

## Minutes from Meeting of Climate, Biodiversity Action & Environment SPC

Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022, 2.15pm – Held in Hotel Kilmore

**Present: Cllr. Philip Brady, Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Winston Bennett, Cllr. T.P. O'Reilly, Cllr. Shane P O'Reilly, Cllr. Craig Lovett, Barry Wilson, Paddy Connaughton DOS, Colm O'Callaghan, Jim Lyng, Bróna Keating, Allison Treanor, Sean Guider, Kevin Sexton, Ben Malone, Local Authorities Water Programme (LAWPRO)**

### 1. Apologies:

Cllr. Philip Brady acknowledges apologies received from Cllr. Madeline Argue, Fintan McCabe, Joe Brady and calls the meeting to order.

### 2. Minutes of meeting dated 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2021

Proposed by Cllr. Shane P. O'Reilly and seconded by Cllr. T.P. O'Reilly.

### 3. Matters arising

No matters from the previous meeting were discussed.

### 4. Presentation by Ben Malone LAWPRO: Aquatic Invasive Alien Species impact on County Cavan

Presentation outlined how invasive alien species is impacting local water quality, biodiversity, economic and social practices. A working group has been established and have been working to address the above issue. Funding of €12,000 has been approved to undertake a feasibility study to examine control and management options and raise awareness including installation of informational signage at 30 No. locations. Matters arising from the above presentation:

**Cllr. Philip Brady:** Is this issue subject to awareness initiatives/promotion on the Council's website?

**Allison Traynor:** NPW usually promote and engage with other stakeholders including leaflet distributions. CCC engages in annual awareness campaigns across local media and CCC's social media platforms. Elected Members could also help raise awareness through party colleagues in the Dail and Seanad.

**Cllr. Winston Bennett:** are neighbouring states facing the same issues as Ireland?

**Ben Malone:** A report published in 2017 showed that 18 No. countries, mostly in Western Europe faced the same challenges. To combat this, they tried to detect the issues early and provide a rapid response by manually removing the matter at a considerable cost.

**Cllr. TP O'Reilly:** should this issue be brought to a full Council meeting?

**Allison Traynor:** all measures to extend funding sources would be welcomed.

**Paddy Connaughton:** How effective would signage be? In the absence of a National Programme, it may be preferable to see the results of the feasibility study first.

**Cllr. Philip Brady:** would a social media campaign be beneficial?

**Cllr. TP O'Reilly:** could a website or point of contact be established for directing queries to?

**Ben Malone:** National Biodiversity Data Centre have an alert system and there is the potential for local authorities to tap into it.

**Cllr. Craig Lovett:** how does Cavan compare to neighbouring counties?

**Ben Malone:** currently under resourced. Feasibility study will examine how other counties tackle this issue and what resources are used.

**Cllr. Winston Bennett:** could the approved budget be utilised to promote the campaign with local Group Water Schemes?

**Allison Traynor:** an engagement strategy will be developed.

## 5. **Update on Cavan County Council Energy Report 2021 by Allison Traynor**

Presentation outlined the progress made by Cavan County Council in meeting national energy targets:

36% Public Lighting

36% Plant

28% Council Buildings (60 No.)

Works included:

Installation of 4,500 No. LED public lights (Total No. is 6,970, which increases due to taking in charge of housing estates).

900 No. lights upgraded in 2021.

€40,000 savings despite increased energy charges.

A pathfinder programme aims to deliver sustainable solutions to the public sector to decarbonise help meet 2030 targets. Cavan County Council are collaborating with Leitrim and Monaghan County Councils.

**Paddy Connaughton:** Progress is slow especially in the area of plant and machinery.

**Winston Bennett:** are there any plans to install solar panels?

**Allison Traynor:** the audit outlines the suite of works to be undertaken and outlines the payback time for each measure.

**Cllr. TP O'Reilly:** what about the heating system in the Virginia library?

**Allison Traynor:** currently gas in Virginia and adheres to the current criteria. Plans in place to move to bio gas.

## 6. **Climate Action Update presentation by Colm O'Callaghan**

160,000 tonnes of gas generated each day.

From 2010 to 2021 a number of policies have been developed including establishing Climate Action Regional Offices (CARO's) in 2018 and the Climate Action Plan 2019.

Cavan County Council is part of the Eastern/Midlands CARO hosted by Kildare County Council.

There is an obligation on all local authorities to create a new Climate Adaptation Plan every 5 years similar to a County Development Plan. The Climate Action Plan 2021 provides a detailed plan for taking action to achieve a 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and setting us on a path to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050, as committed to in the Programme for Government and set out in the Climate Act 2021.

An Active Travel unit has been established in the Council lead by the Road Design Office.

The next steps will be to upgrade the five largest energy producing buildings, appoint a Climate Action Officer within the Environment Section, provide training to staff and embed the ethos across the local authority.

**Cllr. Philip Brady:** what happens if we don't receive funding to meet the 2030 targets?

**Paddy Connaughton:** hitting targets should be achievable provided that the relevant funding resources are available. We will face external challenges such as planning issues and implementing sustainable practices.

**Cllr. TP O'Reilly:** national targets seem ambitious. Will targets be broken down on a County level?

**Colm O'Callaghan:** no, targets will be sector based.

**Cllr. TP O'Reilly:** retrofits will be difficult given the increasing construction costs.

**Barry Wilson:** Dublin Bus have a number of hydrogen fuel cell buses and could be a form of zero emission transport.

**Allison Traynor:** Cork City Council took the lead nationally in 2020 by creating the largest local authority electric vehicle fleet.

**Colm O'Callaghan:** Cavan County Council were the first local authority to use an electric vehicle. It was not successful and we will see how successful the transition to electric vehicle fleets in other local authorities are before making the changeover here.

## **7. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure presentation by Kevin Sexton**

Kevin Sexton provided an overview of the electric charging points in County Cavan. A slow charge point costs €36,000 to install for a 2 vehicle port. Grant of €10,000 is available.

Fast charge points cost €150,000 and cost €10,000 - €12,000 to run annually. A fast charge will provide an 80% charge in just 20 minutes.

Currently 80-90% of charging is done at home.

Payback is not currently being achieved.

**FASTER – Facilitating a Sustainable Transition to Electric Vehicles.** The FASTER Project is a joint initiative by partners in Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland to support the overarching ambition to transition to low carbon transport systems. This project is a

collaboration between DKIT, Ulster University, University of Strathclyde, Louth County Council with Cavan County Council and other local authorities being associated partners.

The project partnership will implement the physical roll out and installation of 73 rapid (50KW capacity) electric vehicle charging stations in the programme area before May 2023. The FASTER Project aims to ensure that the availability of public charging stations is not a major obstacle to Electric Vehicle (EV) market penetration. The FASTER project has been awarded €6,407,513.23 from the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body.

Kevin also advised that Eir and Easygo have joined forces and launched a series of nationwide electric vehicle fast chargers which are replacing old phone kiosks. Initial stage of project with fast chargers installed in Carlow with plans in place to extend to other counties.

**Cllr. Philip Brady:** what did the fast chargers at the Courthouse, Cavan cost the local authority? The charger at Killydoon doesn't appear on the nationwide map.

**Kevin Sexton:** these chargers belong to ESB. Kevin advised that he would make enquiries about the charger at Killydoon.

**Jim Lyng:** how many chargers does the current network support?

**Kevin Sexton:** it is unknown and ESB are not willing to pin down new locations. The Council have identified 4 No. types of chargers/locations – duplexes, destination locations i.e. hotels, sports clubs, enroute i.e. along road network and niche locations i.e. taxi ranks, work hubs.

**Cllr. TP O'Reilly:** if a private business wishes to install a charger in a public carpark, who installs it?

**Paddy Connaughton:** it would be classed as a commercial entity and rates would be agreed between the business and ESB.

**Kevin Sexton:** local authorities are exempt from planning, but not sure if exemptions apply to private and commercial entities.

**Paddy Connaughton:** the venture with Easygo and Eir is a government backed scheme.

## **8. Cavan County Council Civic Amenity Sites (CACs) & Bring Centre Network (BCN)**

### **9. Waste Management/Enforcement Update**

Jim Lyng and Bróna Keating provided the meeting with an update on the Council's CACs, BCN and on Waste Management Activities for 2022.

Jim Lyng advised the meeting that the Council are negotiating with local community groups in Laragh and Mountnugent about the installation of new Bring Centre facilities in those areas. Negotiations with Mountnugent are at an advanced stage and it is expected that civil works will be completed before the end of the summer.

The contract for CACs was up for renewal in February 2022 and the retendering process was competitive. Contract was awarded to McElvaney Waste & Recycling and a better suite of conditions was negotiated saving the Council an estimated €50,000.

The CAC at Corranure forms part of the Council's decarbonisation zone. A feasibility study is ongoing to examine the potential of solar panels, wind turbines, biogas and anaerobic digestion. Results are due by the end of 2022.

**Cllr. Winston Bennett:** is there any planned collection days for used herbicide/MCPA containers and residue?

**Bróna Keating:** the Council are running a series of Bulky Waste Drop Off days this year as part of our Anti-Dumping Initiative and a hazardous waste drop off day will be undertaken. Bróna also advised that farm plastic collections with Irish Farm Films Producers Group (IFFPG) were also scheduled for various locations across the County.

**Cllr. TP O'Reilly:** commended the Council on the maintenance of the Bring Centre Network.

**Jim Lyng:** Wilton Waste & Recycling were awarded the contract to service/empty receptacles. This along with daily monitoring by Council staff has seen a 75-80% drop in complaints from the public.

**Sean Guider:** advised the meeting that the routine waste inspections for 2022 were on par with other years and activities under the Council's Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections will

**10. AOB**

No other business arose and the meeting concludes.

**11. Date of next meeting**

The date of the next SPC meeting will be circulated to all members at a later date.