

LIMERICK CITY COUNCIL

A Monthly Meeting of Limerick City Council was held in the Council Chamber, City Hall, on Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2013 at 4.00 p.m.

The following were in attendance :

**IN THE CHAIR :** Cllr. G. McLoughlin, Mayor

**COUNCILLORS :** M. Byrne, G. Fahy, J. Gilligan, M. Hourigan, C. Hurley, P. Kennedy, J. Leddin, K. Leddin, J. Long, D. McCarthy, O. McLoughlin, K. O'Hanlon, M. Quinlivan, D. Scully and T. Shortt

**STAFF :** Mr. C. Murray, City and County Manager  
Ms. C. Curley, Director of Service  
Mr. T. Enright, Director of Service  
Ms. J. Cotter-Coughlan, Director of Service  
Mr. P. Crowe, Director of Service  
Mr. O. O'Loughlin, Director of Service  
Mr. K. Lehane, Director of Service  
Mr. P. Murnane, Acting Head of Finance  
Mr. K. Reeves, Senior Executive Planner  
Mr. M. Connolly, Accountant  
Mr. S. O'Connor, Social Worker  
Mr. P. Foley, Senior Executive Officer  
Mr. E. Griffin, Senior Executive Officer  
Ms. E. Creamer, Staff Officer

**APOLOGIES :** Cllr. K. Kiely

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Prior to the business proper of the meeting, His Worship the Mayor, Cllr. G. McLoughlin proposed a vote of sympathy to the following on their recent bereavements :

- Mr. Johnny Ryan, Transportation and Infrastructure Department, on the death of his sister, Madeline;
- Mr. Liam Cantillon, Environment Department, on the death of his mother, Mary;
- Ms. Adelaide O'Brien, Fire Station, on the death of her brother, Noel;

All Members wished to be associated with the votes of sympathy.

The Manager, on his own behalf and on behalf of the staff, also wished to be associated with the votes of sympathy.

Cllr. K. Leddin proposed a vote of congratulations to the Irish Ladies Rugby Team on winning the Grand Slam.

Cllr. O'Hanlon, supported by all Members, congratulated those involved in the organisation of the St. Patrick's Day Parade and the Band Parade.

Cllr. Shortt stressed the importance of having a creative and entertaining parade next year for City of Culture.

## **1. MINUTES**

On the proposition of Cllr. Gilligan, seconded by Cllr. Fahy, it was unanimously agreed :

“That the Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Limerick City Council held on 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2013, copies of which were circulated, be and the same are hereby confirmed”.

Cllr. McCarthy stated that he is recorded in the minutes as referring to the severity of the pruning of trees in O'Connell Avenue and pointed out that it was Cllr. Hourigan who made reference to this and not him and asked that the minutes be amended accordingly. Agreed.

## **2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS, JOINT SOCIAL POLICY AND HOUSING STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7TH MARCH, 2013.**

The Chairman's Report, Joint Social Policy and Housing Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2013, was noted.

Mr. Seamus O'Connor, Social Worker, then made a Presentation on the Mid West Regional Homelessness Action Plan.

Submitted the following Recommendations from the Joint Social Policy and Housing Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2013, which were adopted unanimously on the proposition of Cllr. Scully, seconded by Cllr. J. Leddin :

- (a) To adopt the Mid West Regional Homelessness Action Plan
- (b) That a joint meeting of the Joint Policing Committees be held with a view to agreeing an overall strategy to address anti social behaviour and that the Joint Policing Committee consider establishing a high level multi agency group to assist in the development of this strategy.
- (c) That SPC Meetings be held jointly, the Chairperson and location to be rotated between the city and county and that if specific items need to be addressed then separate SPC meetings to be held for that Authority.

Cllr. Long stressed the urgency of agreeing an overall strategy to address anti social behaviour and expressed concern at the anti social behaviour taking place in Ballinacurra Weston, in particular. He referred to the number of people who were evicted due to arrears which is much higher than those who were evicted for anti social behaviour adding that the Council should be evicting more people for anti social behaviour.

Cllr. Hourigan thanked Mr. O'Connor for his detailed presentation and asked if the number of homeless people in Limerick has increased and if the present services are adequate to deal with the numbers. People at risk should be dealt with as soon as possible. He stated that he has been informed that there is up to a four year waiting list for Disabled Persons Grants adding that this is not satisfactory as elderly people are the most vulnerable in our society and should be dealt with as speedily as possible. He asked for an update on Joint Housing Policy and enquired if Clare County Council is also involved. He asked what capital funding is available for house construction in 2013 and asked for details of the building programme for 2013.

Cllr. Gilligan congratulated Mr. O'Connor and his predecessors on the work they have done to date in relation to dealing with homelessness in the city adding that with people being in negative equity, loss of jobs etc., the number of homeless people will increase and he recognised the difficult task facing Mr. O'Connor and his colleagues.

His Worship the Mayor, Cllr. G. McLoughlin welcomed Mr. Bob Brew who is a councillor from Oregon, US, to the meeting.

Cllr. Scully pointed out that during his mayoralty a homeless person froze to death which was very sad at that time, since then a lot has been achieved in dealing with the problem, however, homelessness is getting worse. Sixty six people were not placed as per report, adding that the statistics are very high in Limerick at 11%. He stated that the broader issue of social housing can not be solved within the urban area which has 40% social housing. This figure is very high considering the normal recommended figure is 20%. He stressed the urgency of adopting a Joint Housing Strategy which will deal with all social mix of housing.

Cllr. O'Hanlon agreed that there are anti social behaviour issues throughout the whole city which need to be dealt with as soon as possible. However, he referred to the closure of Mary Street Garda Station and the ongoing reduction in the number of gardaí throughout the country making it very difficult to tackle anti social behaviour problems. He congratulated Seamus O'Connor and Rob Lowth on the ongoing progress they are making in dealing with homelessness which involves dealing with very difficult situations at times. The Council is a very caring Council and deals with a lot of people and issues who would otherwise end up on the streets. He referred to the fact that there are now nearly four thousand people on the housing waiting list in the city and enquired if the Council have any money to actually house any of these people as most money seem to be going into the regeneration areas. He agreed with Cllr. Hourigan that Disabled Persons Grants should be dealt with as fast as possible especially adding that it is unacceptable that people have to wait four years to have their application dealt with. He said clear information needs to be given to the public in relation to grants for windows and doors as presently, some people are not aware of the grant or apply for second grants. He asked for an update in relation to insulation grants.

Cllr. Quinlivan welcomed the Homelessness Action Plan and pointed out that any time he has brought people to the Homeless Centre they have always been dealt with in an efficient and sympathetic manner. He said the Government should also look at the Rental Allowance Scheme as a lot of landlords have not reduced rents and also enquired why some Council tenants have received bills for property tax.

Cllr. J. Leddin stated that Limerick city has been very fortunate in that there has been significant investments in relation to dealing with the issue of homelessness. He referred specifically to McGarry House which is a state of the art rehabilitation centre and the Government are also part funding Brother Russell House. He agreed with previous speakers that there is a serious housing problem in Limerick city which the new merged authority will have to look at.

His Worship the Mayor, Cllr. G. McLoughlin thanked Seamus O'Connor for his very detailed presentation and congratulated all those working in the Homeless Centre. He also congratulated Sinead Carey and Annette O'Corrall of the Novas Initiatives Street Outreach Programme who won September Persons of the Month for the excellent work and contribution they have made to the homeless. These individuals along with other volunteers take to the streets of the city each night handing out soup and sandwiches or a hot meal to those in need. For many the interaction with the soup run volunteers is the only human contact the service users have throughout their day.

In reply to the Members queries, Seamus O'Connor confirmed that there has been an increase in the number of homeless people in Limerick, particularly young homeless people and an increase in the number at risk is also expected, particularly people with mortgage arrears and those who have been badly affected by the recession. He confirmed that the majority of evictions in the private sector are for rent arrears, very few people who have been evicted for anti social behaviour come to the homeless centre. He pointed out that a lot of homeless people who are offered emergency accommodation refuse it as they do not want to move from rural to city or vice versa. He informed Cllr. Hourigan that further breakdown of statistics can be supplied to him, if required. He said the services and resources in the city are good and can meet the demand.

Cllr. Shortt stated that the planning permission granted to Thomond House for eighteen housing units and a hostel is due to expire shortly and he asked the Director of Service to secure funding for same so that the proposal can go ahead.

The Director of Service (Housing and Regeneration) stated that there are a number of policy areas that have to be revisited which will be discussed between now and the end of the year and will be brought to the respective Councils. He informed Members that Disabled Persons Grants and all similar assistance programmes are dependent on monies from Government. Large numbers of applications are received each year and the Council is being very active in processing these applications as fast as possible. The Council is also looking at energy efficiency schemes and other similar schemes but pointed out that there are other schemes outside the local authority which can be accessed by people. He confirmed that the City and County Councils did not release any information to the Revenue Commissioners in relation to the Property Tax.

### **3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS, TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11TH MARCH, 2013**

The Chairman's Report, Transportation and Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2013, was noted.

Submitted the following Recommendations from the Transportation and Infrastructure Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2013, which were adopted unanimously on the proposition of Cllr. Fahy, seconded by Cllr. Byrne :

- (a) 'That Limerick City Council source funding to design and install lights to regulate traffic and provide a safe environment for pedestrians crossing at the intersection of Thomond Bridge with Clancy Strand and the High Road, Thomondgate'.

The Director of Service undertook to carry out a technical examination of the junction and the area in general with a view to improving pedestrian safety.

- (b) 'That Limerick City Council consider holding a joint meeting with the Transport and Water Services SPC of Limerick County Council'.

The Director of Service supported this proposal, subject to the agreement of the Transport and Water Services SPC of Limerick County Council also, at a time and date to be determined, convenient to the elected members of both Councils.

Cllr. O'Hanlon referred to the Irish Water Update presentation made at the SPC Meeting and stated that the report was inadequate and that the same presentation should have been made at this meeting. He requested a copy of the presentation be circulated to all members.

Cllr. Long thanked His Worship the Mayor, Cllr. G. McLoughlin for convening a meeting with Bus Eireann and commended Cllr. Fahy on his role as Chairman of the SPC. He also thanked the local radio station for carrying the public's viewpoints in relation to the changed bus routes. He again voiced his concern that refuse collection trucks are operating during peak traffic times bringing traffic to a standstill and asked that this matter be looked at to ensure that they only operate outside peak traffic times.

Cllr. Quinlivan welcomed the decision by Bus Eireann that from 8<sup>th</sup> April the Ballynanty Bus will run along Edward Street. He commended the staff of Bus Eireann for their friendly and pro active approach but pointed out that it is the National Transport Authority who make the decisions regarding bus routes. He expressed his dissatisfaction that the Ballynanty bus now only runs every hour instead of every half hour. He supported the recommendation regarding installing lights at intersection of Thomond Bridge with Clancy Strand and the High Road, Thomondgate, as it is very difficult for pedestrians to cross the road at this intersection. He stated that something needs to be done about speeding on the Quarry Road, there are a lot of young children in this area and speed ramps are not sufficient to stop the speeding.

Cllr. Gilligan also welcomed the Irish Water update. He asked that consideration be given to installing traffic lights at the end of the Island Road.

Cllr. Hourigan enquired when the lights on Sarsfield Bridge will be reinstated. He agreed with Cllr. Long regarding refuse collection trucks and stated that a Delivery Strategy needs to be agreed. He asked for an update regarding sewage works on the Meelick Road. He also agreed with Cllr. Quinlivan regarding speeding on the Quarry Road as it has become a 'rat run'. He stated that in 2006 anti social behaviour was being experienced in Rockspring Gardens and following an oral hearing a number of actions were taken. He asked the City Council and The Gardaí to look at this matter again as anti social behaviour has been taking place there again recently.

Cllr. Shortt congratulated all concerned on the replacement of lead pipes and enquired if more of this work will be carried out throughout the city. He too welcomed the proposal for traffic lights at the intersection of Thomond Bridge with Clancy Strand. He informed Cllr. Hourigan that there is minimal anti social behaviour taking place in Rockspring Gardens and stated that long standing residents there want to maintain the access onto Clancy Strand as pedestrian access is valued by a large number of residents there. The decision should stand and should not be challenged in relation to this matter. Other solutions to the low level anti social behaviour should be looked at.

Cllr. Hurley stated that the speed limit on Condell Road is not acceptable as a lot of people are avoiding the road because of this and asked that increasing the speed limit there be examined. He supported the recommendation for pedestrian lights at Thomond Bridge. He too enquired when the lights will be reinstated on Sarsfield Bridge as it is very dark and dangerous at present. He referred

to arrows on the road in High Street directing traffic into a car park which he raised before and asked that it be looked at again.

In reply, the Director of Service (Travel and Transportation) agreed to look at increasing the speed limit on Condell Road from 50km per hour and also agreed to look at solutions to resolve speeding on the Quarry Road. He informed Cllr. Gilligan that Rory McDermott is the City Council's Road Safety Officer. He stated that there was a delay in the refurbishment of the lights on Sarsfield Bridge, however, confirmed that they will be reinstated in the coming weeks. He referred to the sewerage scheme for the Cratloe Road and said this was part of the Coonagh to Knockalisheen Road Scheme and that the allocation will only cover the acquisition of land. He agreed to look at the Rockspring Gardens issue.

In reply to His Worship the Mayor, Cllr. G. McLoughlin, the Director of Service (Housing and Regeneration), stated that using local labour will be incorporated into any future contracts and legal documents will be framed around this. There are a number of projects underway already, however, there is a big project coming up after the summer and using local labour will be factored in to that contract.

#### **4. CORRESPONDENCE**

Submitted list of tenders opened in respect of the following :

- Traffic Fines Management System;
- Coonagh to Knockalisheen Distributor Road – Eircom Works;
- Engineering Consultancy Services for City Centre to University Walking and Cycling Route (Limerick Smarter Travel Route 2);
- SAQ for Limerick Regional and Local Road Resurfacing Programme 2013;
- Development at Gaol Lane, King's Island and establishment of Framework Agreement for Design Team Services for Minor Capital Works Project;

Submitted letter of acknowledgement from the Office of the Minister for Housing and Planning in connection with a motion of Council regarding funding for housing and indicating that a further reply will issue as soon as possible.

An invitation was received from the O.N.E Patrick Sarsfield Branch to attend the Easter Rising Commemoration Services on Easter Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2013. A Wreath Laying Ceremony will take place at the O.N.E. Memorial, Pery Square at 11.00 a.m., there will be mass in the Dominican Church at 11.30 a.m. and after the mass a small ceremony will take place at the Republican Plot, Mount St. Laurence Cemetery.

It was proposed by Cllr. Byrne, seconded by Cllr. Scully and unanimously agreed to attend the above services and to robe for same.

Cllr. Gilligan asked that the City Council contribute to the cost of two wreaths for the above services. This was agreed.

Cllr. Quinlivan referred to three boarded up houses adjacent to the Sinn Fein Office on Gaol Lane and asked that they be looked at.

## **5. DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY**

It was proposed by Cllr. O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr. Fahy and unanimously agreed to approve Disposal of Property as follows in accordance with Notices already circulated under Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 :

- (a) Disposal of premises consisting of a dwelling house situate at 10, Chestnut Court, Kennedy Park, in the City of Limerick and outlined hatched red on Drawing No. TP289, area of premises – 0.015 hectares, to Patrick and Marie McNamara.
- (b) Disposal of land in accordance with Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2012 – Sub Lease of Arthur's Quay Multi Storey Car Park to T.C.E. Management for a period of three years with an option to extend for a further year and another year beyond that.

## **6. PARTICIPATION BY MEMBERS AT CONFERENCES**

It was proposed by Cllr. Fahy, seconded by Cllr. J. Leddin and unanimously agreed to approve participation by Members at the following conferences :

Elected Members Training Seminar organised by Esperanza Enterprises entitled 'The Future of Local Government in Ireland'

Held in The Kingsvalley Hotel, Merlin Park, Dublin Road, Galway

12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2013

Estimated Travel and Subsistence : €225.95

Conference Fee : €150.00

Conference organised by Ace Training entitled 'Starting and Growing a Chamber of Commerce in your Community'

Held in The Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth

12<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2013

Estimated Travel and Subsistence : €578.31

Conference Fee : €100.00

Elected Members Training Seminar organised by Esperanza entitled 'Water Services Bill 2013'

Held in The Westport Plaza Hotel, Castlebar Street, Westport, Co. Mayo

19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2013

Estimated Travel and Subsistence : €318.10

Conference Fee : €150.00

Conference organised by TGR Seminars entitled 'Local Property Tax: logistics, implications and consequences for Irish consumers'

Held in The Mullingar Park Hotel, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

19<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2013

Estimated Travel and Subsistence : €404.64

Conference Fee : €145.00

The Westport Conference entitled 'Social and Traditional Media and the Councillor'  
Held in The Westport Country Lodge Hotel, Westport, Co. Mayo  
19<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2013  
Estimated Travel and Subsistence : €427.09  
Conference Fee : €139.00

Planning Conference entitled 'Achieving competitiveness & promoting innovation: the future role of planning'  
Held in Belfast City Hall, Civic Buildings, Donegal Place, Belfast  
25<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2013  
Estimated Travel and Subsistence : €539.02  
Conference Fee : €299.00

Elected Members Training Seminar organised by Esperanza Enterprises entitled 'Strengthening the Building Control System'  
Held in The Westport Plaza Hotel, Castlebar Street, Westport, Co. Mayo  
26<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2013  
Estimated Travel and Subsistence : €318.10  
Conference Fee : €150.00

Conference organised by Celtic Conferences entitled 'Meeting Management Principles & Best Practice'  
Held in The Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery, Co. Cork  
26<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2013  
Estimated Travel and Subsistence : €425.91  
Conference Fee : €100.00

Cork County Council's Annual Mayors Conference entitled 'Strategies for Maximising the Positive Impacts of Tourism'  
Held in Walter Raleigh Hotel, Youghal, Co. Cork  
25<sup>th</sup> May, 2013  
Estimated Travel and Subsistence : €286.20  
Conference Fee : € 60.00

## **7. FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

Submitted Financial Statement for the month of February, 2013, which was adopted unanimously on the proposition of Cllr. J. Leddin, seconded by Cllr. Hourigan.

### **8 (a) UNAUDITED ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

It was proposed by Cllr. J. Leddin, seconded by Cllr. O'Hanlon and unanimously agreed to approve unaudited Annual Financial Statement for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012.

### **8 (b) TRANSFERS TO THE CAPITAL ACCOUNT**

It was proposed by Cllr. J. Leddin, seconded by Cllr. O'Hanlon and unanimously agreed to approve the setting aside of transfers to the Capital Account (as per report attached to Council Agenda) to specific ring fenced reserves in line with the provisions of the Local Authority Accounting in Ireland Code of Practice and Accounting Regulations.

## **8 (c) OVER EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2012**

It was proposed by Cllr. J. Leddin, seconded by Cllr. O'Hanlon and unanimously agreed to approve the over expenditure for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2012, including Capital Transfers.

## **9. PLANNING PROPOSALS AND DECISIONS**

The Meeting noted the list of Planning Proposals under consideration at 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2013 and Decisions taken from 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2013 to 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2013.

Cllr. O'Hanlon enquired what the situation is in relating to the property tax for unfinished estates. He referred specifically to Drominbeg which was exempt from the household charge last year because it was an unfinished estate, however, some residents there have got notified for the property tax. He indicated that no work has been done since last year on this estate so the status of the estate did not change.

In reply, the City and County Manager agreed to circulate Members with the published list of unfinished estates and agreed to get the criteria on how decisions were made from the Department.

## **10. NOTICE OF MOTION**

Submitted the following Notice of Motion, due notice of which was given, which was referred to the Protocol Committee :

“That LCC amend it's Standing Orders, to align the arrangements concerning the conduct of area meetings with the practise at Limerick County Council, where area meetings are chaired by the members of the electoral area, in rotation, and where members of the press are admitted to the meetings”.

Signed : Cllr. Tom Shortt

## **11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

An invitation to the Members was received inviting them to the ordination to the Episcopate of Reverend Brendan Leahy in St. John's Cathedral, Limerick, on Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 at 3.00 p.m. and afterwards to a light buffet reception in Mary Immaculate College, South Circular Road.

It was proposed by Cllr. O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr. Hourigan and unanimously agreed to accept the invitation and to robe for the occasion.

## **THE MEETING THEN CONCLUDED**

## **A TRUE RECORD**

**CONFIRMED THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_ 2013.**

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**MAYOR OF LIMERICK**

