



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Limerick City and County Council's Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee held on 8th April 2025 at 3:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Dooradoyle and ONLINE by MS Teams Video Conference.

Members Present: Cllrs. Teefy (Chair), Butler, Conway, Doyle, Kilcoyne, Gavan, Hartigan, O'Donoghue, O'Donovan, E. Ryan, M. Ryan, T. Ruddle, Teskey.
Mrs. M. Browne, Mr. F. Flaherty, Mr. S. Golden, Mr. D. O'Neill, Mr. P. Ruttle, Mr. D. Tobin.

Officials Present: Mr. H. McGrath, Ms. A. Leahy, Mr. D. Slavin, Mr. J. Cregan, Mr. J. Gannon, Ms. K. McDonnell, Ms. M. Corrigan, Ms. M. Fitzgerald, Ms. N. McGarry, Mr. R. Gorey, Mr. S. McGlynn, Ms. S. Kennedy, Ms. T. Flanagan, Mr. T. Hayes, Mr. T. Goodwin.

Item 1: Minutes:

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee held on the 19th of February 2025 were proposed by Cllr. E. O'Donovan and seconded by Cllr. E. Ryan and adopted.

Mr. F. Flaherty requested that deferred Item 9 on the Agenda of the February meeting (Update on provision of salt to Resident's Associations during extreme weather conditions) remains on the agenda for subsequent SPC meetings.

Item 2: Notice of Motion submitted by Farron Flaherty, Dan O'Neill & Seán Golden, (Limerick Cycling Campaign, ICTU/SIPTU and Limerick Chamber) –

Enhancement of Bus Services in Raheen and Mungret Areas

We request that the Travel and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee of Limerick City and County Council take the following actions to prioritise the earliest possible delivery of proposed BusConnects routes 4a and 4b:

1. Facilitate a Stakeholder Meeting:

Organise a meeting involving all relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to: -

- Limerick City and County Council
- Bus Éireann
- National Transport Authority (NTA)

- Industrial Development Authority (IDA)
- Limerick Chamber
- ICTU/SIPTU
- Representative from the affected schools and their respective Parents' Associations.

2. Initiate Trial Services During Peak Times:

As an initial step, implement trial runs of the 4a and 4b routes during peak times from late August 2025. This trial will assess the feasibility, demand, and operational considerations of the new routes, providing valuable data for full-scale implementation for the full rollout of the BusConnects project.

In proposing the Motion, Mr. Flaherty stressed the importance of the early delivery of the BusConnects routes 4a and 4b. Improving connectivity to key areas such as the Raheen Business Park and educational institutions in Raheen and Mungret will promote sustainable transportation, reduce traffic congestion, support the local community & economy, and ensure equitable access to education for all children.

Mrs. M. Browne seconded the Notice of Motion

Ms. Karen Mc Donnell read the response as follows:

We acknowledge the importance of improving public transport connectivity in the area and appreciate your proactive engagement on this matter. In response to your request, we will facilitate a stakeholder meeting involving all relevant parties, including Limerick City and County Council, Bus Éireann, the National Transport Authority (NTA), the IDA, Limerick Chamber ICTU/SIPTU, and representatives from the affected schools and their Parents' Associations.

The NTA and Bus Éireann are responsible for delivering the redesign of the bus network in Limerick, we will therefore, formally advise the NTA of your request for a trial of the 4a and 4b services during peak times from late August 2025, in advance of full rollout of BusConnects.

We are currently actively working with the NTA to progress the implementation of new routes and associated infrastructure under the BusConnects programme and we are committed to ensuring that routes 4a and 4b are delivered at the earliest possible opportunity.

Cllr. O'Donovan stated that it will be 2027 before the roll out of Bus Connects and having a stakeholders meeting would be futile. The new mechanism with the Mayoral legislative Project Delivery Board Transport Sub-Group has not yet met, and it is essential that the sub-group is set up as soon as possible. She added that it is a much more powerful mechanism to go through the Mayor's office.

Cllr. Gavan concurred with Cllr. O'Donovan adding that in addition to Raheen, there are 3,000 people working in Castleconnell / Annacotty Business Park. She advised early discussion is important and BusConnects is a priority.

Cllr. Butler, chairperson of the Mungret Community College Board of Management agreed with the sentiments. He added that it is hugely disappointing how Limerick is treated nationally by the NTA and the traffic congestion in Raheen/Dooradoyle to the schools is very frustrating. He learned through the media about the proposal of a one-way system in the area and members should be advised about such proposals. This issue should have been also considered in the motion.

Mr. Flaherty acknowledged that local councillors should have been included in the motion.

Cllr. E. Ryan highlighted the infrequency of buses in the Mitchelstown Ballylanders area. Mr. Flaherty asked if routes could be implemented before 2027, especially as these are key areas of employment. In response Mr. McGrath advised that the Public Service Obligation (PSO) city bus service contract with the NTA was discussed at last SPC meeting and he suggested that members contact the NTA with any issues and copy LCCC.

In response to Cllr. O'Donovan, Mr. McGrath advised that the Mayor agrees with the urgency to remove the delays and is arranging a meeting of the Transport Sub-Group for Project Ireland Delivery Board. He will address again with the Mayor and is hopeful of favourable news.

In relation to Annacotty / Castleconnell, Mr. McGrath advised that Annacotty Business Park was not included in BusConnects initially. There have been extensive discussions with the NTA to facilitate Annacotty Business Park and review this issue of link to local services. It currently does not align with BusConnects however, it still deserves a service.

In response to Cllr. Butler, Mr. McGrath advised that Metro members were briefed on the Draft Transport Plan and will be briefed again prior to public display. He added that before the 4a and 4b are in place, issues such as buses, mechanics, drivers and funding need to be in place by NTA/Bus Eireann for each element. Services cannot be implemented until resources are in place. He advised that the Executive also finds it frustrating and welcomes any support from the committee, so any pressure from the members is crucial. Mr. McGrath agreed to facilitate a meeting as requested and invite the NTA to attend.

Mr. Tobin advised that NTA route planners were in Limerick last month. A new programme manager over Bus Connects was appointed recently and a new assistant Director, consequently a lot of things are lining up. It will be effective to have good, sustained pressure from the members.

Cllr. O'Donovan stated that the NTA attending a meeting the end of the year was not satisfactory as discussions have been ongoing for five years and councillors have already had Bus Connects consultation. The motion only refers to Raheen & Mungret, however, there is also poor bus services to Castletroy, and we need to be fair-minded. She queried the three schools referred

in the motion and Ms. McDonnell confirmed that there are 2 primary schools and one secondary school.

Cllr. M. Ryan concurred with Cllr. O'Donovan adding that some members of this SPC were members at the last SPC and the committee should be stronger collectively. This city needs a frequent service and the message from this committee needs to go to the NTA, Bus Éireann & the TII, as it is not currently stacking up for 2027.

The Chair agreed that it is beyond urgent and suggested that rural services also be included on agenda for a subsequent meeting. Mr. McGrath agreed to follow up.

Item 3: Limerick City Centre Transport Plan Update – Mr. Hugh McGrath A/D.O.S:

Mr. McGrath confirmed that the Transport Plan comes out of the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Plan (LSMATs), and he will brief members as progress is made.

The Chair thanked Mr. McGrath for the detailed presentation and opened the floor to questions.

Cllr. Teefy highlighted that there is no mention of the Ballysimon area. Cllr. J. O'Donoghue stated the plan is very comprehensive and added that a lot has been spent on Active Travel projects over the last few years. However, maintenance is an issue as Cycle lanes are not being cleaned from debris and weeds.

Cllr. J. O'Donoghue asked how we breathe life into city centre as he is sceptical about the plan. There is a time and convenience factor. It is not convenient for a person living in Dromin Athlacca to come into city, find a place to park and pay for it or go to the Crescent shopping centre where there is free parking and travelling by bus is currently not an option.

Cllr. M. Ryan advised that while Park & Ride sites are welcome, they are too near the city centre i.e. Raheen, Mackey are too near traffic congestion. He added that a lot of money was put into cycle lanes into city centre and the low usage is a concern.

Cllr. O' Donovan asked if e-scooters are included in the data as they are used by a large number in the city centre. She also asked if the plan must go to Members for approval or to Dept. for funding and how does it fit in with all those separate plans going on. She added that the most important stakeholder in the city is the resident living in the city centre and the way to revive the city is consultation with the residents.

Cllr. O'Donovan added that she is in favour of the bus corridor on O'Connell Street, however when O'Connell Street was developed, Blue Badge parking was removed. More car sharing

schemes in the city are required and she highlighted illegal parking in disabled spaces and EV parking spaces in the city. She also suggested Bus shelters be at every bus stop and bus stop with green roofs should be rolled out.

In relation to Ballysimon, Mr. McGrath advised that Irish Rail is working on the NTA's behalf to determine the best location of the P&R at Ballysimon. The Ballysimon location on N24 aspires to have rail connectivity option and he met with Irish rail twice and their recommendation is due in a few weeks. He will revert to members with an update.

Cllr. Conway suggested a more rural presentation at the next meeting. He met with local link groups and has been told there is no funding for local link connections. Taxis have been depleted in the county as local link had put them out of business. People are trying to get into the city at night and taxi is usually the only option, but a lot of rural taxis are on contract, so not available at night. Day bus is taken by local link i.e. on school contracts etc.

Mr. Tobin stated that it is very important to get people in and out of the city. He added that good progress has been made and recognises the work of local authorities as there is an appetite to use alternative transport.

Mrs. Browne advised that she solely depends on buses and uses local link, and all local links are wheelchair accessible. The Chair suggested that local link be invited to attend next meeting.

Cllr. E. Ryan highlighted that there were six buses a day to and from Limerick to Galbally. The first year or two there was poor usage and now it has been pulled from a few locations. If people don't use the service, there is not much point in having it.

Cllr. F. Kilcoyne proposed more spaces for taxis in the city such as the bus lane outside Brown Thomas and the Chicken Hut could be turned into taxi rank for a few hours. The Ambulance depot opposite MW Regional hospital is moving to high rise car park for parking, and this could also be an option.

In response to Cllr. O'Donoghue, Mr. McGrath accepted that the bus service does not meet his current needs however, he advised that there is also access to several good quality private car parks in the city. In response to Cllr. Ryan, he added that Park & Ride needs to be connected to high frequency bus network. He can accept why it is perceived as congested locations however; he advised that congestion happens at specific times, and we need to look at start and finishing times. He is currently talking to businesses in relation to starting and finishing times for employees.

In response to questions, Mr. McGrath advised that there are acute stringent requirements around e-scooters, and more detail discussion is required. It is intended to launch a Pilot with the NTA on shared bike and e-scooters so we will be in control of how it is managed.

Regarding the approval of the Transport Plan, Councillors will be fully briefed prior to public display of the draft transport plan along with other stakeholders and added it is not a reserved function.

The main corridor through O'Connell Street is intended as a bus priority. Taxis can access the bus corridor and are a supporting part of sustainable transport. 24-hour bus service is embedded in bus connects network design on the high frequency route from UL to Raheen in addition to the 343 Local link.

Regarding the lack of disabled bays, Mr. McGrath advised that the Council is examining gaps. There are sensors on all disabled bays, so will be examining the reports to see if there are gaps. The intention is to liaise with groups and scope out. Limerick is currently putting in rapid EV chargers at over 12 sites in the county and can give updates on this project at future SPC Meetings.

In response to Cllr. Conway, Mr. McGrath advised that the ideal is for taxis to be working with local link, there are synergies there and it probably merits another discussion. He will revert with update on strategy.

Item 4: Presentation of the Active Travel Interactive Map – Toby Goodwin, Behavioural Scientist.

Mr. Toby Goodwin delivered a presentation on the Limerick Active Travel Interactive Map showing 145 km of cycle lanes between the city and county. He gave an update on the major Active Travel schemes - bus shelters, Safe Routes to Schools, footpaths towns and village schemes.

The members thanked Mr. Goodwin, and the Chair opened the floor to questions.

Cllr. O'Donovan stated the gaps shown were critical and clearly presented a barrier to usage. She added the public bike share scheme is not currently on the map and asked if there was any update on TFI bikes in Limerick. Cllr. Gavan added that TFI scheme could be extended as far as Castleconnell.

Mr. Goodwin advised that a cyclebility audit is being undertaken and information is currently being collated using an insta360 camera device to survey and identify challenges for potential cyclists to make improvements. The usage of TFI has seen 2.5 times increase from 2022 to 2024. Ms. McDonnell confirmed that TFI bikes is to be retendered this year, and more information will be available later in the year.

Mr. Tobin complimented the project adding that it is testament to the work over the last 5 years. He referred to the number of deaths on roads and hopes the Dept. of Transport will maintain the current funding levels. He asked if it was possible for the Council to work with the RSA to show increased dangers to members of the public and asked if the RSA's data could be shared in order to prioritise.

Mr. Goodwin confirmed that RSA does not currently share this data directly with local authorities. The RSA is due to share the data with the NTA, who will then share with LCCC. Once attained it will be pulled into the audit to show priorities.

On a separate matter, Mr. Ruttle highlighted that the Foynes to Limerick project has been criticised regarding the CPO process. He proposed that a representative from the MWNRDO be invited to a subsequent SPC Meeting regarding a process analysis. Cllr. Teskey fully supported Mr. Ruttle.

Mr. McGrath advised that the SPC is a policy and strategy driven committee only and advised that members can submit a motion to the SPC for consideration. He also added that Induction training is to be delivered by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to all members of Local Authority SPC's on the 17th of April next.

The Chair thanked all for their attendance and contribution and advised that the next meeting is Tuesday, the 10th of June 2025. This concluded the business of the meeting.