

To the Mayor and Each Member of Limerick City and County Council

**Chairperson's Report for the Environment Strategic Policy Committee Meeting
of 22nd October, 2018.**

Item 1: Minutes of Environment SPC Meeting held on 25th June, 2018

The Minutes of the meeting of the Environment SPC held on 25th June, 2018 were proposed by Cllr. Hourigan, seconded by Cllr. Keller and unanimously adopted.

Item 2: Presentation on Waste Plastics and opportunities for reuse/recycling in building materials, roads and pavements – Mr. Mark McConnell, ECOS Environmental Consultants

Mr McConnell gave a presentation to the Committee on the opportunities for re-use/recycling of waste plastic materials. He noted that currently China imports most of Ireland's waste plastics, but from this year will no longer accept many plastic waste streams.

He identified that there are a number of examples of innovative reuse/recycling of plastics including building materials, roads materials, signage/advertising hoardings, and garden and street furniture. He noted that by adopting these materials there was the potential to create jobs, promote R&D, increase exports, enhance sustainability and reduce pollution. In welcoming the presentation Members stated that the innovative uses described in the presentation would be viable solutions to disposing of waste plastics.

Item 3: Presentation on the Noise Action Plan – Ms. Anne Goggin

Ms Goggin confirmed that the third Noise Action Plan for Limerick had recently been adopted. It covers the period 2018-2023. It is intended that the Council will undertake noise modelling on identified noise hot spots in 2019 and will in turn develop interventions that will try to address the issues. The Members welcomed the presentation and sought clarity on a number of noise related matters, to which Ms Goggin responded.

Cllr Hurley proposed that the Council should call on Transport Infrastructure Ireland to begin research into developing recycled plastic noise abatement barriers. Cllr Teefy seconded this proposal.

Item 4: Update on Invasive Species Initiatives – Ms. Anne Goggin

Ms Goggin provided an update on progress of the pilot project for treating Japanese Knotweed in the Newcastle West area. She confirmed that spraying has begun on a number of sites in 2018. She advised that spraying over three years will be required to eradicate Japanese Knotweed successfully, and that monitoring of the sites for a further two years will be undertaken to ensure that the plant does not recur. The Members welcomed the initiative.

Item 5: Presentation on the Limerick Conscious Cup Campaign and the #RunReuseRefill run – Ms. Sinead McDonnell

Kings Island Conscious Cup Campaign - Ms McDonnell advised that this is a part of a national campaign that aims to reduce and eventually eliminate the use of single-use cups. There are currently 10 businesses on Kings Island participating, which offer customers a 20c discount on the price of a cup of tea or coffee where the customer brings their own re-usable cup to the business.

#RunReuseRefill Run – This is a joint initiative between the Council and St. Michael’s Rowing Club, aimed at reducing the use of “single use” plastics at the club’s annual fundraising run. By using re-usable plastic cups supplied by the Council, the event organisers reported a reduction in discarded plastic waste, the saving of nine volunteer hours in litter picking and cost saving for the club. This also allows the cups to be re-used and shared with other community-based groups for similar events in the future.

Ms McDonnell stated that the initiative was an opportunity to influence behavioural change around plastic packaging, and was seeking the support of the Committee to develop a policy around restrictions on the use of “one-off” packaging/items. The Members thanked Ms McDonnell for both presentations and welcomed both initiatives as innovative responses to the problem of “single-use” plastics.

Recommendation 1:

That the Council write to Transport Infrastructure Ireland calling on it to conduct research into the possibility of introducing Recycled Plastic Noise Abatement Barriers on its motorways.

Recommendation 2:

That the Council considers developing a policy on restricting the procurement and use of single-use plastics, to cover all Council activities, and to support other business / organisations endeavouring to do the same.

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Jerome Scanlan

Chairperson of the Environment Strategic Policy Committee