

# **Water Services and Environment S.P.C.**

## **Minutes of Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

### **In attendance:**

#### **Elected Members:**

Cllr. Suzanne Doyle (Chair), Cllr. A. Breen, Cllr. B. Dooley, Cllr. I. Cussen, Cllr. V. Liston, Evan Arkwright

#### **KCC Staff:**

Pamela Pender, Mark McLoughlin, Dara Wyer, Ciaran O'Toole, Louise O'Neill, Mark Byrne

#### **Apologies:**

Joe Boland, Cllr B. Wyse, Tom O'Connor, Emer Conway,

#### **In Attendance:**

Garrett Owens - CEO, Collette Ducie - Head of Operations, Mary O'Sullivan - Commercial Sales Director, to provide a presentation on behalf of Future Street Ltd.

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1. The Chair opened the floor to any declarations of pecuniary or beneficial interests under section 177 of the Act, as amended. No declarations were made.
2. The minutes of the meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022, previously circulated, were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Íde Cussen., seconded by Cllr. Anne Breen.
3. The Chair thanked staff members from Innovation, Environment, Transport, Strategic Projects & Public Realm for attending and invited each to introduce themselves to the Committee Members.
4. A detailed presentation, circulated to the Committee members ahead of the meeting, was made by Future Street Ltd staff on the use of solar powered bin compactors and their purpose in providing an alternative sustainable public waste management system. In addition, a "Big Belly" 570 Liter model unit was provided and displayed for

those in attendance. A working demonstration was provided to the members following the presentation.

During the presentation, a panel discussion was facilitated, and queries were put forward for consideration.

Cllr. I. Cussen noted that Dublin City Council currently provides a similar model for recycling purposes in addition to waste and queried the volume of recycling carried out as well as relayed concerns of cross contamination with waste material deposited into units marked for recyclables.

Mr. Owens clarified that although the bin is a compacting bin, the material deposited is done so in a manner that extracts the air and loosely compacts the contents as the primary purpose, thereby leaving the material to be easily sorted at a recycling facility. There are also a variety of units available, both compacting or non-compacting depending on the Council's requirements at individual locations.

It was also noted that data from Madrid suggests on average, 500,000 Liters of recycling material is deposited every 6 months and while cross contamination can occur, the company has evolved the branding of the units over time to assist the public to correctly identify the correct usage for their needs.

Cllr. A. Breen queried the current solar powered bins in place in Poplar Square, Naas, how often they are emptied in comparison to the previous standard bins that they replaced.

It's noted that previous to the 3 Big Belly units currently installed, there were 5 standard bins which were emptied 7 times per week, totaling 35 lifts per week on average count. Since the introduction of the solar powered bins, there has been a reduction to 1 lift per bin each week, totaling 3 lifts.

E. Arkwright raised questions on the wrapping of the units and if this could be used by the Council to sell advertising space to raise a revenue income stream or promote local community groups & projects in the area. He also sought clarification if the

company solely provided units to Local Authorities or could companies purchase the units for business needs.

Mr. Owens confirmed that, whilst the company has initially provided bins to Local Authorities, there has been an increase over the previous 12 months in requests from businesses throughout the country. Typically, these would include retail business parks following successful implementation within the Public Sector with regard not only to service efficiency but litter containment within the unit and pest prevention aspects.

Cllr. V. Liston had concerns about the design element and appreciated the function of the bins, queried if the aesthetics of the bins would suit areas of natural beauty or detract from the local environment.

Mr. Owens confirmed There are multiple units available of varying sizes and function and prior to an installation stage, it's normal procedure to view the area in person and make recommendations based on a number of factors such as footfall, accessibility issues, anticipated frequency of collection as well as the local landscape. It's also noted that whilst it's never the intention of a unit to detract from the local area, it's important that it be easily and readily identified as a bin to passing members of the public to minimise potential street littering.

A working demonstration of the model was provided to all present, allowing an opportunity to view the internal workings of both the compactor as well as the waste containment unit, which is both mobile and telescopic depending on the requirement of the location access and with a view to health and safety of the service operator at point of collection. The units operate on a chute opening, designed to prevent access to the internal compartments by members of the public and the doors are securely locked with unique security keys as opposed to a standard utility access bin. This also helps prevent some misuse of domestic household being input into the unit as the chute opening level can be restricted with different fittings supplied.

It was noted at this point that the units are mobile ready, can be bolted into location of choice and moved to alternate location by MD area staff if required. Each unit is geo-tagged so if moved, it will be flagged on the system as part of an anti-theft measure. The units only require 8 hours of daylight, not sunlight, per month to charge

the battery to capacity so are well suited to the Irish climate provided location is not fully shaded.

Ms. O'Sullivan confirmed that Cosmetic wrappings can be customized and updated upon request, with cost estimated to be between €150 - €300 depending on the requirements. Visually attractive wrappings seem to deter graffiti in place of plain undressed units.

Cllr. S. Doyle queried if cameras could be mounted on the units but there are currently no CCTV options available on the units due to concerns with GDPR policies.

The financial aspects of the units vary depending on the requirements of the Local Authority and the additional maintenance plans available as per budgetary needs. As a rough approximation provided solely as a point to the members, the below was provided.

Full unit purchase, €4,000 - €5,000 per unit with no additional maintenance options. Any maintenance options would be in addition to the initial costing. Rental cost can be €1,200 per annum, which would include a maintenance visit to inspect, clean and service the unit.

Dara Wyer was invited to provide his insight as Environmental Awareness Officer and he noted the following:-

As the units are almost flat topped, it may encourage waste to be left behind on the unit rather than within the unit. If the Council were to consider the use of solar powered compactors, he highlighted the need to avoid the provision of hybrid options containing Big Belly units in addition to the standard street unit currently in use.

He welcomed the idea that the units contain the waste fully, preventing vermin and wildlife from accessing the contents. He also noted that they are visually appealing and cannot be opened by members of the public. He further mentioned the potential benefit of a reduction in the number of plastic bin liners-used-currently.

A figure was provided that Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown replaced 520 existing standard bin units with 401 Big Belly units and achieved a significant reduction in the use of plastic bag by forgoing bin liners and cleaning the internal units from time to time at

their local depot. The bags are widely available for sourcing by each Local Authority should they wish to.

Cllr. Liston queried the process for analyzing the situation to determine whether a solar powered bin compactor would be desirable in a location. Cllr. Doyle noted that Mark McLoughlin has endeavored to bring the information to the Municipal District area engineers to carry out a data analysis on current costings, concerns, and location optimization before coming back to the Committee with a recommendation on implementation. The Committee could then explore and discuss the recommendation. The Chair further noted that it is all at a relatively early stage and should it be envisaged that it may be implemented, there would be a lengthy process including a tendering process to be followed.

5. The Chair invited proposals to be put forward from Committee Members for items to be considered for future SPC Agendas.
  - E. Arkwright put forward a proposal to arrange an on-site visit to Green Generation, which is a biogas facility in County Kildare. The aim would be to better understand and appreciate how the business has transformed organic waste into energy sources and fertilizer byproducts and in doing so, shifted its core business model to now reflect that of a green energy producer.
  - Cllr. V. Liston would like to see a discussion surrounding Citizen Science, with a focus on data generated locally by citizens of County Kildare and the recognition by Kildare County Council of this data in addition to official data sources such as Environmental Protection Agency.
  - The Chair has requested that this proposal be clarified further at a future meeting with a view to how it would align with the Strategic Policy Committee function. Cllr. Doyle requested if Cllr. Liston could arrange for a suitable person to attend for a presentation of Citizen Science to clarify, with the notion that it follows on into LECP, Local Economic & Community Plan. Citizen Science is research carried out by members of the public who volunteer to collect scientific data. This research often focuses on monitoring biodiversity, invasive species and climate and is fed directly into the Environmental Protection Agency.

Cllr. Cussen raised concerns around obtaining information on ownership of lands that are immediately adjacent to the rivers in the County, whether it be the Local

Authority or private owners with a view to who would be responsible for that section of the river The Chair suggested that this is more of an issue to the use of GDPR and should be seen more of a topic for the full Council instead of an SPC issue under policy. The question could be refined to reflect the parameters of GDPR use.

6. The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023, details confirmed later as The Curragh Racecourse, Newbridge, Co. Kildare, to commence at 14:00.

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