



KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

CLIMATE ACTION

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE 12TH MARCH 2025

14:30HRS COUNCIL

PRESENT

Councillors: Cllr Daragh Fitzpatrick (Chairperson), Cllr Brian Dooley, Cllr Tim Durkan, Cllr Angela Feeney, Cllr Rob Power, Cllr Brendan Wyse

Sectoral Interests: Nathan Flaherty – PPN Environmental Conservation, Louise Rawlins Traynor – PPN Community/Voluntary, Sinead Rowan – Business Commercial Pillar, Thomas Malone – Agriculture/Farming Pillar

Officials: Marian Higgins, Director of Services
Paula O'Rourke, Climate Action Office Coordinator
Mary Morrissey, Climate Action Officer
Monica Hayes, Graduate Climate Action Team

Speakers: Mary Morrissey, Paula O'Rourke

Apologies: Cllr Brian Dooley, Louise Rawlins Traynor

AGENDA ITEM 1: DECLARATIONS OF (A) CONFLICTS OF INTEREST OR (B) PECUNIARY OR BENEFICIAL INTERESTS UNDER SECTION 177 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001, AS AMENDED.

No conflicts registered.

AGENDA ITEM 2: INTRODUCE COMMITTEE AND CLIMATE ACTION OFFICE TEAM

This is the first meeting of this newly formed SPC. Members of the committee who were present introduced themselves as did members of the Climate Action Office Team

AGENDA ITEM 4: TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM PAULA O'ROURKE (KCC CLIMATE ACTION CO-ORDINATOR) ON AN OVERVIEW OF WHAT ACTIONS HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED IN THE KCC CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (CAP)

Members raised the following points and asked the following questions:

Thomas Malone

The Nurney anaerobic digestion plant is in liquidation due to the fact that the process by which it functions isn't economical. So how does the Grass to Gas plan evolve given this situation when there is no clear policy at national level and there are competing interests.

Cllr Angela Feeney

Commends the Climate Team for the successful project in Demo House and encourages people to go there as it demystifies the process of retrofitting. The uptake of people wishing to visit it has been great. Thanks, and well done to the team on that.

Cllr Brendan Wyse

Impressed by solar array on the Cotton Mills building. How much electricity does it supply this building and is there excess going back to the grid and are you going to store excess electricity

Replies to questions posed:

There are other anaerobic digester plants. If we look to Europe, we can see that there is a focus on this infrastructure there. Even though the Nurney plant has closed there should be development in this area as it's a route to reducing greenhouse gases emissions. A reminder that the Grass to Gas project is looking at how to use waste grass on the LA's own sites.

Thanks for acknowledging the success of the DemoHouse. An acknowledgment of Mary Morrissey's role in this project

Trish Brennan, KCC Energy Officer, is looking into the data related to the solar panels to see how well they are working. There is an audit of the energy efficiency of the building. There is a need for more capacity on the Aras building and while acknowledging that it's the most energy efficient building of the council, there is still a lot to be done with it.

AGENDA ITEM 5: TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM MARY MORRISSEY (KCC CLIMATE ACTION OFFICER) ON AN OVERVIEW OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY CLIMATE ACTION PLAN.

Members raised the following points and asked the following questions:

Thomas Malone

In relation to flooding – is there capacity available to take excess water?
Who is responsible for the various water bodies in the county? How can we work with them? In relation to water cuts, they could take up road space and contents may be polluting. Who then is responsible for this pollution?

Cllr Rob Power

Is there an Environment SPC and if so where does flooding sit between Environment and Climate SPC.

A Central Bank report recognized that flooding events would cripple the insurance industry. Kildare was high on the list as potential for financial damage. We need to be aware of this.

What is the process of rolling out the DZs and are we creating more pilots around the county? How do we look at potential projects where partnerships could be forged between e.g., Bord na Mona and Department of Defense to work with them to create, for example district heating systems, or solar or other energy schemes? In Newbridge for example there is no real process in place to work together on ideas. How do we start those conversations?

Cllr Tom Durkan

In relation to SuDS in older estates, the water is going into sewer lines during heavy downpours. Could we retrofit older estates? Pollution has happened on occasion.

In relation to Insurance companies, they score you and there is an area in Maynooth, Parson St and despite flood relief done there is still high insurance.

Replies to questions posed:

Nature Based SuDS are part of design process measures on new builds. In rural areas, water cuts hold water. Work needs to be done but also education in relation to surface water management. The OPW funds flood relief but there is a need for more funding. Consideration is being given to a workforce team within the council that focuses on drainage and that draws on a cross departmental input from Environment and Planning (?)

Flooding sits with the Environmental SPC but because it's such an important topic Edele O'Brien, Senior Executive Engineer will come to a Climate SPC meeting later in the year to discuss it. Edele will be able to answer some of the questions that have arisen today.

We have a district heating feasibility study and have EU funding for another research project looking at district heating systems. Naas is another place where we are looking at district heating. Also looking at data centers and the biodiversity around them but there are opportunities for the council to work with the private sector in this area. It would be good to work with big players and put ourselves in a new space. It is important to remember that the focus of the CAP is on the LA and where we can influence we will, but Jackie McNabb and her team in LEO would be encouraging businesses to go on that path.

Re Central Bank, premiums could increase in Kildare without an event happening, so we are looking at that

The concept of the DZ is to focus efforts on Maynooth initially and then depending of success of initiatives there, they will be rolled out to other places. Rolling out successful schemes will

be down to funding. A new DZ Officer is set to be appointed soon, and a part of their role will be to explore this area.

AGENDA ITEM 7: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Rob Power requested that due to the frequency of the meetings could presentations be sent beforehand

AGENDA ITEM 8: TO NOTE DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place Wednesday, 14th May in Committee Room (TBC)

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 15:30hrs