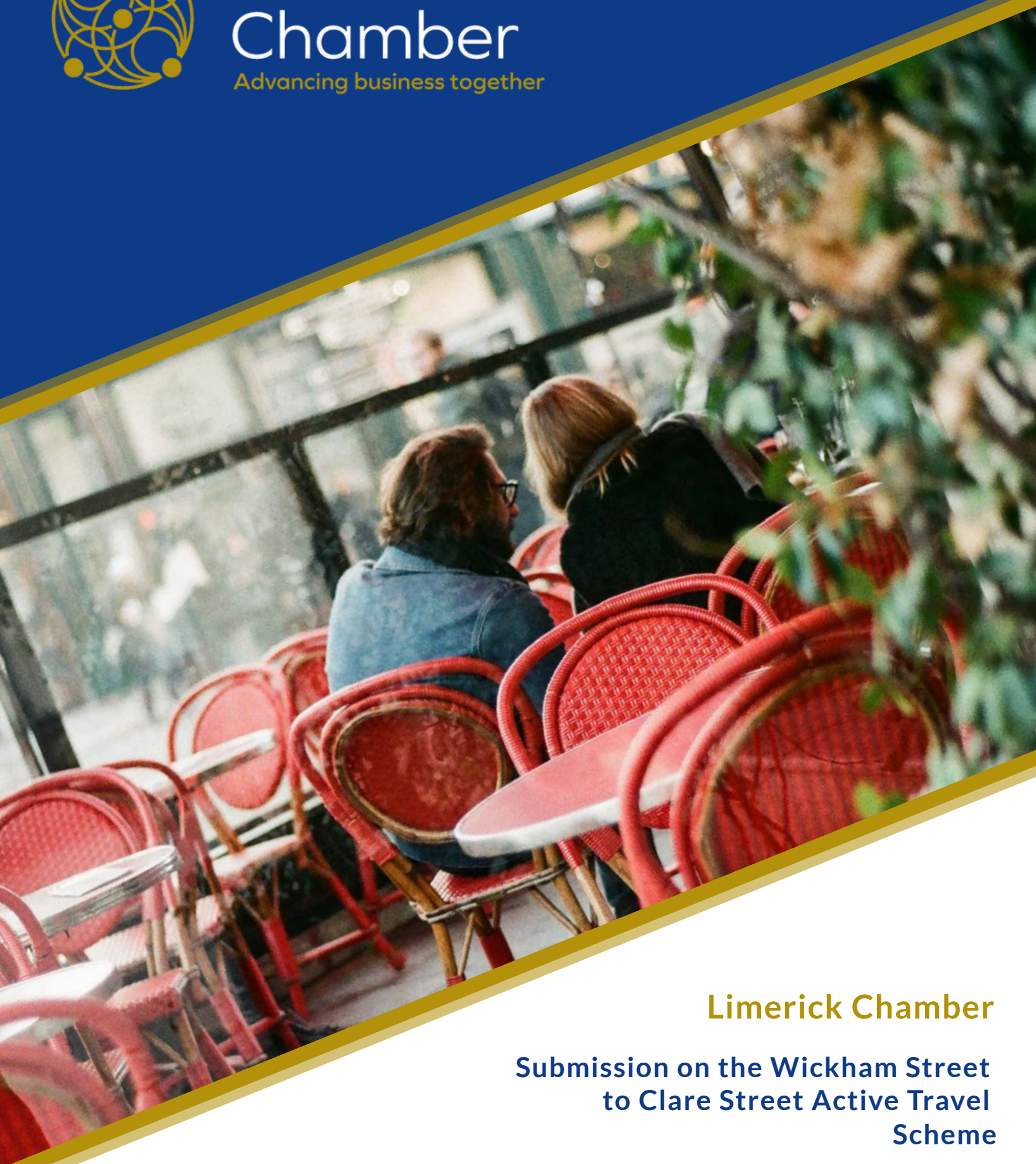




Limerick Chamber

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**Submission on the Wickham Street
to Clare Street Active Travel
Scheme**

May 2023

Introduction

Limerick Chamber would like to thank Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) for the opportunity to submit its views on the proposed active travel scheme connecting Parnell Street to Clare Street. Limerick Chamber has long been an advocate and supporter for active travel projects making submissions of support to the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transports Strategy (LSMATS), the University of Limerick to Annacotty Greenway, the Technological University of the Shannon (Moylish) to city centre active travel scheme and the South Circular Road to city centre active travel scheme. Furthermore, the Chamber plays an active role in supporting public transport projects, making submissions to both rounds of consultation for the LSMATS and, more recently, the BusConnects plan for Limerick.

Limerick Chamber's city centre based members have continually called for a wider mobility plan for the city centre, which outlines how people will navigate through the city centre in light of the various transport and other infrastructural projects being undertaken. In essence, there needs to be a cohesive plan for the city centre, taking into account transport needs for everyone and the impact existing transport projects will have on routes of travel for all mobility types. While a study was outlined within the BusConnects plan, there is a concern that doing this plan at the end of BusConnects, rather than in tandem with projects will yield sub optimal results and could cause major issues for those attempting to travel to and from the city centre using all modes of transport.

The predominant issue for those businesses based in the city centre is that there are a number of transport projects that are being brought forward in isolation with no wider plan of how displacement might affect other existing users of road infrastructure. While members try to support active and public transport projects, where possible, this proposed active travel project is another case of a project being brought forward with no wider plan or clarity on how it might displace other road users and thus makes it very difficult to support the plan. However, the Chamber does appreciate the inclusion of some more detailed information on this that was included as part of the emerging preferred route option (yellow route) - however, this should have been expanded for all potential routes.

The Chamber welcomes the overall goals of the project in making the city more accessible, safe and easy to navigate for active travel users, the Chamber also welcomes the inclusion of a project timeline, which does provide some clarity around implementation. However, the project timeline would benefit from the

inclusion of a construction element, whereby if planning was successful, construction would start and end on certain dates. This type of clarity is much needed from city centre members, especially when considering the recent O'Connell Street project.

Furthermore, the Chamber commends LCCC's active travel team in their inclusion to public realm along the route and also the inclusion of art installations. This is the type of added value on projects that will make Limerick a more attractive place to live, work and shop while also creating ambiance improvements.

Areas of Concern / Feedback

The absence of a wider mobility plan, as mentioned in the introduction, will negatively impact travel infrastructure going forward. Currently, projects are being brought forward on an individual basis and not including any insight in to how this might affect other city centre users, especially businesses. This was also an issue with the BusConnects plan, whereby bus route information was provided but no indication where traffic displacement would go. We urge Limerick City and County Council to carry out this work as a matter of urgency, not only will it provide clarity on the projects to be undertaken and allow businesses to plan accordingly, it will also make the public consultation process more open and transparent and allow people to submit fully informed views - this is particularly important for businesses.

The absence of the inclusion of modelling across all proposed routes is a key concern, we understand from the public consultation day that more detailed modelling will be undertaken once a preferred route is chosen. However, again, detailed modelling should be provided at the preliminary public consultation phase to allow submissions to be fully informed. The inclusion of the modelling should outline how many new users of specific routes there will be, but also any potential displacement caused by new infrastructure along the route. Several times, Limerick Chamber requested further information on the key areas where car use, delivery vehicles and parking was to be affected along the four potential routes. Despite preliminary discussion on where this might be at the public consultation day, the information was not passed along to Limerick Chamber. The end goal for the Chamber in this regard was to circulate as much information as possible to our members so they could make a fully informed decision. Unfortunately, with the absence of this information, it made choosing a preferred route very difficult and negatively impacted the public consultation process.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, despite Limerick Chamber's support for active travel projects in the past and because of the lack of modelling and potential displacement information, Limerick Chamber are not in a position to pick a preferred route. We would ask that in the future Limerick City and County Council provide further modelling and displacement information. We also ask that a city centre mobility plan be undertaken as a matter of urgency.



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