the motion and submit to Mr. H McGrath for discussion, as part of the development of the Limerick City Transport Plan.

**Item 5: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Leddin (referred from October Metro Meeting)**

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that this Council amend our traffic calming policy to allow the delivery of traffic calming measures where an elected member provides the funding, and the necessary petition is signed and submitted by residents.

In proposing Cllr. Leddin's motion, Cllr. Secas stated that the petition signed by a local community needs to change. She fully supports the motion adding that we need to be proactive and act more efficiently in support of communities, without bureaucracy.

It was proposed by Cllr. Leddin and seconded by Cllr. Secas to amend the policy.

**Reply:** Limerick City & County Council approved an updated Traffic Calming policy in April 2024. A core principle of the updated policy is that each location is assessed using a marking system to ensure a consistent approach that includes all relevant factors to determine what measure if any is justified. The justification for and type of traffic calming measure to be provided must be considered and appraised by the operational team following a stepped approach before ultimately considering physical measures.

The appraisal system requires approval from the Senior Engineer of the Roads, Traffic and Cleansing Department (or their delegate) to approve the installation of traffic calming features.

Where an elected member believes that a measure is needed, they are advised to consult with the relevant district engineer for advice on likely compliance and to ensure that any further assessment of measures can be justified and not wasteful.

Mr. Hugh McGrath invited Cllr. Leddin and Cllr. Secas to meet with him and Mr. J Gannon for further discussions. Cllr. Leddin welcomed the response and the proposal to advance discussion.

**Item 6: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor P. Doyle (referred from October Metro Meeting)**

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that Limerick City and County Council would present to city centre retailers at no cost parking ticket books in January 2025 provided the retailers have paid their 2024 rates in full. I would suggest large retailers who pay more than €20K in rates receive a 100 book of tickets and all other retailers 25 books of tickets to distribute free parking tickets to their customers in Limerick City centre. A provision for such a scheme should also be included in the Councils 2025 Budget process.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. P. Doyle and seconded by Cllr. J. O'Donoghue

In proposing the motion Cllr. Doyle highlighted the closures of retailer units in the city in recent times and added that people need to be encouraged to shop in the city.

**Reply:** Budgetary provision was not made in the 2025 Budget to fund this proposed scheme. However, Limerick City and County Council will continue to support city centre retailers with supports approved in the Council's Annual Budget and other supports through the Local Enterprise Office. These supports include but are not limited to the following:

- Small & Medium Business Support Scheme which provides a grant payment of 13.5% of 2025 Rates (subject to a maximum limit of €1,500) for small businesses with a total commercial rate bill of less than €30,000.
- The Councils marketing department will work with stakeholders to assist with marketing and promotion of events.
- Continue to work with city centre business on programme of events to encourage footfall.
- Continue to provide social media platform for business to promote their goods.

Specific budgetary provision for this and other SME schemes can also be considered as part of the Statutory Budget 2026 process.

Cllr. Doyle welcomed the response and suggested that the request is for a small low-cost scheme. Cllr. Ruddle supported the motion.

Mr. Kennedy added that the item can be referred to the Limerick City Centre Taskforce group (chaired by Cllr. Maria O'Donoghue) for consideration. Cllr. Doyle will pass on as an item of interest to the Limerick City taskforce Goup for consideration.

**Item 7: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor E. Secas (referred from October Metro Meeting)**

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that the Mayor and the Director General liaise with UL and An Garda Síochána, to set up and chair a taskforce to address car parking problems in residential areas around the University of Limerick.

In proposing the motion, Cllr Secas stated that children have to use road to walk as cars parked on footpaths and elderly people are frightened to walk, a taskforce needs to be set up.

The notice of Motion was proposed by Cllr. Secas and seconded by Cllr. Hartigan

**Reply:** The University of Limerick (UL) community liaison group, which includes representatives from Limerick City and County Council (LCCC), An Garda Síochána (AGS), UL, and local residents, is actively seeking solutions to the ongoing parking issues. Despite the LCCC Traffic Warden issuing tickets, the problem persists.

Previously, LCCC and AGS led the "Think Before You Park" campaign, with AGS patrolling the areas last year. The parking problems are largely due to the high number of properties rented to multiple residents. While private student accommodations have started charging for parking permits, the public roads have limited capacity, and the demand for parking remains high.

LCCC cannot target students specifically; all illegally parked vehicles are subject to enforcement when the Traffic Warden patrols residential areas.

As this item was not discussed at the October Metro meeting, Mr. Kennedy advised that the motion can be referred to the next Metropolitan meeting. Cllr. Secas welcomed the proposal.

The members agreed to refer this Notice of Motion to the March Metropolitan meeting

**Item 8: Question submitted by Councillor E. Secas (referred from September Council Meeting)**

I will ask at the next Meeting if Limerick City and County Council will introduce in its forthcoming budget a Community Hedge Cutting Grant Scheme to assist communities, groups of local residents and landowners with the cutting of dangerous overhanging hedges/tree branches along public roads, similar to the schemes provided by Clare/Leitrim/Cork County Councils.

A written response to question was circulated to all members as follows -

Limerick City & County Council is proposing to introduce a Community Hedge Cutting Grant in Q2 of 2025 for application within the hedge cutting period between the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025 and 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

Limerick City & County Council intend to provide a grant up to a maximum of €50 per km of roadside hedge/overhanging trees to be cut with a minimum length of road network to be incorporated in any application of 5km.

**Item 9: Update on provision of salt to Resident's Associations during extreme weather conditions**

With the proposal from the Chair, this item was deferred to the next SPC meeting

**Item 10: Update on Bus Connects programme.**

Mr. Hugh McGrath delivered an update on the Bus Connects Programme as part of the draft Traffic Management plan for Limerick city outlining the following -

- Park & Ride sites at terminus of Bus routes at Raheen, Mackey and Coonagh being advanced through planning and land acquisition state.
- Bus Stop review with the NTA well advanced for implementation of improvements over 2025 & 2026 with detail design now underway
- Bus Priority options & Limerick City Centre Transport Plan currently at Option (stage 4) identification & Development stage
- Improved services as set out under the Network Redesign with the 70% improvement in levels of service expected to be delivered by 2027.

Members thanked Mr. McGrath for the update and requested that an invitation be extended to (Bus Connects Team, NTA) to provide an update on Bus Connects Limerick. Mr. McGrath will extend an invitation and revert to members.

In the interim, Mr. McGrath advised members to direct queries regarding the existing bus services to the NTA and the Transport Strategy Team.

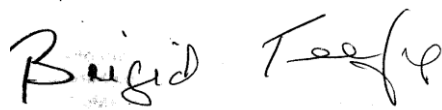


**Recommendation from Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee:**

- That, the Draft Community Hedge Cutting Grant Scheme be presented to the Full Council Meeting on the 31st of March 2025 for adoption.  
(Report enclosed)

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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**Brigid Teefy**

**Chairperson of the Travel & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee**