

**Minutes of Meeting of the Physical Development Strategic Policy Committee held on  
Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2022 at 3:30 pm in the Council Chamber and via MS Teams,  
Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.**

**Present:**

***SPC Members***

Cllr. J. Crowe, Chair  
Cllr. P. O’Gorman  
Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy  
Cllr. I. Lynch  
Cllr. A. O’Callaghan  
Cllr L Grant  
Cllr J Killeen  
Cllr J Cooney  
Cllr M Howard  
Cllr P Murphy  
Cllr A Norton  
Mr. D. M. Wise  
Ms. A. Wheeler

***Staff of Clare County Council***

Ms. C. Kirby, Director of Physical Development  
Mr. A Kelly, Chief Fire Officer  
Ms. C Earley, Senior Executive Technician  
Mr. S Lenihan, SE, PMO  
Mr. C Feeney, SE, Environment  
Mr. T Burke, SACFO, Fire Service  
Mr. L O’Connor, AO, Transportation  
Ms. A O’Connor, ASO  
Mr. J Murphy, SEO, Shannon MD

Apologies : Mr. P Hayes, Ms. T O’Donohoe, Mr. J Leahy & Ms. L O’Neill

**Item 1 – Confirmation of Minutes of the SPC Meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2022.**

The Minutes were proposed by Cllr Joe Cooney and seconded by Damon Mathew Wise

**Item 2- Matters Arising**

**Damon Mathew Wise** asked about item no 6 on agenda, Liam O’Connor confirmed that Damon’s request to share the email received by the Clare PPN in relation to proposed amendments to the Building Regulations Part M (Access and Use) with SPC members was carried out.

**Item 3 – Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy Revised Draft**

**Sean Lenihan** introduced Hugh Creegan, Michael MacAree and David Clements from the NTA and thanked them for all the briefings they have facilitated, he said there are a lot of positive things in the strategy, but it is disappointing that the Limerick Northern Distributor Road has been removed from the initial draft.

**David Clements** gave a very comprehensive presentation and update on LSMATS. He confirmed that there has been a lot of engagement with stakeholders and closing date for submissions is Friday 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2022. He reminded the members that the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft is not the final draft and all submissions will be taken on board.

**Damon Wise** spoke about the lack of accessible suitable direct buses from Shannon to Dublin and the need to make Clare and Shannon more accessible. Damon spoke about Universal Design Accessibility and the needs of people with disabilities in Ireland and all across Europe.

**Cllr Alan O' Callaghan** thanked the NTA for their presentation but expressed concerns regarding the here and now. He noted existing problems with traffic congestion at UL and on the new bridge in Limerick city as a result of a reduction in the number of lanes for vehicles. He also questioned the timelines of the various projects within the strategy

**Cllr Joe Cooney** thanked the NTA for their presentation and said that there are a lot of positive parts to the strategy and a lot will be achieved going forward. However, he cannot understand the removal of the LNDR from the draft strategy and called on the NTA to review their position with a view to getting it back on the strategy to comply with RSES and the County Development Plan.

**Cllr Pat O'Gorman** concurred with Cllr J Cooney and mentioned the fact that the first phase of the LNDR will finish on a local road at Knockalisheen/Moyross, which doesn't make sense. He said everyone is in favour of sustainable transport options but that the need is also there for the LNDR and asked the NTA to revert back to the Minister. He also mentioned ongoing difficulties with access to UL. Cllr O'Gorman expressed concerns about the proposed railway link to Shannon. He noted that landowners are unable to obtain planning etc due to a indicative line on a map. He asked is there are any assurances that the rail link will go ahead in our lifetime?

**Damon Wise** spoke about access to the Clare Campus of the University of Limerick for wheelchair users and the difficulties that are encountered.

**Cllr Clare Collieran Molloy** asked if the Minister had the statutory authority to remove this road under RSES?

**Cllr Anne Norton** agreed that there is only one solution and that is to complete the LNDR.

**Carmel Kirby** replied by saying that Clare County Council have an extremely positive working relationship with the NTA. She said that the absence of LNDR is an unfortunate distraction of what is a very positive document. There is concern about congestion in the north side of the city. Carmel said that 49% of the area in LSMATs is located in Clare and it was important that the views of communities and representatives from Clare are taken into account.

She confirmed that Clare County Council would be making a submission before the closing date of 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2022.

**Cllr Joe Killeen** supported the calls for the LNDR to be included in the strategy and noted the importance of the project for South East Clare. He added that the Limerick – Galway rail link should be enhanced and that the flooding issue on the rail line at Ballycar needs to be resolved. Cllr Killeen also noted the importance of the Shannon rail line and that efficient transport connections were required to the Cliffs of Moher, which had 1.7m visitors per annum pre Covid.

**Michael MacAree**, NTA replied to the individual issues raised by the SPC members. He said that to achieve optimum results and to strengthen the strategy, the NTA will work in collaboration with Clare County Council and Limerick City and County Council, the TII and other key stakeholders. He added that LSMATS provides a strong framework for delivery and it also provides for the speed of delivery that is required.

**Hugh Creegan**, NTA noted that he understood the significance of the LNDR. He added that the NTA want to gather all feedback. He said there will be further consultation and that all views and feedback would be considered.

**David Clements**, NTA clarified that in relation to Ballycar, it is a matter for Irish Rail and Department of Transport.

Carmel Kirby informed members that stakeholders have collectively identified a solution for Ballycar. She thanked the team from the NTA and expressed her appreciation of their time.

#### **Item No 4 – Draft Fire & Emergency Operations Plan 2022 – 2027**

**Adrian Kelly** gave a brief overview of the draft fire and emergency operations plan. He noted that recruitment is still a challenge in both Ennis and Shannon Fire Stations and that recruitment was challenging both nationally and internationally. He confirmed to members that there is still no update on the First Responders and the recruitment of apprentice mechanics, has been included in the workforce plan.

**A Kelly** informed members that the next step with the Draft Plan is to circulate to staff for consultation. Any observations received will be considered and a final draft prepared for the next meeting of the SPC. The Plan would then be put forward for adoption at the October 2022 Council meeting.

**Damon Wise** spoke about accessibility needs and the lack of universal design. Adrian Kelly responded by saying that Clare County Council can only enforce regulations under the Building Regulations.

**Damon** also asked how successful have Clare County Council been recruiting members of marginal groups such as the travelling community and people with disabilities to the Fire Service.

Adrian responded by saying that everyone who applies goes through the same fire recruitment process.

**Cllr Liam Grant** spoke about recruitment and retention and in particular Shannon. He noted that it would be wrong if the plan was the same as before and was of the opinion that it was not ambitious enough.

## **Item 5 – National Cycle Network**

### **Catherine Early gave a presentation to members on the National Cycle Network (NCN)**

**Catherine** informed members of the development of a new National Cycling Network Strategy which will map existing cycling infrastructure in both urban and rural areas, including Greenways, and will serve to inform future planning and project delivery decisions in relation to walking and cycling infrastructure for the remainder of the decade.

**Cllr I Lynch** asked for clarification on his concern in relation to the proposed Ennis to Kilkee cycle route and the wording of same on the plan, why was Kilrush not included?

**Sean Lenihan** responded by saying that the old West Clare Railway was historically known as Ennis to Kilkee, however, its well known that the railway line splits at Moyasta for Kilkee and Kilrush. The priority for the development of a greenway on the West Clare Railway is for the line from Kilrush to Kilkee to be developed first.

## **Item 6. AOB-**

Cllr I Lynch asked if there is multiagency emergency plan in place for the Shannon Estuary in a plane goes into the water. A Kelly had to leave SPC for another meeting, however, he has since provided the following update:

“There are a number of plans in place for dealing with incidents at and on the Estuary. These include the Major Emergency Plans of the Principal Response Agencies, Shannon Airport Interagency Plan, Irish Coast Guard National Search and Rescue Plan, National Maritime Oil Spill Contingency Plan, Shannon Foynes Port Company Marine Emergency Plan to mention a few.

In addition, a coordination document has been developed between the various Agencies for the Estuary titled “*Shannon Estuary Serious Incident and Major Emergency Strategic Co-ordination Document*” which was last updated in 2021. This document provides an Overview of the Potential Risks around the Estuary, the Response Strategy of the various Agencies, Personnel Landing Points/ Berth Support Facilities & Beaching Area, maps outlining relevant areas/risks/etc., together with Contact Details for Strategic Co-ordination”

**Cllr I Lynch** spoke about “No Mow May” and how the grass was now high in areas where children are playing and asked if the Clare County Council gardening section could assist with grass cutting.

**Cyril Feeney** responded by saying that “No Mow May” has contributed hugely to Biodiversity. If there are operational issues with grass cutting, they can be dealt with locally by the Municipal Districts.

**Cllr Lynch** asked Sean Lenihan for an update on West Clare Greenway. Sean responded by saying an independent Agronomist is to be appointed by end of June following a tender competition and that public consultation will commence in early September.

In relation to the proposal from Cllr Alan O Callaghan “That this SPC would review a policy around the temporary use of signage for events, where the signage is left behind when the event is over” C Feeney noted that fines can be issued under the litter act if signs are left in place and that fines had been issued previously. Signs can only be erected 7 days in advance of an event and must be removed 3 days after the event has taken place.

Carmel Kirby and John Crowe thanked everyone for their participation in the meeting.

**Item 7 - Date of next meeting : Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September. 2022**

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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

**Cllr. John Crowe**

**Chairperson**

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

**Liam O'Connor**

**Administrative Officer**

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