

**Community, Leisure, Arts, Heritage and Culture Strategic Policy Committee Hybrid Meeting  
11/02/2026**

A meeting of the Community, Leisure, Arts, Heritage and Culture Strategic Policy Committee (CLAHC SPC) was held on Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at 3pm in the Council Chamber Dooradoyle and Online via Microsoft Teams.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**Chairperson:**

Cllr. Fergus Kilcoyne  
Cllr. Azad Talukder  
Cllr. Brigid Teefy  
Cllr. Catherine Slattery  
Cllr. Dan McSweeney  
Cllr. Daniel Butler  
Cllr. Gregory Conway  
Cllr. John Sheahan  
Cllr. Michael Collins  
Cllr. Olivia O'Sullivan  
Cllr. Pdraigh Reale  
Cllr. P.J. Carey  
Cllr. Sarah Beasley  
Cllr. Shane Hickey O'Mara  
Cllr. Tommy Hartigan  
Mr. Pdraig Lohan

**APOLOGIES:**

Cllr. Martin Ryan  
Mr. Sean Lenihan, Director of Service

**NOT PRESENT:**

Mr. Khurram Iqbal  
Ms. Louise Crowley  
Mr. Pete Moles  
Mr. Randal Hodgkinson  
Ms. Marion Hurley  
Mr. John Ward

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr. Brian McCarthy, Director of Service  
Ms. Karen Burke, Town Regeneration Officer  
Ms. Anne Rizzo, Senior Executive Officer  
Ms. Catherine Bowes-Kelly, Age Friendly Programme Manager  
Mr. Damien Brady, City & County Librarian  
Ms. Fiona Ismail, Senior Executive Librarian  
Ms. Fiona McCormack, Senior Executive Officer  
Ms. Eileen Gleeson, Staff Officer  
Mr. Phelim Macken, Limerick Sport Partnership  
Mr. Mark O'Connell, Director of Repucon Consulting  
Mr. Thomas O'Neill, Heritage Officer  
Mr. Paul Moroney, Community Safety Co-Ordinator  
Ms. Joanna O'Donoghue, Staff Officer  
Ms. Aisling Coughlan, Assistant Staff Officer

### **Declaration of Interest:**

The Meetings Administrator stated that, in line with Part 15 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended, and the Standing Order, all present members should notify the Cathaoirleach of any declaration of interest in any item due for discussion at the Meeting. No such interests were declared.

### **Item 1: Minutes:**

The Minutes of the Community, Leisure, Arts, Heritage and Culture Strategic Policy Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025 were proposed by Cllr. P. Reale and seconded by Cllr. B. Teefy and adopted.

### **Item2: Matters Arising**

#### **Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Beasley (to be referred to the Community, Leisure, Arts, Heritage and Culture Strategic Policy Committee)**

Councillor S. Beasley presented a Notice of Motion requesting that Limerick City and County Council promote the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower initiative across Limerick City and County. The initiative uses a discreet sunflower symbol (e.g., lanyard, pin, card) to indicate that a person has a non-visible disability and may require additional time, assistance, or understanding. The Motion outlined the purpose of the scheme, its global recognition, and guidance on how staff and the public should respond when they see the symbol.

Councillor S. Beasley asked for the SPC to recommend that Corporate Services will issue an email to all Limerick City and County Council staff informing them about the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Project and advising staff to be attentive to individuals presenting with a Sunflower lanyard, pin, or identification card. This was proposed by Cllr. S. Hickey O'Mara and seconded by Cllr. G. Conway.

### **Item 3: Review of Limerick Library Development Plan 2021-2025 People, Place, Platform**

The Members received a comprehensive update from the City & County Librarian, Damien Brady on the progress of the Limerick Libraries Development Plan *People–Place–Platform 2021–2025*. The presentation outlined significant achievements across all three strategic themes. Under People, members were informed of the wide range of community-focused initiatives delivered during the lifetime of the plan. These included extensive outreach programmes, strengthened partnerships with local and national organisations, and an expansion of literacy and reading initiatives for all ages. Notable highlights included the success of the Healthy Ireland at Your Library programme, the Europe Direct Information Centre designation, and large-scale participation in national literacy campaigns such as Summer Stars, Ireland Reads and the Children's Book Festival. The service also

advanced supports for migrants, individuals with additional needs, older people, and early learning centres, while continuing to prioritise digital inclusion and lifelong learning opportunities. Under Place, the Librarian reported on major infrastructural developments, including the completion of the upgraded Newcastle West Library, ongoing maintenance and refurbishment across the branch network, and progress on plans for the new Central Library at Opera Square. An options study for a future library in Castletroy has identified a preferred site and work also continues on enhancing facilities in Askeaton. Investment in mobile and delivery vehicles ensures continuity of frontline services, and the rollout of the *My Open Library* service in Cappamore has proven highly successful. The Platform theme focused on strengthening digital and technological capacity. Key developments included the enhancement of the library website, expansion of social media channels, significant growth in the use of e-books, e-audiobooks and online resources, and the introduction of new digital services such as movie and music streaming platforms. The rollout of the national library management system, Spydus, was highlighted as a major milestone, giving users access to over 17 million items nationally. Service indicators presented showed continued growth in visits, loans, online engagement, and event participation. The Librarian concluded by acknowledging the commitment and professionalism of staff across all branches and departments in delivering the ambitions of the plan.

Members acknowledged the excellent work carried out by all library staff, congratulated them on their achievements, and emphasised the outstanding service that libraries continue to provide to the people of Limerick across both city and county.

**Cllr. D. McSweeney** requested an update on the funding allocation for the new Central Library at Opera Square, as well as the current status of the tender process

The City & County Librarian explained that the general grant system for small to medium libraries amounts to only €3 million. However, the Department has taken a different approach for the three major cities—Dublin, Cork, and Limerick—by providing enhanced levels of support. Significant funding has already been allocated to Dublin and Cork, and there is therefore an expectation that Limerick will receive similar support.

Regarding the tender, Members were advised that although the tender process has been completed, a contractor has not yet been appointed due to the absence of secured funding. Mr. Brady confirmed that the project is shovel-ready and can proceed immediately once funding is in place.

#### **Item 4: Consideration of proposed Draft Local Sports Plan (Action Plan)**

Fiona McCormack, Senior Executive Officer and Mark O'Connell, Director of Repucon Consulting presented the Draft Limerick Local Sports Plan, which sets out a strategic framework to increase participation in sport and physical activity across Limerick. The plan is grounded in the principles of partnership, inclusion, sustainability, innovation and evidence-based decision making, with a vision of supporting residents of all ages and abilities to be active. Members were briefed on the proposed

strategic themes, which include empowering communities to become more active, enhancing the county's sports and recreational facilities, and strengthening communication and collaboration among stakeholders. Key priorities outlined in the draft plan focus on increasing participation levels, particularly in disadvantaged areas and among minority groups, supporting clubs and volunteers, improving access to indoor and outdoor facilities, and maximising opportunities linked to the 2027 Ryder Cup legacy. Ms McCormack noted the next steps, including the ongoing SEA/AA screening, the upcoming public consultation in March, and the intention to bring the plan forward to the Management Board and subsequently to the May meeting of Limerick City and County Council for noting.

**Cllr. D. McSweeney** expressed his disappointment at receiving the plan so late for review. He further conveyed his dissatisfaction with the inclusion of individual projects in the plan, noting that it should instead focus on overarching goals applicable to all communities rather than a selected few. He asked why this approach had been taken.

Director of Service, Brian McCarthy, outlined the guidance issued by central government regarding the preparation of the Local Sports Plan. Members were advised that all sport-related plans must be incorporated into the document, including objectives set out in the Mayoral Plan; as such, these cannot be altered or removed. The Director noted the comments raised and confirmed that the team would review whether the positioning of these objectives within the document should be adjusted.

#### **Item 5: Update on Local Community Safety Partnerships Membership**

Paul Moroney, Community Safety Co-Ordinator, updated members on the establishment and operation of the Limerick Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP), which replaces the former Joint Policing Committee in line with the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024. It was noted that LCSPs were formally established on 30 June 2025, with Limerick's partnership comprising up to 30 members representing elected officials, public services and community organisations. The presentation outlined the LCSP's remit, including developing a community safety plan, enhancing local engagement and ensuring strong collaboration with the National Office for Community Safety. Members were informed of meeting requirements, governance structures and the role of subcommittees in supporting targeted thematic work. An update was also provided on the pilot Community Safety Wardens, whose presence aims to promote safety, visibility and positive community interactions. The session concluded by highlighting the importance of transparency, partnership and sustained funding in ensuring that the LCSP can deliver a community-led, responsive and effective approach to safety across Limerick.

Members welcomed the initiative but expressed concern that only seven Elected Members would be eligible to sit on the LCSP. They felt this number was insufficient and would not provide adequate geographical representation. Members suggested establishing special sub-groups—including one

for the city centre and youth—to allow for greater participation by Elected Members and to focus on specific areas and issues.

Members also requested a breakdown of the areas that the seven Elected Members will represent and asked that each municipal and metropolitan district be included. They further sought clarification on when the Partnership will be formally established.

The Community Safety Co-ordinator acknowledged Members' concerns that seven representatives may not be sufficient. However, he explained that this number was set by the Department and cannot be increased by any local authority. He further advised that sub-groups will be established as needed, depending on emerging priorities.

Mr. Moroney advised Members that he hopes all municipal and metropolitan districts will be represented and that gender balance will also be achieved. He emphasised, however, that the selection of the seven representatives is a reserved function of the Elected Members.

**Cllr. P. Reale** raised a query regarding the visibility of the Community Safety Wardens, particularly in relation to their work schedules. He also expressed concern that the Limerick Local Community Safety Partnership may become the only forum through which Elected Members engage with senior Gardaí, which could result in discussions being dominated solely by safety-related matters

The Community Safety Co-ordinator advised that the wardens have been active on the streets for the past two months. They work in pairs from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and cover the entire city centre, including the train station. Their patrol area spans between the two Garda stations at Roxboro and Henry Street. The wardens wear highly visible green uniforms and use an online reporting system to log any issues they encounter. Mr. Moroney added that he hopes, at a future date, to deliver a presentation during the Metropolitan District meeting outlining the wardens' achievements to date.

In relation to concerns that the LCSP may become the only forum for engagement with senior Gardaí, the Community Safety Co-ordinator clarified that there is no reason why the elected members can't request independent meetings between elected members and senior gardai, outside of the meetings with the LCSP.

**Chair Cllr. F Kilcoyne** asked for presentation to be shared with all the members.

**Director of Service, Brian McCarthy**, acknowledged Members' concerns regarding the number of Councillors represented on the LCSP. He noted, however, that there is national pressure to proceed with the selection, and it is likely that appointments will be made at the Full Council meeting in March. The Director also recognised the need for sub-groups but advised that these can only be formed once the Partnership itself has been formally established.

### **Item 6: Information on Framework for Emergency Management - Community Support Centres**

An update was provided by Anne Rizzo, Senior Executive Officer on the development of Community Support Centres (CSCs), an initiative arising from recent severe weather emergencies that highlighted the need for local facilities where affected communities can access essential supports such as food, mobile phone charging, hygiene facilities, internet access and reliable public information. The success of community-led response hubs during events such as Storm Éowyn demonstrated the critical role of local organisations and volunteers, as well as the value of providing spaces where people can obtain practical assistance, information and emotional support.

In response, the Government has approved funding for mobile generators for local authorities, with Limerick City and County Council allocated four units and additional funding for electrical upgrades in centres designated to operate as CSCs. The Community Development team has begun identifying suitable locations, issuing a survey to community groups and GAA clubs. Nine responses have been received to date from locations across the city and county, though a gap has been identified in the southeast, where options such as Bruff, Kilmallock, Ballylanders and Galbally are being explored. The next step is to have an electrical contractor assess the nine responding sites for suitability and associated upgrade costs. The Department has indicated it may consider funding additional centres based on submissions from local authorities. Delivery of generators is expected in the coming months.

Members acknowledged the importance of establishing such centres but stressed that additional provision is particularly needed in the east of the county.

**The Chair, Cllr. F. Kilcoyne**, thanked the emergency services and Council staff for their significant efforts during the recent severe weather conditions.

**Cllr. C. Slattery** welcomed the initiative but expressed concern that no centres had been identified in East Limerick. She noted that she had submitted a local football club for consideration and requested an update on its status.

The Senior Executive Officer advised that this is the initial phase of the project and that the Council is actively seeking to identify further suitable sites in south east Limerick. Ms Rizzo explained that the requirements for these centres are extensive, and to date only nine surveyed locations have met all criteria. It is hoped that, over time, every town and village in Limerick will be equipped with the necessary generators.

**Cllr. D. McSweeney** asked to repeat the list of the nine centres selected to date and enquired whether these were GAA clubs or community centres.



The Senior Executive Officer listed the centres as follows: St. Munchin's, Garryowen, and Mungret St. Paul's GAA in the city; and Foynes, Patrickswell, Cappamore, Ballybricken/Bohermore, Newcastle West, and Abbeyfeale. Ms. Rizzo confirmed that the selected locations are a mix of both GAA clubs and community centres.

Cllr. P. Reale asked whether the survey issued to groups had included a question regarding ownership or lease agreements. He stressed that centres should ideally have ownership or long-term leases to avoid the need for repeated selection processes in future years.

The Senior Executive Officer advised that the survey did not include a question on ownership or lease arrangements. To illustrate the level of requirements involved in identifying a suitable centre, Ms Rizzo confirmed that the survey will be circulated to Members for their information.

#### **Item 7: Strategic Policy Committee work plan development**

The Meeting Administrator informed members that, in line with the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) review completed in 2023, each SPC is required to have a work plan. The work plan workshop is organised on the 26<sup>th</sup> February and members were asked to consider items they would like to include in the plan. A follow-up email will issue.

#### **Item 8: Date of next meeting**

The Chairperson Cllr F. Kilcoyne thanked all for the presentations made. The next meeting of the Community, Leisure, Arts, Heritage and Culture SPC will take place on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2026 in Council Chamber, Dooradoyle at 3pm and online.

Meeting ended at 4.45 pm

Minutes Proposed By: CLLR D. MCSWEENEY

Minutes Seconded By: CLLR G. CONWAY

Minutes Signed by Chair:  Date: 15/04/26

