

Minutes from Climate and Biodiversity Action & Environment SPC

Tuesday 25th February 2020, 2.00pm, Old Reference Library, Farnham Street, Cavan

Present: Cllr. Philip Brady (Chairperson), Cllr. Winston Bennett, Cllr. Madeleine Argue, Joe Brady, Fintan McCabe, Barry Wilson, Paddy Connaughton, Director of Service, Colm O'Callaghan, Jim Lyng, Allison Treanor

Apologies: Cllr. T.P. O'Reilly, Cllr. Craig Lovett, Cllr. Shane P. O'Reilly

Cllr. Brady welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the newly formed SPC and invited all attendees to introduce themselves. Mr. Connaughton advised the committee of the structure of each newly formed SPC and the areas they were responsible for.

Energy Management Update

Allison Treanor provided a presentation on the Council's Energy Management Plan. All public bodies are required to achieve energy savings of 33% by 2020. Cavan County Council are at 22% based on 2019 data. This includes Council fleet and buildings. SEAI are the monitoring and reporting authority. The current breakdown is as follows:

- Public Lighting 58%
- Remaining electrical 13 %
- Thermal 10 %
- Transport 19%

Services previously provided by Water Services i.e. pumping stations has been passed over to Irish Water.

There are currently 7,000 public lights in the County and by the end of 2020 it is expected that 60% of the public lights will be upgraded.

The Council are currently spending the following on their energy needs:

- €15,000 - €20,000 on heating per month
- €28,000 - €61,000 on public lighting per month
- Nearly €300,000 per annum on fuel

Current energy providers are Energia and Bord Gais.

Cllr. Argue commented that she received representation from residents in Killeshandra that the newly installed public light bulbs in the town were not as good as previous ones. Ms. Treanor advised that public lighting is designed to display footpath area only and not infringe on private dwellings or highlight shop facades. Paddy Connaughton advised Cllr. Argue that should address this issue with the District Manager in the Cavan Belturbet MD.

Cllr. Bennett stated that the lighting at pedestrian crossing needed to be better and closer to the actual crossing and it was difficult to see pedestrian in the dark winter evenings.

Paddy Connaughton advised the meeting that the biggest challenges facing the Council are improving the fleet of vehicles. The technology is not available to upgrade all vehicle to EVs.

Also, many of the public buildings are protected structures and difficult to improve BER ratings.

Update on Significant Water Management Issues (SWMI) Consultation Process

Allison Treanor provided a presentation on the SWMI report. DEHG have commence a public consultation process from December 2019 to 26th June 2020. The report sets out the significant issues that need to be addressed and allows for all stakeholders to furnish their views and highlight any areas that need to be addressed in the 3rd cycle of the plan.

Ms. Treanor provided a breakdown of the most recent water quality report where 69 rivers and 29 lakes are monitored in County Cavan. Ms. Treanor highlighted the factors affecting water management including land improvement works, agriculture, climate change, siltation, drinking water quality and invasive alien species and movement of organic fertilisers.

Climate Action Update

Mr. O'Callaghan provided a presentation on the impact Climate Change is having showing the damage caused by an extreme weather event which took place in 2017 in Co. Donegal.

Mr. O'Callaghan advised that extreme weather conditions will be more frequent in future. Levels of rainfall will remain same each year, however it will be more concentrated and we will experience more rainfall in Autumn/Winter seasons and droughts during the Summer season.

Mr. O'Callaghan proceeded to advise the committee on the Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 – 2024. He advised that the aim of the strategy is to reduce vulnerability of our environment, society and economy and to increase resilience.

Cllr. Bennett called for the need to change dates allowing farmers to spread slurry in Co. Cavan. The Country is broken into 3 separate zones, with Cavan in zone C, meaning slurry could not be spread until 1st February, while in Co. Meath (zone B) farmers could spread slurry from 16th January. Fintan McCabe supported this and said dates should be changed. Cllr. Brady recommended that this be put forward as a motion at the next available Council meeting.

Cllr. Bennett also mentioned the need for more anaerobic digesters and divert slurry into fuel.

Cllr. Brady enquired if funding was available to assist the Council in working towards the goals set out in the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. Mr. O'Callaghan advised that many funding streams were not suitable as the Council would need to provide 50% funding and most were focused on national projects.

AOB

Cllr. Brady congratulated Belturbet Zero Waste on winning their award for Best Waste Management Programme at the All Ireland Community & Council Awards 2020.

Mr. Lyng advised that 4 SPC meeting would take place in 2020. Mr. Connaughton informed committee members that the SPC was a forum for members to bring ideas in relation to agriculture and farming for discussion. Cllr. Bennett suggest that a farmer with experience

of anaerobic digesters be invited to attend the next meeting to discuss the pros and cons of such a project.

Cllr. Argue enquire if litter and waste matters would also be discussed within the newly formed SPC. Mr. Lyng advised that this was the forum to discuss such issues.

Mr. McCabe enquired if the Council had an liaison with the OPW in relation to drainage strategies.

It was suggested that Breffni Integrated be invited to attend the next meeting to discuss the Energy Masterplan for the County.

Finally, it was agreed that the next meeting will take place in early May 2020, with a definite day and time to be confirmed at a later date.