

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

### Chairperson's Report of the Meeting of the Climate Action Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee of Tuesday 18 October, 2022.

#### **Item 1: Adopt minutes of the Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 21st June, 2022 .**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st June 2022 were proposed by Cllr Collins (B) and seconded by Cllr Sheahan K.

#### **Item 2 : Directors Report**

Nuala Gallagher, Director of Services outlined the report in relation to

- Green Blue Infrastructure Strategy
- Climate Action Plan
- Westfields Wetlands Reed Removal

She advised that an update on progress on development of the Council's Climate Action Plan would be given at the December meeting of the Committee.

#### **Item 3 : Draft Litter Management Plan 2022-2024: (Shane O'Doherty, Administrative Officer)**

Mr Shane O'Doherty, Administrative Officer, gave a detailed presentation on the the Draft Limerick Litter Management Plan 2022-2024. Topics covered included the process for developing the Plan, definitions of litter, and details of the categories of litter most prevalent in Limerick. He went through the 8 objectives outlined in the Plan and the actions under these.

Mr O'Doherty noted that the trends in the IBAL Reports for Limerick are towards improvement. He advised that €117,000 had been spent in 2022 on 28 litter projects; that over 1,500 complaints had been received YTD; that in excess of 4,300 inspections have been carried out; 216 on the spot fines had been issued, which resulted in 42 court cases and 22 convictions for littering. The payment rate for on the spot fines was 50%.

He advised that the Plan would be placed on public display for 30 days, after which it would be presented to Full Council for consideration.

#### **Item 4. Update on the EGLA Biodiversity Conference: (Sinead McDonnell, Environmental Awareness Officer)**

Sinead McDonnell gave a detailed update on the recent EGLA Biodiversity Conference held at The Strand Hotel. Details were outlined on the topics and different speakers over the 2 days of conference.

She advised that the outcomes of the conference would inform the development of the National Biodiversity Plan. She told members that the deadline for submissions for Draft National Biodiversity Plan is 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

**Item 5. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor E. O’Donovan (to be referred to the Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee)**

In proposing the motion, Cllr O’Donovan proposed Limerick City and County Council provide a clean air zone in Limerick City Centre similar to Cork City project that successfully launched in April 2022. She had seen the initiative in Cork, and had spoken with local Councillors in that regard. Cork City Council is currently monitoring air quality, and once the data has been analysed actions will be put in place to track improvements. She requested that Limerick City and County Council speak with our counterparts in Cork City Council about this initiative.

In response, Ms Gallagher, Director of Service said that the Cork Clean Air Zone was launched in April 2022 and includes Oliver Plunkett Street and adjacent streets that have been pedestrianised. Cork City Council began monitoring air quality in the zone in September 2022 and its effectiveness has not yet been demonstrated.

Limerick City and County Council manages a network of its own and EPA air quality monitors in Limerick City and the suburbs. Air quality in Limerick City is good - it meets European norms.

Details of air quality in Limerick are publicly available on the Council’s website [www.limerick.ie](http://www.limerick.ie), the link for which is <https://www.limerick.ie/council/services/environment/environmental-control/air-quality#Air%20Quality%20Monitoring%20in%20Limerick>

In addition, details of air quality monitored by EPA Air Monitoring equipment is publicly available on the Air Quality.ie website on the following link: <https://airquality.ie/>

Declaring a clean air zone within Limerick City centre at present is not appropriate. Limerick City and County Council, along with all Local Authorities, has submitted proposals for a decarbonisation zone in Limerick City and is awaiting approval from the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications. The initiative, if approved, will aim to reduce carbon emissions in the Study Area, Limerick City centre, by the national target of 51% by 2030. The aim of reducing carbon emissions will form part of the Council’s Climate Action Plan, to be prepared in 2023, and should have a positive impact on reducing air pollutants in the decarbonisation zone. The Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment SPC and full Council will be consulted in the process of preparing the Climate Action Plan.

The motion was seconded by Cllr Benson. Ms Ailís Ní Chofaigh, on behalf of the Limerick PPN, also supported Cllr O’Donovan’s motion and commented that the World Health Organisation has identified lower air quality limits than the EPA has identified and that these lower limits are not being met at O’Connell St., Limerick.

Cllr O’Donovan thanked the Director for her response.

**Item 6: Question submitted by Ms Ailís Ní Chofaigh on behalf of the PPN Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Linkage Group**

Limerick City and County Council to create an awareness campaign around Septic Tank Maintenance – we would ask Limerick Environment to put together a digital information leaflet on “How to Maintain

Septic Tanks”, why it is important, and advice on what people need to be aware of (including regulations regarding maintenance). This should be promoted across their digital platforms – social media and the Council website and shared in the Council newsletter/e-mail. As less than 1% of septic tanks are regularly maintained nationally, this is a serious concern for water pollution in Limerick.

A response was circulated prior to the meeting.

Before closing the meeting Cllr Galvin proposed that a new time of 2.30pm be agreed for all future CABE SPC meetings. This was seconded by Cllr Collins (B).

Next meeting of the CABE SPC - **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2.30pm at Council Chamber, MQ.**

The meeting subsequently ended.

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**Liam Galvin**

**Chairperson of the Climate Action Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee**