

**Minutes of Meeting of the Physical Development Strategic Policy Committee held on  
Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 at 3:30 pm in the Council Chamber,  
Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.**

**Present:**

***SPC Members***

Cllr. J. Crowe, Chair  
Cllr. P O’Gorman  
Cllr. S Crawford  
Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy  
Cllr. J. Cooney  
Mr. D. M. Wise  
Mr. P. Hayes  
Mr. J. Giller (remotely)

***Staff of Clare County Council***

Ms. C. Kirby, Director of Physical Development  
Ms. L O’Neill, SEO, Ennis MD  
Ms. C Mcguire , Heritage Officer, Planning  
Mr. A Kelly , CFO  
Mr. S. Lenihan, SE, Project Management Office  
Mr. J. Leahy, SE, Roads  
Mr. C. Feeney, SE, Environment and Water  
Mr. J. Corry, AO, Roads

Cllr. John Crowe, welcomed everyone to the SPC Meeting. He paid a special welcome to Cllrs P. O’ Gorman & S. Crawford as it was their first meeting as members of the SPC.

**Item 1 – Confirmation of Minutes of the SPC Meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2020**

The Minutes were proposed by Cllr C. Colleran Molloy and seconded by P. Hayes.

There were no matters arising

**Item 2- Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS)**

C. Kirby introduced this item. She added that Clare Co Council & Limerick City & Co Council had been working very closely with the NTA over the past 12 months in developing the LSMATS strategy. She added that a significant amount of work had been put into the preparation of this draft strategy by the NTA & both Local Authorities. She added that the draft strategy informed a programme of works for the Metropolitan Area and that it would be a 20 year strategy , up to 2040 which would be reviewed in 6 years time. She added that we were now in the middle of the public consultation period, which had been extended until the end of October. She confirmed that the purpose of todays presentation was to update the SPC members on the draft strategy further to their request at the February meeting.

Hugh Creegan from the NTA and Kevin Burke from Jacobs Systra consultants on behalf of the NTA gave a detailed presentation on the Draft Limerick/Shannon Metropolitan Transport Strategy 2040 remotely by MS Teams.

It was indicated that the vision for the Limerick/Shannon Metropolitan Area was to have an integrated, multi-modal transport network across the LSMA area to support growth in a sustainable manner and that the strategy would be instrumental in the regeneration and transformation of Limerick City and the wider Limerick- Shannon Metropolitan Area as identified in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region.

It was identified that as it was a multi-modal transport strategy that there were high level proposals for walking, cycling, bus, rail etc. It was proposed that there would be a higher standard of urban design that prioritized safer and more efficient pedestrian movement as well as developing consistent, clear and continuous urban and suburban cycle networks. It was proposed that busses would be the workhorses of the public transport network with significant upgrades to include radial routes, cross city routes, orbital routes, smart ticketing etc. It was also proposed that there would be enhanced bus connectivity to Shannon town and Airport. The strategy proposed a double tracking from Limerick Colbert Station to Limerick Junction as well as having improved walking, cycling and bus links to existing metropolitan stations e.g. Sixmilebridge. Over the lifetime of the strategy it was proposed that the present value of costs were estimated at €1.1bn with the present value of benefits at €3.2bn giving a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 2.8. It was suggested that submissions could be made by email and by post until 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

The SPC members thanked H. Creegan and K Burke for their detailed Presentation and raised a number of questions.

J. Giller raised 3 questions as follows:

- as Covid-19 had significantly affected peoples travel behaviour, ie 50% decrease in various public transport modes as well as an increase in the use of private cars since the lockdown, he enquired were there any plans to revise the strategy in light of Covid-19?
- he enquired if the draft strategy was as ambitious as it could be bearing in mind Climate Change.
- he enquired if the Cost Benefit Analysis considered Climate Change targets.

Cllr Clare Colleran Molloy mentioned the strategic importance of the Limerick Northern Distributer Road (LNDR) and asked should this have priority in the strategy?

P Hayes asked the question would the strategy be promoting universally accessible transport for everyone's use.

D. M. Wise spoke about the importance of connectivity to Shannon Airport, how important a railway link would be from Colbert Railway Station in Limerick to Shannon Airport. He explained that the services from Shannon Airport to Dublin Airport needed improvement and that there

was a significant need for accessible services for people with disabilities travelling from Kilkee, Kilrush, Shannon and on to Dublin.

Cllr S Crawford mentioned the importance of improved railway services.

Hugh Creegan , NTA responded to the questions raised . He confirmed that he understood the concerns around public transport due to Covid-19 as public bus usage had decreased by 38% and rail by 40% in Dublin. However, he indicated that this strategy was all about planning for the long term and not the short term. He advised that the strategy was very cognisant of climate change in its targets. He confirmed that all modes of transport proposed would be universally accessible. He advised that they had to design the strategy with likely passengers numbers and both bus and rails systems were examined and it was determined that a massive investment in rail could not be justified presently based on the demand.

S. Lenihan indicated that this new Limerick/Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy was a very welcome development. He also mentioned the strategic importance of the LNDR project.

C. Kirby thanked the NTA and Jacobs Systra for the comprehensive presentation and she took the opportunity of thanking the NTA for advice and funding during Covid-19.

H. Creegan concluded by expressing his appreciation and thanks to the SPC for listening and engaging and to confirm that he would welcome any further feedback in advance of the closing date for the public consultation process.

Cllr. Crowe and Cllr O' Gorman indicated that they had a very useful workshop on LSMATS in the Shannon MD and they thanked S. Lenihan for his assistance.

### **Item 3- Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Biodiversity.**

C McGuire, Conservation Officer gave a presentation on the Clare Biodiversity Programme 2020, as follows:-

She gave an update on the development of the Clare Biodiversity Best Practice Staff Manual & Training Project, which was at present being developed and discussed with the Roads Section.

She discussed the work being undertaken in the management of 10 Biodiversity demonstration sites in public amenity/recreational areas throughout County Clare and the involvement of Clare County Council staff, Community groups/Tidy Town groups and Rural Social Schemes for example. She added that this project had received further funding from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and additional actions would continue until the end of this year.

She spoke about the interest and actions for Pollinators being undertaken by Tidy Towns Groups in Clare.

She added that the final results of the Clare Swift Survey 2020 showed that there was a very small population remaining, with only 56 Swift nests located around the County. Clare County Council is encouraging communities, schools and public buildings to erect Swift nest boxes in their buildings to provide suitable nesting sites for the Swift, as they are losing their nest sites due to building renovation.

She advised that at the height of the pandemic in March/April/May people became really interested in Biodiversity and took solace from Nature. People availed of the online heritage/biodiversity events and resources such as KNOWYOUR5K and took part in the many online competitions, jigsaws, recording and writing. As part of the Clare County Council wellness package for people cocooning at this time, hundreds of copies of the *Gardening for Biodiversity* publication was sent out to the public. She added that there was a 60% increase in wildlife species records sent to the National Biodiversity Records Centre in June 2020.

The SPC thanked C. McGuire for her Presentation

Cllr J Crowe mentioned the importance of re-connecting with schools again from a biodiversity point of view.

Cllr Clare Colleran Molloy asked if Clare County Council had made any progress on use of non chemical weed treatment options.

J Leahy responded by confirming that Clare County Council cannot make any decisions on their own and that there needed to be a national approach. He added that Glyphosate wasn't illegal and that it was nationally approved. He added that any decision could have a huge impact on the farming community however, he advised that Ennis MD were exploring a chemical free option for weed killing called foam steam in conjunction with Ennis Tidy Towns.

He concluded indicating that there were other products available, and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown were currently doing a study on an alternative option .

### **Climate Change Adaptation Strategy**

C Feeney gave an update on the implementation of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy adopted last year. He indicated that:

- 10% of actions completed
- 67% on going
- 23% not started.

He concluded saying that the Strategy would be in place for 5 years.

**Item 4- Any Other Business.**

D. M. Wise Â advised that he was a member of the National Council of people with Disabilities if there was any item that the SPC wanted to bring to their attention

**Date of next meeting 3.30pm 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2020**

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cllr. John Crowe**

**Chairperson**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**John Corry**

**Administrative Officer**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_