Minutes of the SPC Climate Action and Environment meeting held in Castleblayney Library on Monday, 20/04/2026, at 2.30pm.

Present: Cllrs R. Truell (Chair), N. O'Connor (DOS), Cllr S. Flynn, N. Malone, E. Brennan, L. Murtagh, K. McEntegart, Cllr R. Aughey, Cllr Bronagh McAree, and A. Forde.

Cllr Truell welcomed the members to the meeting.

1.0 Minutes from the previous meeting

L. Murtagh noted that both the Water Team and LawPro delivered informative presentations at the previous meeting. He suggested that the Council could increase its use of social media to raise awareness in relation to issues with septic tanks. L. Murtagh further recommended enhanced public awareness campaigns focusing on water quality, including the impact of businesses and farming activities on water quality.

N. O'Connor advised that the Council currently undertakes social media campaigns relating to water quality and confirmed that these campaigns can continue to be expanded. He stated that he would engage with J. Fox within the Council regarding matters relating to septic tanks. In addition, he proposed that a report outlining the current water awareness campaigns being undertaken by the Council be provided to members at the next meeting.

N. Malone provided information in response to a question raised at the previous meeting regarding vapes. He stated that the Waste Team undertakes battery and WEEE inspections, which include vapes and e-cigarette devices, and informed members that 25 WEEE inspections are planned for 2026. N. Malone advised that both disposable and rechargeable vapes contain batteries and electronic components and are therefore classified as WEEE under the European WEEE Directives, European Battery Regulations, and Irish WEEE Regulations. He stated that retailers selling disposable or rechargeable vapes are required to register as retailers of Electrical and Electronic Equipment (EEE) and batteries through an approved compliance scheme, such as the European Recycling Platform (ERP). N. Malone informed members that retailers are obliged to accept used disposable and rechargeable vapes on a one-for-one, like-for-like basis in store and must have designated ERP battery and WEEE recycling boxes available. He further advised that retailers must display statutory WEEE and battery signage informing consumers of their right to return used vapes free of charge and must ensure that all products are sourced from registered producers.

Cllr R. Aughey suggested that vape collection facilities should also be provided at restaurants and bars within the local area in order to reduce the risk of fires occurring in businesses. The previous minutes were proposed by E. Brennan and seconded by L. Murtagh.

2.0 Seek SPC approval for the Draft Litter Management Plan 2026–2029, subsequent to the public consultation phase, for consideration at the CPG meeting on 19th May.

N. Malone gave a presentation on the Draft Litter Management Plan 2026–2029 following the completion of the public consultation process. N. Malone informed members of the statutory requirement to prepare and review a Litter Management Plan and advised on the role of public consultation in informing the final document. N. Malone stated that the purpose of the item was to seek SPC approval to progress the draft plan to the Corporate Policy Group for consideration. N. Malone informed members that the public consultation process was carried out in full compliance with legislative requirements. N. Malone reported that the draft plan was published on the Council website, and public notices were placed in the Anglo-Celt and broadcast on Northern Sound radio to encourage engagement from the public and all interested parties throughout the submission period.

N. Malone stated that one submission was received from the public under the theme "Litter Prevention and Control." N. Malone advised that the submission related specifically to dog foul bags and bins. N. Malone outlined the key points of the submission, which acknowledged the positive impact of dog foul bags and bins in the town, expressed concern regarding the recent absence of dog foul bags from bins, and highlighted the perceived contradiction between enforcing fines and not providing adequate resources to dog owners. N. Malone advised that the decision to remove dog fouling bags from dog bins is an operational matter, based on the unsustainable financial cost to the Council going forward. N. Malone confirmed that dog bins will continue to be provided in designated areas and that a dog fouling awareness campaign will be run under the Green Dog Initiative during the summer period, encouraging dog owners to carry their own dog fouling bags.

The Chair invited questions and discussion from members following the presentation. N. Malone responded to queries regarding the dog walker scheme and the involvement of Tidy Towns groups in the Draft Litter Management Plan 2026–2029. Cllr R. Truell noted that N. Malone sought SPC approval for the Draft Litter Management Plan 2026–2029, following the completion of the public consultation phase, for consideration at the CPG meeting scheduled for 19th May. The Litter Management Plan was proposed by Cllr R. Aughey and seconded by Cllr E. Brennan.

3.0 To receive a presentation from the Dog Control Unit.

N. Malone presented an overview of the Dog Control Unit's service activity and organisational arrangements during 2025. N. Malone informed the Committee of the Unit's structure, including the Dog Wardens, administrative support, and the contracted dog pound service. N. Malone advised members of significant developments during the year, including the transfer of the Local Authority Veterinary Service to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the introduction of XL Bully legislation, under which 11 exemption certificates had been issued, and the provision of funding for a second Dog Warden, subject to annual confirmation.

N. Malone stated that operational performance and financial outturns for 2025 continued to reflect the delivery of statutory services amid ongoing resource pressures. N. Malone advised that 5,689 dog licences were issued during the year, with total income of €157,499 and expenditure of €291,041, resulting in an operating deficit. N. Malone informed members of activity levels relating to straying, surrender, seizure, rehoming, aggressive behaviour, livestock worrying, and Dog Breeding Establishments, and outlined capital investment under the Dog Control Support Initiative together

with key priorities for 2026. N. Malone concluded that while the service continues to operate effectively, it remains structurally underfunded.

Cllr R. Truell thanked N. Malone for his presentation and invited questions and discussion from members. N. Malone addressed matters relating to the Dog Control Act, animal welfare, XL Bully dogs, dog breeding establishments, and cross-border legislation. In addition, E. Brennan raised queries regarding the level of success of the Carrickmacross dog park and feedback on its operation. N. Malone advised that the dog park is a Carrickmacross Municipal District project and confirmed that he would liaise with D. Thornton and provide a response to E. Brennan in due course.

4.0 AOB

Cllr R. Truell advised that the next meeting would take place on 19th October. The Chair then invited questions from members.

Cllr R. Aughey raised concerns regarding fly-tipping in the Sliabh Beagh area. N. Malone and N. O'Connor addressed the matter, outlining current and proposed measures, including the use of CCTV, monitoring by the litter warden, anti-dumping initiatives, enforcement through litter fines, and efforts to ensure that all properties in the county have waste collection services. N. O'Connor further advised that there is ongoing investment in Sliabh Beagh.

Cllr R. Truell thanked the presenters and members for their engagement on the issues raised. The meeting concluded at 3.45 p.m.