

Minutes of the Strategic Policy Committee Meeting of the Climate Action and Environmental Services Strategic Policy Committee held online on 3rd November, 2020 at 3.00 pm.

Present: Cllrs. Noel Keelan (Chairperson), C. Bennett, P. Treanor, R. Aughey, R. Truell, S. Coyle.
Bernard Treanor, IFA, Patrick McCabe, GWS, Brian Duffy, Castleblayney Regeneration, Liam Murtagh, Transition Monaghan, Pat Tierney, PPN Community, Michelle Mayne, PPN Social Inclusion
A.King, P.McGuinness, K.Duffy, N.O'Connor, B. Smyth, I. Williamson, S. Finnegan, V. McKenna, B.McMahon, C.Gaffney, D. Beagan, P.Deery

Minutes of Previous Meeting: Proposed by Cllr. P. Treanor, seconded by Mr. L. Murtagh.

1. Update on River Basement Mgt. Plan 2022 - 2027

K.Duffy gave a presentation to members on the River Basement Mgt. Plan 2022 – 2027 to update them on what the Council hope to achieve in relation to water quality in Co. Monaghan and our progress to date. He advised that a timeline has been set and it is hoped to have a river basement management plan in operation by December of next year. While members welcomed the update, L. Murtagh highlighted the downside in the process of the time involved and queried what action could be taken to improve water quality in the short term. Mr. Duffy responded by stating that a lot of work has been done already eg. in particular in relation to Lough Muckno and was hopeful that the water quality in same would start to improve. The Castleblayney plant has been taken over and the Council is confident that this will also help improve the water quality. Mr. Duffy responded to further queries and Cllr. Keelan thanked him for the comprehensive presentation.

2. Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy/National Waste Priority

N. O'Connor gave a presentation to members on the Waste Action Plan, outlining the objectives of the plan. He gave an update on priorities for 2020 and advised that unfortunately, there had been a large increase in illegal dumping in the County. It is envisaged that the 2021 priorities will be similar to those of 2020. B. Duffy queried the role of the Council regarding waste management at Festivals. Mr. O'Connor replied that the onus is on festival committees to manage waste in a proper manner. He answered queries from members relating to issuing of litter fines and advised that fines over €500 are for those who have a license for collection of waste and it is likely that these will be increased in the future.

3. Potential Effects of Brexit on Small Food Business Supervised by the Local Authority

B. Smyth explained the huge importance of the UK market to the Irish agri-food industry, in particular beef and dairy products. He noted that Irish food has moved freely to both the UK and the EU for the last 30 years. He outlined the implications for the Irish agri-food industry if there is no deal between the UK and the EU and described the customs checks that will be required on all loads of food products, whether they contain food made from plants or animals. These checks will be carried out on all consignments of food being either exported to or imported from the UK from 1st January next. He pointed out that the UK landbridge is the quickest and most direct route for Irish goods being exported to the EU but that the customs checks entering and leaving the UK will cause significant costs and delays. He did not identify any direct effects on small businesses supervised by Monaghan County Council because they

sourced nearly all their animals and food product in Ireland and were not exporting to the UK. However, many large Monaghan food businesses will be directly affected as large quantities of what they produce is exported to the UK. The direct effects on these businesses may indirectly affect the small food businesses. The effect on the Irish consumer is not clear either but may lead to scarcity of certain foods imported from the UK and will almost certainly lead to food price inflation.

Cllr. Keelan thanked Mr. Smyth for his informative summary and answered queries from members while outlining that it is still unclear as to what the future brings, especially if there is no deal.

4. Energy & Carbon Counting in the Local Authority

V.McKenna gave a presentation to members on the role of the Council relating to Energy & Carbon Counting within the Local Authority and highlighted the importance of energy reduction. He outlined the actions Monaghan County Council have undertaken in this regard. Mr. McKenna answered questions from members relating to current Public Building stock and acknowledged the difficulties with current Council legacy stock, however, we are moving the right direction and advised that new developments will be compliant with current standards. Cllr. Keelan thanked Mr. McKenna for his informative presentation.

5. Climate Change Update

Mr. King gave a detailed presentation to members. This included recent important events relevant to climate change, the Climate Change Action Bill and the anticipated impact of the Bill. He also updated members on the role of Budget 2021, the Local Authorities strategy to deliver Climate Change and the additional resources required and finally the opportunity to drive Sustainable Energy Communities. He advised members that the Biodiversity Plan had been adopted at a Council meeting the previous day.

6. Date of next meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held on 2nd February at 3.00 pm.

Cllr. Keelan thanked members for their attendance and contribution to the meeting. The meeting concluded.