



KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL
CLIMATE ACTION
STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE 12TH MAY 2021
10AM VIA MS TEAMS

PRESENT

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

Sectoral Interests: Judith Browne, PPN – Community/Voluntary
Tom Malone, Agriculture/Farming (had to leave early)
Ali Sheridan, PPN - Environmental/ Conservation

Officials: Joe Boland, Director of Services
Alan Dunney, Regional Coordinator CARO
Paula O'Rourke, Climate Action Officer
Peter Mulhern, Energy Efficiency Officer
Lisa Rothwell, Executive Planner
Geraldine Morris, Clerical Officer

Apologies: Allan Shine, Business/Commercial

AGENDA ITEM 1: TO NOTE THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON 10TH FEBRUARY 2021 AND SPECIAL STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15TH APRIL 2021 (PETER HAMILTON, CHAIR)

10th February: Proposed by Tom Malone, Seconded by Fintan Brett and approved

15th April: Proposed by Naoise Ó Cearúil, Seconded by Bill Clear and approved

AGENDA ITEM 2: TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

It was noted that the submission seeking to designate Maynooth as the candidate town was formally sent to the DHLGH and a reply is awaited.

AGENDA ITEM 3: TO NOTE FINALISED WORK PLAN

The finalised work plan was circulated to the meeting and was duly noted. The Chair stressed that it would be subject to ongoing review.

Top Level Priorities – Driven through Existing Thematic Areas



6 Month Priority Areas:	
Organisational Focus	KCC Climate Action Planning
	Climate Action Bill: Implications for KCC
	CDP: Climate Proofing Inputs: Sustainable Cluster Community Planning
	Roll out all Climate Action Training Pillars
	Mainstreaming across KCC
	Drive broad Community Engagement
6 Month Priority Areas:	
Practical Focus	Transportation Focus: DART+, bus infrastructure
	Cycleway Planning & Funding
	EV Strategy & Infrastructure
	Green Business Supports
	Open Space Plan – carbon, biodiversity, boglands
	Tree planting & carbon sequestration Env SPC collaboration
	Just Transition to leave nobody behind
	Retrofitting Gameplan – public & private
	Maximise sources of Funding

AGENDA ITEM 4: TO NOTE PROPOSED APPOINTMENT OF A GRADUATE TO PROGRESS CLIMATE ACTIVATION INITIATIVES IN THE COMMUNITY AND TO CONSIDER THE SCOPE OF THIS WORK

The meeting was addressed by the Climate Action Officer who advised that as part of a sector-wide programme under the auspices of the Local Government Management Agency, a Graduate had been assigned for the purposes of progressing climate action initiatives within local communities. It was considered to be very worthwhile initiative and would fit in well with a number of the council's key climate change objectives. A brief discussion ensued wherein a number of aspects were clarified. The Director paid particular tribute to the Municipal Districts who had provided seed-funding for climate related community projects.

Action: Initiative endorsed by SPC.

AGENDA ITEM 5: TO NOTE SUBMISSION MADE TO KCC COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN FROM THE CLIMATE ACTION LINKAGE GROUP

The submission was formal noted. A general discussion took place which focused on the quality of the document as well as the need to ensure that, as far as possible, all stakeholders would be brought on board.

Action: Submission noted and commended

AGENDA ITEM 8: TO RECEIVE PRESENTATION FROM LORRAINE BENSON, NATIONAL PEATLANDS COUNCIL AND COLLEAGUES REGARDING A PROPOSAL TO CREATE A NATIONAL PEATLANDS PARK IN CO KILDARE

A detailed presentation was led by Lorraine Benson of the National Peatlands Park Group coordinator along with the following contributors: Jesmond Harding, Ray Stapleton and Tristram Whyte. The purpose was to set out the merits of designating the Bog of Allen area as a National Peatlands Park. This would have, inter alia, the following expected benefits:

- Education, scientific, archeological etc
- A new relationship with peatland heritage
- A change in perceptions and empowering of local communities
- Forming part of a network of similar sites both nationally and internationally

The presentation included conceptual maps, detailed overview of flora and fauna aspects as well as linkages to existing attractions. There would also be significant benefits to the local economy particularly from a tourism perspective.

The main purpose of the presentation was to garner support from the Council (and other stakeholders) particularly for the purpose of including it as an objective as part of the review of the County Development Plan.

A discussion and a question and answer session ensued wherein the proposal was welcomed and the quality of the presentations were lauded. It was noted that discussions had not as yet taken place with the Bord na Móna but the team are looking forward to and preparing for that engagement. Should the project proceed, it should not unduly impinge on other current/future uses. Reference was also made to the desirability of linking the proposal with the national Just Transition impetus.

Action: Presentation noted and commended.

AGENDA ITEM 6: TO RECEIVE UPDATE ON PROPOSED GUIDELINES FOR THE FORTHCOMING CLIMATE ACTION PLAN PER CLIMATE AMENDMENT BILL

An overview of the requirements of the Climate Amendment Bill, when adopted, was outlined by the Climate Action Officer. She focused, in particular, on the need to prepare a Sustainable Energy Climate Action Plan (SECAP) in order to inform the following:

- The Covenant of Mayors
- The SPC Work Plan
- The requirements of the new Climate Action Plan

She referred broadly to current national climate objectives and, in particular, the role of local authorities as being potential exemplars. Tenders for the SECAP consultancy were due to be received later in the day.

Again a question and answer session ensued wherein further clarifications were outlined regarding expected timelines and proposed ministerial guidelines relating to the preparation of the new plans which were expected next October. It was also expected that a 12 month period would be allowed for the preparation of the plans. In this context she suggested that, realistically, initial work should commence over the summer period.

Action: Timelines noted.

AGENDA ITEM 7: TO CONSIDER APPROACH TO DECARBONISING ZONE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The meeting was addressed by Alan Dunney, Regional Coordinator. He confirmed that the Council's formal submission to designate Maynooth as the candidate DZ town had been forwarded to the DHLGH last week. It was envisaged that the DHLGH would prepare guidelines for the preparation of the subsequent implementation plans. He also noted that the SEAI were expected to issue revised

guidelines regarding the establishment of SECs shortly while further work was ongoing regarding best practice in terms of engaging with communities.

Realistically, the DZ implementation plans were likely to be significantly resource heavy and might, for example, include the following aspects:

- Finalisation of community masterplans in the short term
- Commencing retrofitting projects
- Awareness raising in schools to possibly include ideas for branding
- Strengthening partnerships with Maynooth University
- Incorporating the DZ as part of the review of the Maynooth Local Area plan
- Developing the biodiversity corridor
- Strategic transport assessment
- Community activation

A general discussion ensued wherein it was recommended that work should commence sooner rather than later, even in advance of the guidelines. The extent of the effort involved was fully noted, would involve all departments of the council and would also permeate the work of a number of SPCs. The Director of Services reinforced this aspect and stated that the plan would significantly involve collaboration on the part of council staff, elected members, local community and wider stakeholders. The merits of engaging a dedicated project manager should be considered. He undertook to raise these matters to a forthcoming meeting of the Senior Management Team.

The chair referred to the expected level of buy-in on the part of the local community and referred to the initial local excitement which was being generated.

Action: It was recommended that work should commence sooner rather than later in light of the extent of the challenge involved.

AGENDA ITEM 9: TO RECEIVE UPDATED FROM ENERGY MANAGEMENT TEAM

The meeting was addressed by Peter Mulhern, Energy Efficiency Officer, who gave a brief overview of the current priorities of the Energy Management Team to include:

- Achieving ISO 50001 status
- The opening of the Register of Opportunities (big list of energy saving ideas)
- Analysing the Top 20 energy users within the organisation,
- Preparation of the SECAP tender/framework
- Proposed establishment (in conjunction with adjoining counties) of an Energy Bureau

In response to queries, he also advised that energy saving initiatives relating to the library service were being progressed and guidance was awaited in relation to public EV charging points. The Director confirmed that the Council was considering the provision of electric vehicles for its community warden staff. In this context, Councillor Clear referred to the electric vehicles which were supplied by the Postal Service to employees and suggested that this might be considered as a model of good practice.

The Energy Efficiency Officer also confirmed that initiatives would encompass both inward and outward focusing aspects. The Regional Coordinator stressed the extent of work which was ongoing within the organisation in mainstreaming good practice.

Action: Report of Energy Efficiency Officer noted. Importance of driving/mainstreaming initiatives organizationally was emphasised.

AGENDA ITEM 10: NOTICE OF QUESTION:

- A) GLYPHOSATE: CAN AN UPDATE ON THE WORK TO REMOVE GLYPHOSATE BE PROVIDED TO THE SPC. WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE PILOTS AND IS THERE AN ANTICIPATED DATE FOR A COUNTRYWIDE BAN? [JUDITH BROWNE]**
- B) HEDGEROWS: CAN AN UPDATE BE PROVIDED TO THE SPC ON ONGOING WORK TO ENSURE HEDGEROWS ARE NOT CUT AFTER MARCH 1ST AND WHAT PRACTICES ARE IN PLACE TO MONITOR HEDGE CUTTING ACTIVITY AND INCREASE AWARENESS OF THE BIODIVERSITY VALUES OF HEDGEROWS [JUDITH BROWNE]**

These items were taken together. Earlier in the meeting, Mr Tom Malone stressed the importance of the use of Glyphosate to agricultural/horticultural sectors. In his view, subject to being used by licensed operators, such use was safe. He did acknowledge that there were issues elsewhere in society and in other sectors. Differing views were expressed on this aspect wherein reference were made to lawsuits currently being taken against Pharmaceutical Companies. A brief presentation was made by Judith Browne of the PPN which suggested the following actions:

- All KCC staff and contractors would not spray Glyphosate
- Grants to residents and community groups would be contingent on its non-use
- Organic local food producers to be encouraged
- Change in legislation/policy regarding roadside verges
- KCC to embark on a significant public information campaign

She also suggested that the NRA (now TII) be discouraged from its use. She noted, in particular, that Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Council was now “glyphosate-free” as a matter of policy.

Her presentation also highlighted the need for further limiting the cutting of hedgerows.

A detailed discussion ensued wherein the Climate Action Officer advised as follows:

- Within the Council, only the Parks Department was now not using glyphosate
- Realistically, habits were unlikely to change overnight and accordingly education was also a key aspect. The continued rolling out of climate action training will effect change.
- Environmental aspects is now a category for consideration in awarding residential/community grants.
- The Council did not have any direct control over the NRA(TII)
- There were differing requirements in relation to spraying near drains, water course etc. depending on the chemical used.

She also referred to the extensive research which was ongoing, being led by Kildare County Council, in conjunction with Maynooth University. She acknowledged the progress made in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council but highlighted the related resourcing requirements.

Policies relating to the cutting of hedgerows rested primarily with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. In general terms, rather than focusing on the contractors, it would be a better course to interact directly with the employing entities/departments. Where trees were removed it was the policy of the Parks Department to ensure re-planting as part of its tree planting programme where feasible. The ongoing input of the Heritage and Environmental Awareness Officers was acknowledged.

AGENDA ITEM 11: TO NOTE DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 8TH SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 10AM, ARRANGEMENTS TO BE CONFIRMED

Noted - The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and meeting closed at 12.40pm