

Minutes of the Meeting of Limerick City & County Council Environment Strategic Policy Committee held on Monday 25 February, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. in the Council Chamber, Dooradoyle, Limerick.

Present:

Councillors Scanlan, (Chairperson), Collins (J), Collins (M), Daly, Gilligan, Gleeson, Hourigan, Hurley, Keller, McCreesh, O'Hanlon, Ryan, Secas, Sheahan (J), Teefy, Mr. Mark McConnell, Mr Seamus Leahy.

Apologies:

In Attendance:

Officials:

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

Item 1: Minutes of Environment SPC Meeting held on 10 December, 2018

The Minutes of the meeting of the Environment SPC Meeting held on 10 December, 2018 were proposed by Cllr. Hourigan, and seconded by Cllr. Hurley and unanimously adopted.

Item 2: Presentation on the Limerick City and County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy – Mr Dara McGuigan, A/S.E.O. and Mr. Tom O'Neill, Heritage Officer.

Mr McGuigan advised the Committee that the Physical Development Directorate, in conjunction with Economic Development Directorate, was preparing a draft Climate Change Adaptation Strategy in accordance with the requirements of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Act 2015 and the National Adaptation Framework.

The Strategy would attempt to address how the Council will adapt its plans, processes and policies to take account of the current and future effects of climate change-related extreme weather events, to minimise the harmful effects and exploit any beneficial opportunities of climate change.

The local authority sector is one of 12 sectors nationally which are charged with producing climate adaptation strategies in 2019. The deadline for adoption of the Strategies is 30th September, 2019. He advised that the Strategy was being drafted at present, and that the Members would have an opportunity to comment on it during a public consultation period later in the process.

The Members welcomed the presentation and raised a number of matters relating to the impacts of Climate Change on Limerick and the country as a whole.

Item 3: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor M Collins

“I will move at the next meeting that this Municipal District will impose a voluntary ban on election posters for this year’s Council, European and any Referenda elections taking place on 24th May 2019.”

In proposing the Motion Cllr Collins explained that the Members in the Newcastle West District had agreed to the voluntary ban on election posters during the forthcoming elections, and that he had proposed at the District Meeting that the Motion should be sent forward to the Strategic Policy Committee for discussion with a view to recommending that the Full Council adopt the voluntary ban.

Cllr Collins stated that it takes 400 years for “corriboard” to biodegrade. During the 2014 elections there were an estimated 611,000 posters manufactured, resulting in the generation of approximately 363 tonnes of CO². Posters were detrimental to marine life and the environment in general. Posters could also become a health and safety issue for drivers and the public alike. He called on all candidates to go poster free for the forthcoming elections.

In response, Mr Kennedy advised that legislation currently permits candidates to erect election posters within certain timeframes. It is not therefore an offence for election candidates to erect and display posters, if they comply with the relevant time periods set out in the legislation. He went on to state that the Council would not be in a position to enforce against breaches of the voluntary ban were this to occur.

The Members debated the Motion at length, setting out the pros and cons of the motion. The key element for many was the voluntary nature of the proposed ban. Following agreed amendments to the wording of the Motion, Cllr Collins proposed that the amended wording be sent to Full Council for consideration. Cllr O’Hanlon seconded the Motion.

‘I will move at the next meeting of the Full Council that all election candidates of this Council agree to a voluntary ban on the erection of election posters for all elections.’

Item 4: Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Gilligan

“I will move at the next meeting that this Council immediately enact local bye-laws making all refuse collectors charge customers only on a pay by weight basis.”

In proposing the Motion, Cllr. Gilligan stated that the only payment option open to waste collectors should be pay-by-weight, as a flat rate charge ran contrary to waste reduction policy.

In responding, Mr Kennedy pointed out that between September 2017 and September 2018 the flat rate option had been phased out. The only charging options open to waste collectors now were pay-by-weight or pay-by-lift. He went on to say that, the phasing out of the flat-rate fee offering by waste collectors has been conditioned by the National Waste Collection Permit Office in Offaly (NWCPO), through the individual Household Collector's Permit Conditions. The introduction of separate byelaws to regulate this would not therefore be appropriate.

Following discussion by the Members, Cllr Gilligan thanked the Director for his response.

The meeting then concluded.