



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

Stiúrthóireacht na Forbartha Fisiciúil,
Comhairle Cathrach agus Contae Luimnigh,
Ceanncheathrú Chorporáideach,
Cé na gCeannaithe,
Luimneach

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Minutes of the Meeting of Limerick City & County Council Environment Strategic Policy Committee held on Monday 22nd October 2018 at 10:00 a.m. in the Council Chamber, Dooradoyle, Limerick.

Present:

Councillors Scanlan, (Chairperson), Gilligan, Gleeson, Hourigan, Hurley, Keller, McCreesh, Secas, Sheahan (J), Teefy.

Apologies:

Councillors McMahon, Collins (J), Collins (M), Daly, O'Hanlon, Ryan.

Sectoral Reps:

Mr. Mark McConnell, Mr. Seamus Leahy.

Apologies

Officials:

Mr. Brian Kennedy (Director of Service), Mr. Dara McGuigan (Acting Senior Executive Officer), Ms. Anne Goggin (Senior Executive Engineer), Ms. May Fitzgerald (Assistant Staff Officer) Ms. Amy O'Halloran (Clerical Officer).

The Chairperson Cllr. Jerome Scanlan opened the meeting.

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

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

Members pointed out that the proposed Eastern and Midlands Water Supply Project had been referred by the Minister for an independent review. In light of the proposed review, Members queried how the merits of existing reports on the project would be assessed against the outcome of the review process.

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

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 this had changed. In addition, the range of plastic products which are currently accepted for recycling by waste companies is limited. This requires us to think differently about how we deal with this waste stream.

He outlined a number of approaches to addressing this issue: minimisation and prevention, reuse/recycling and incineration. He noted that incineration was the least preferred option and was not cost effective.

He identified that there are a number of examples of innovative reuse/recycling of plastics including building materials, roads materials and signage/advertising hoardings, garden and street furniture, many of which are manufactured here in Ireland.

He discussed the need for these materials to have a circular lifecycle – when they reach end of life they can be recycled for reuse in another form - and identified that a move towards using these type of innovative products would have to be policy driven, taking into account the regulatory environment and the commercial viability of using the recycled plastics.

He noted that by adopting these materials there was the potential to create jobs, promote R&D, increase exports and enhance sustainability citing the reduction in disposal of waste plastics and bitumen use in roads.

In welcoming the presentation Members stated that many of the innovative uses described in the presentation would be viable solutions to disposing of waste plastics. They were supportive of more awareness initiatives on this topic and acknowledged that Ireland cannot continue to export its waste materials indefinitely. Members advised that there would likely be opposition to the use of plastics in building/roads materials from existing suppliers. Members called for greater enforcement against waste plastic generators.

Mr McConnell acknowledged the views of the Members and agreed that materials would have to meet the regulatory standards before they could be introduced. He reiterated that this presented an opportunity to Limerick to lead in this area, in conjunction with waste collectors, research and development and the residential and commercial sectors. He said that it was important that a strategy/policy guide the process.

Mr. Kennedy welcomed the presentation and agreed to arrange a meeting with Mr McConnell to discuss this subject in more detail.

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

Ms Goggin confirmed that the Noise Action Plan had recently been adopted. It covers the period 2018-2023. She noted that noise pollution is ranked as the second most common cause of pollution related illness by the WHO. The Action Plan is the third such round of noise planning. The European Union Environmental Noise Directive 2002, as enacted by the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 give effect to the Plan. Ms Goggin noted that the Action Plan must now be incorporated into the City and County Development Plan.

The Action Plan may have implications for future developments; however she advised that it would be in developer's interests to undertake noise abatement assessments when considering any development.

In developing the Action Plan the Council has identified noise hot spots mainly along national roads and in the city centre. It is intended that the Council will undertake noise monitoring and modelling on these hot spots and will in turn develop interventions that will try to address the issues. The Action Plan also provides for the protection of "Quiet Areas".

The Members welcomed the presentation and asked regarding timeframes for the roll out of the monitoring and interventions, and what the cost of this would be; whether the Council had prosecuted offenders for noise pollution; whether the Council required soundproofing in apartments and Council owned properties.

In response, Ms Goggin advised that the Council is currently seeking tenders for the supply of the modelling equipment, which should be completed by year-end. Modelling would most likely start in 2019, initially focussing on the Castletroy area. As regards cost of interventions that would differ on a case by case basis. She advised that the Planning and Environmental Services Section does prosecute offenders under the noise provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency Act, and that individuals could take a private case to the District Court. The Council's Building Control Section deals with issues regarding sound-proofing/insulation of buildings.

Cllr Hurley proposed that the Council should call on TII 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 with the pilot project for treating Japanese Knotweed in the Newcastle West area. She confirmed that staff have received training in the identification and treatment of the species, and that spraying has begun on a number of sites in 2018. Ms Goggin advised that spraying over three years will be required to eradicate Japanese Knotweed successfully at these sites, and that monitoring of the sites for a further two years will be undertaken to ensure that the plant does not recur.

She advised that some areas around the city have been treated in previous years. It is hoped to extend the pilot to the Rathkeale area in 2019.

Members asked whether contractors/farmers were sufficiently aware of the ease that the plant can be spread; if spraying was an effective method of treatment; and what alternatives to Round Up were available given recent court proceedings in the US.

Ms Goggin responded that the Council continues to work with contractors to raise awareness of how invasive species can be unwittingly spread; confirmed that spraying has been found to be an effective method for eradicating Japanese Knotweed; and confirmed that while Round Up has recently had its licence extended for another five year period, the Council is liaising with suppliers to find alternatives to Round Up should it be banned.

The Members thanked Ms Goggin for her update.

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

Kings Island Conscious Cup Campaign - Ms McDonnell gave a presentation on the Kings Island Conscious Cup Campaign. 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 (and 10 other businesses in other parts of the city and county) 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.

The campaign is proving very popular with the businesses. It is intended to expand the initiative to include lunch boxes.

#RunReuseRefill Run – This is an annual event run by St. Michael’s Rowing Club. In previous years the club incurred costs in purchasing water (approx. €250), and in voluntary litter picking after the event. In an effort to reduce the use of one-off plastic bottles, the club approached the Council with a view to seeking alternative options. Ms McDonnell advised that in 2017 approximately 500,000 discarded plastic bottles were collected as part of the TLC event.

The solution involved the club providing water to participants in reusable plastic cups supplied by the Council. These cups were given out at the midway point of the 10km run and collected in skip bags about 200m further on. This resulted in a reduction in the amount of plastic waste and saved approximately nine volunteer hours in litter picking. The cups were washed, cleaned and are ready for reuse. Ms McDonnell advised that there is potential for these cups to be shared with other community-based groups for similar events. She said that

sustainability was an area where many Tidy Towns groups have not successfully addressed and initiatives such as the Conscious Cup Campaign and the #RunReuseRecycle Run could assist groups in achieving higher marks under this criterion.

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 and commented on how awareness of the issue is the first step in creating solutions to the problem.

Items 6 and 7 on the Agenda were deferred to the next meeting of the Committee, which is scheduled for 10 December, 2018.

The meeting then concluded.

