

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

Chairperson's Report of the Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 13 October, 2020.

Item 1: Adopt Minutes of Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee of the 9th July 2020:

The minutes were proposed by Cllr. Galvin and, seconded by Cllr. Sheehan (M), and adopted.

Item 2: Director's Update:

Mr. Kennedy presented the Director's Report and referred to correspondence and acknowledgement letter received from Minister Charlie McConalogue, TD concerning the establishment of a national animal cruelty register.

Ms. Hayes asked about item in the minutes regarding the cost to purchase a public toilet. In response Mr. Kennedy said that this will be considered as part of Budget 2021.

Item 3. To approve the proposed 2021 dates for the Climate Action Biodiversity and Environment SPC:

The proposed dates for 2021 Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment SPC meetings were approved.

Item 4. Update on the preparation of a Management Plan for Westfields Wetlands (Feidhlim Harty, FH Wetland Systems Ltd)

Mr. Harty updated the members on progress in the preparation of a Management Plan for Westfields Wetlands, covering elements including reed removal, water quality, pollution control, non-native invasive species, training and awareness for Council staff and public, interconnectivity of the water bodies and biodiversity.

Members welcomed the update and discussed vegetation and algal growth; water quality status; and nutrient levels and causes of same.

Item 5. Update on Grass Cutting Programme 2020 and the "Let it Bee" Campaign (Anne Goggin, Senior Executive Engineer, LCCC)

Ms. Goggin gave an update on the Grass Cutting Programme for 2020 and Let it Bee campaign and confirmed that a grass cutting policy is in development, which is being informed by the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.

Members welcomed the update and discussed grass cutting in residential areas; the need for proper consultation with residents regarding any proposed changes to grass cutting regimes; the expansion of the Let it Bee initiative to other areas; non-chemical treatment of non-native invasive plant species; and improved communication and public awareness of biodiversity initiatives.

Item 6. Update on Review of Use of Herbicides by LCCC (Anne Goggin, Senior Executive Engineer, LCCC)

Ms. Goggin gave the presentation on the review and noted that Glyphosate is the only herbicide in use by the Council. It is not used in large quantities and only on hard surfaces for cleansing and in parks. She advised that on foot of the review we would hope to reduce and eliminate their use over time, particularly in parks. She acknowledged that there was a need to review our contract for weed control and look at other non-chemical weed control methods.

Ms McDonnell noted that the national Tidy Towns competition has been pushing to reduce and eliminate the use of herbicides.

Members expressed the need to find alternatives to Glyphosate and discussed alternative weed control treatments.

Item 7. Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr S. Hartigan (referred from Full Council meeting)

“I will move at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council engage with Councillors to identify ways to limit the widespread use of election posters, for example, displaying posters at strategic locations in communities as an alternative to widespread postering on poles”.

In proposing the Motion, Cllr Hartigan noted a single poster takes 400 years to breakdown. He stated 77% of Irish people believe election posters should be scrapped, they are made from corrugated plastic, a lot of work goes into erecting them and taking them down. He suggested a designated area in each village for display of posters.

Mr. Kennedy replied that while a voluntary ban on posters could be entered into by candidates, it is likely a change in legislation would be required to limit the placement of election posters to designated areas within towns and villages.

While supporting the spirit of the Motion, Members expressed concerns regarding the ability to enforce any voluntary ban or limitation on the number of posters displayed without legislative change; the perceived inequity of a voluntary ban/limit on new candidates; and concerns regarding how and by whom designated postering sites would be chosen. Cllr Hartigan expressed his disappointment with the lack of support from the Members for his

motion. Mr. Kennedy suggested that the Committee would write to the Minister calling on him to review the existing legislation. Cllr Hartigan welcomed that proposal.

Item 8. Question submitted by Ms. Hayes

“In respect of the Archaeological excavations conducted recently as part of the King's Island Flood Relief Scheme application, with particular reference to the Medieval and Viking Quarter area around St. Mary's Cathedral, The Court House, Potato Market and Council offices

(a) Were any underground tunnels or walls or other structures located?

(b) If so, what were the findings and have the findings been recorded?

(c) Were any Artefacts located? If so, have these been transferred to the National Museum? Is there a list of these available and an estimation of the period they are from?”

A written response to Ms. Hayes' question was circulated prior to the meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:

Jerome Scanlan

Chairperson

09/11/2020