



KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

CLIMATE ACTION

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE 9TH DECEMBER 2020

@ 10AM VIA MS TEAMS

PRESENT

Councillors: Peter Hamilton (Chair), Bill Clear, Fintan Brett, Ciara Galvin, Naoise Ó Cearúil, Fiona McLoughlin Healy,

Sectoral Interests: Judith Browne, PPN – Community/Voluntary
Allan Shine, Business/Commercial
Tom Malone, Agriculture/Farming
Ali Sheridan, PPN - Environmental/ Conservation

Officials: Joe Boland, Director of Services
Alan Dunney, Regional Coordinator CARO
Stephen Deegan, Climate Action Officer
Geraldine Morris, Clerical Officer

The Chair opened the meeting, introduced the agenda and advised a lot of work had been done in previous six weeks, in collaboration with relevant staff (particularly the Climate Action Officer), in developing a strategic approach to climate mitigation and climate adaptation. The main objective of the meeting would be to further develop the SPC workplan and have the input of all SPC members.

Agenda item 1: To approve the Minutes of the Climate Action SPC meeting held on 7th October 2020

Minutes were approved.

Agenda item 2: To consider any matters arising from the minutes

No items were raised.

3. To receive an update on the CCAS from the Climate Action Officer (SD)

The Climate Action Officer gave a summary of the national end of year Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (CCAS) report.

- It was adopted in September 2019 and encompassed all of the Council's adaptation objectives
- The Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) provided a template and reporting tool for this end of year review.
- The Kildare CCAS has 120 actions of which, 73% are ongoing or achieved. The national reporting tool is not a league table as different Local Authorities published different

adaptation objectives. However, in an overall context, Kildare County Council's progression compares very favourably.

- This first review has been more inward focused, driven by the Climate Action Team. There is now a need to enhance partnerships across the county and develop a stronger stakeholder focus.
- Objectives completed include embedding climate action in the Corporate Plan, as well as the appointments both of the Climate Action Officer and Energy Efficiency Officer. In particular, actions delivered under the 'governance theme' were particularly strong.
- Good examples of initiatives across each department were cited. However there are also lots of challenges as outlined in the recent **Ireland's Environment – An Integrated Assessment 2020** (from the EPA). In addition, 2021 will herald significant opportunities:
 - The County Development Plan process commences in early 2021 and climate action will form a key component
 - Climate action is also significantly interwoven in the Corporate Planning process and accordingly, there will be opportunities for this to cascade throughout the organisation through the PMDS process.
 - There will have to be a significant emphasis on 'mainstreaming'
 - In particular, a comprehensive SPC workplan will deliver a strategic approach and drive the mainstreaming / linkage objectives

A draft newsletter/ezine was circulated. The intention is that during Q1 2021 the Climate Action Unit will develop an online digital version using the template provided. The possibility of issuing the ezine via the library software in 2021 will be examined.

The following questions / comments arose:

- a. Various members raised the issue of cycling infrastructure in County Kildare as an area to be progressed. The main points raised were in relation to (i) ensuring all parts of the County get a fair proportion of such projects, (ii) safe cycling to schools for children and (iii) ensuring projects are shovel ready for funding. SD would liaise further with the transport directorate on this.
- b. The meeting was asked if any amendment had been made to a flood alleviation planning risk and flood risk guidelines for Local Authorities since the 2008 version was issued. The Director undertook to follow up.
- c. The CAO was asked to highlight the top 3 most impactful achievements in relation to the CCAS update. In response, the following achievements were particularly marked: embedding climate action in the Corporate Plan, KCC winning big for E & M CARO, as well as the formation of the Climate Action SPC. In addition, the PPN have been very proactive, as had its climate action linkage group. Indeed, the input of all departments into the CCAS process was very positive.
- d. Alan Dunney, Regional Manager E & M CARO advised that the CARO had developed KPI's in accordance with the Climate Charter for reporting national progress. The Climate Action Team will oversee these being applied locally. It was further stated that KPIs should be measurable on the basis of carbon and energy reductions – that metrics would be important to show demonstrable progress

- e. The meeting was informed that the Environment SPC were teasing out the 'native woodlands initiative' and relevant staff were actively looking through the property interest register to identify potential locations.
- f. With the recent appointment of the Energy Officer, there would be a new momentum on gaining energy efficiencies, including publication of a Sustainable Energy Action Plan. Initiatives delivered to date were also acknowledged.
- g. It was agreed that the ezine was a positive initiative.
- h. A brief discussion took place on the Just Transition which focused on the input of CARO to date, including a grant of €255k which was secured for the region for community capacity building. It was agreed that this was a key area going forward, particularly, in light of issues relating to Bord Na Mona.
- i. The meeting was informed that the Kerdiffstown Remedial project represented a good example of green procurement and that a case study on how sustainability had been incorporated into its procurement process was really meritorious. This was also being examined by the Environment SPC with a view to replicating the learning within the wider organisation.
- j. Alan Dunne, Regional Coordinator, gave an overview of the National Climate Action Training plan (approved by CCMA and AILG) and set out the various timelines for roll out. It would be available to all members of staff (indoor/outdoor, technical/administration) as well as elected members and representation from SPC sectoral interests. This roll out had already commenced and a number of streams have already been piloted. There was a current emphasis on the 'on-line' modules.

4/5 SPC to further consider SPC workplan

The Chair acknowledged the work of the Climate Action Officer and advised they had been meeting twice weekly with support from Director. Given the progress on adaptation, there would now be clearer focus on mitigation – reducing greenhouse gases and the associated need to progress a mitigation strategy. This was welcomed by all members of the SPC.

In a presentation, the Chairperson gave some background on the national and local implementation of climate change policy, indicating that the support of the CARO Structure had been central to progress to date. It had signed up to the Climate Action Charter. There was now a Climate Action (amendment) Bill in place with a focus on:

- Net zero 2050 emissions target;
- economy wide carbon budgets commencing in 2021;
- strengthening the role of the Climate Change Advisory Council in proposing carbon budgets;
- all Local Authorities having to prepare individual Climate Action Plans (to include both Adaptation and Mitigation).
- Giving a stronger oversight role for the Oireachtas through an Oireachtas Committee.

It was noted that Minister Eamon Ryan would attend February SPC meeting via video link.

In terms of Ireland's overall carbon emissions it was noted that reductions were evident in the years post the Celtic Tiger, but that progress since had flatlined and more work was therefore, needed.

Priority would be given to publishing a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan [SECAP] in 2021 which would, in particular, inform the baseline for the required new Climate Action Plan.

The main purpose of this SPC meeting was to develop the workplan which would define the role of the SPC in setting the policies and context with an emphasis on prioritisation as well as shaping governance aspects. Another key role would be to determine the correct thematic areas, thus ensuring the SPC had a focus on the strategic delivery of objectives relevant to the Council.

The following questions / comments arose after the presentation.

- a. It was noted that the figures in respect of Carbon Emissions for the county are not yet available. It was suggested that the 2020 figures might not be a true reflection given the impacts related to COVID19
- b. Mention was made again of the schools, travel/cycle ways and DART Plus. The Climate Action Office would liaise directly with internal departments responsible for these areas. Declan Keogh to be invited to present to the SPC.
- c. There was some discussion on the matter of EV Charging points and how best to locate these. It was confirmed that discussion is ongoing with various stakeholders.
- d. Capacity building is very important to give confidence to communities.
- e. Dublin CARO is working on guidance notes for the next roll out of County Development Plans to identify decarbonizing zones in County.
- f. The EM CARO has commenced a research project in relation to business opportunities.
- g. Through the CPG, all SPCs would be encouraged to progress climate related policy initiatives.
- h. In terms of community engagement, it was very important to leave no one behind. There is a need to have tangibles and measurables, so that communities see actual progress on the ground to engage with. Cultural change would have to be encouraged.
- i. The SPC workplan should provide momentum beyond awareness campaigns to identifying deliverable action, funding and projects.

6. Discuss next steps and actions

The Chair summed up by saying that strong ideas have come through and that the structures, where warranted, be further refined in light of the agreed workplan.

7. To note date of next meeting – 10th February 2021 at 10am, venue Council Chamber/MS Teams TBC

It is to be noted that Minister Eamon Ryan is expected to be in attendance on MS Teams at this next meeting and give an overview on the Climate (Amendment) Bill.

It was stated that this forum on MS Teams worked well for some members who would like to see it continue.

The Director of Services thanked the chair for his leadership shown and very useful strategic view taken to the complex issues to hand.

The meeting ended at 12.08.

A number of comments were made in the notes section of MS Team:

Who	What said
10:27 Joe Boland	Establishment of SECs another significant positive
Allan Shine	Just Transition Fund announcement for Allenwood is excellent news recently with €810,000 of funding secured which will enable the park to create 160 "green jobs"
10:34 Cllr Fiona Mc Loughlin Healy	the Community would love to be more involved in consultation around that significant fund for Allenwood Community Development Association. They would really like to be included in a meaningful way.
Ali Sheridan	Would be great to see air quality added in as an issue to address under this banner
Ali Sheridan	There is very clear green procurement guidance available and legislation is coming from EU. Would be great to see KCC move ahead of the mandated changes.
Director of Services	will be a joint meeting of 3 MDs prob in second week in Jan where a presentation re just transition will be given by CAROwill be a good opportunity to explore further possibilities for local interaction
Cllr Fintan Brett	I'm on EMRA and the various regional assemblies in Ireland have 1.195 Billion available between 2021 & 2027- most of this is geared towards climate change & green energy projects.
Ali Sheridan	Emission reductions down approx 9% this year due to Covid ... but for every crisis we have seen in the past, these reductions are only temporary and need policy and infrastructure to be maintained. All indications are that emissions are on the up again as normal behaviour creeps back in

Cllr Ciara Galvin	What's a decarbonising zone?
Stephen Deegan	there's a brief description on the last page of the ezine on Decarb Zones
Allan Shine	Chair, I am happy to present at a future SPC meeting on the JTF for Allenwood, the potential job creation, the green focus for the park etc.
Cllr Fiona McLoughlin Healy	it would be great if could invite members of the community that are interested in what is happening with their community group to that presentation? I think it might be very helpful
Cllr Ciara Galvin	There should always be an ask at the end of training and/or other communications, channel enthusiasm that is out there
Ali Sheridan	Could we get an update on KCC performance against 2020 targets (33% energy etc) so we know the gap we need to close to the new 2030 targets?
Director of Services	CPG can assist with linkage among all SPCs in relation to climate action priorities.