



**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 Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 4pm via Video Conference**

Cllr. Scanlan, Chairperson, opened the meeting and welcomed the members to the first SPC of 2021.

**Item 1: Adopt Minutes of Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee of the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020:**

The minutes were proposed by Cllr Michael Collins, seconded by Cllr Michael Sheahan, and adopted.

**Item 2: Presentation on the National Water Resources Plan (NWRP) Draft Framework - Consultation 2 (Sonja Reidy, Senior Executive Officer, Water Services)**

Ms. Reidy gave a presentation and update on the National Water Resources Plan (NWRP) Draft Framework - Consultation 2.

The NWRP is Irish Water's plan to identify how they will provide a safe, sustainable, secure and reliable water supply to their customers now and into the future, whilst safeguarding the environment. The NWRP will set out how Irish Water will balance the supply and demand for drinking water over the short, medium and long term. It will be a 25-year strategy.

The members discussed the presentation and expressed their concerns around Limerick being grouped in the same region as Dublin; and the proposed pipe line to pump water from Lough Derg to the greater Dublin area. The lack of timelines around the NWRP, and the lack of alignment with regional and national Development Plans was also of huge concern to the members.

A detailed discussion ensued. Members strongly advocated that (i) the submission would argue that Limerick would not be included in Group 4 Region which included Dublin; (ii) that

Limerick would argue that no water should be taken from the Shannon; (iii) that Limerick would call on Irish Water to address leakage issues in Dublin and Limerick.

In conclusion, Ms Reidy proposed to include the following as part of the submission from the Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment SPC:

- This Committee states its objection to the extraction of water from the River Shannon to service water supply issues in Dublin and that the efforts of Irish Water should be concentrated in relation to repairing leaks in the existing networks in Dublin and Limerick.
- Regional Water Resource Plans should be aligned with the Regions expressed in the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies.
- Aim to provide a guaranteed supply of water to the towns and villages in the County of Limerick having regard to the drought conditions experienced in 2018 in East Limerick.
- Identify funding and timeframe for water supply projects noting impact on Limerick City & County Development Plan.

The members concurred with this proposal.

The Chair, Cllr Scanlan, at the request of the members, agreed to discuss the possibility of a joint meeting of the Economic Development and Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment SPCs with his counterpart on the Economic Development SPC, Cllr Eddie Ryan.

**Item 3. Notice of Motion submitted by by Councillor S. Hartigan** (Referred from the Metropolitan District Meeting held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2020)

“I will move at the next Meeting that Limerick City and County Council introduce an “Ancient Tree” scheme to encourage the planting or retention of a single community tree in all new housing developments and suitable existing communities with the Council and community pledging to care for this individual tree until it reaches the Ancient tree category age of 400 years +.” The proposal was seconded by Cllr O’Brien.

The Director of Service Mr. Kennedy, in response to the Notice of Motion confirmed that:

“We are currently in the process of developing a Tree Management Strategy for Limerick City and County. It is intended that the Strategy would include guidance on tree planting in new/existing developments, and consideration on the most suitable trees to plant in a particular location.

The concept of adopting a tree in a public space does not appear to be as widespread in Ireland as in other countries, for example the UK. The Tree Council in England, working through local councils and community organisations operates a tree champions and tree

wardens' scheme, which engage communities in the planting and preservation of trees in their localities.

This concept is something we can explore further in the context of the development of our Tree Management Strategy."

Cllr Sheahan (K) welcomed this initiative and proposed that every parish in the county should have 1 acre to plant native trees, adding he knows of an area in Askeaton that would be suitable. It was agreed that Ms Anne Goggin would follow up with Cllr Sheahan (K) in this regard.

Cllr Hartigan welcomed the response.

### **Any Other Business**

The Chair raised the matter of an e-mail circulated to all SPC members regarding the forthcoming Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) between the European Union and Canada. Mr. Hedderman proposed writing to Minister Eamon Ryan and the Tánaiste Leo Varadkar requesting that the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) be discussed fully in the Oireachtas.

This motion was seconded by Cllr Sheahan (K), and supported by Ms. Gabbott.

Mr. Kennedy noted that this will need to go before the March full Council meeting for approval.

Cllr Collins (B) advised that she had attended a biodiversity webinar on the Queen Bumble Bee. Queen Bumble Bees come out of their hives at this time of year and their main source of food is the Dandelion and Willow blossom. On a walk of the Adare river bank recently she saw it being trimmed back which was full of Blossom from the Willow plant. She asked that the trimming back of the Willow Blossom be delayed until later in the year. Cllr Hartigan expressed his support.

Mr. Kennedy undertook that the Council would liaise with Waterways Ireland/OPW regarding this practice.

The Chair concluded the meeting.

### **Recommendations:**

**Recommendation 1:**

“That, Limerick City and County Council write to Mr Leo Varadkar TD, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, and Mr Eamon Ryan TD, Minister for Transport and Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications calling on them to ensure that the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) between the European Union and Canada be discussed fully in the Oireachtas.”

*Jerome Scanlan*

**Councillor J. Scanlan,  
Chairperson – Climate Action,  
Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee.**