

Chairperson's Report of the Blended Meeting of Limerick City & County Council Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee held on Tuesday 12th September, 2023 at 2.30pm.

Members Present:

Cllr. Galvin, (Chairperson), Cllr. Carey, Cllr. Collins (B), Cllr Egan, Cllr Scanlan, Cllr O'Donoghue, Cllr Secas, Cllr Sheahan (K), Cllr Sheahan (M), Cllr Talukder, Ms M. Hayes, Ms Dee Ryan, Ms M. Hurley, Cllr J Leddin, Cllr Teskey

Officials Present:

Mr V. Murray (DOS), Mr. D. McGuigan (Administrative Officer), Ms. C. Lynch (Senior Ex. Engineer), Mr D. Ryan (Staff Officer), Ms. S. Hourigan (Administrative Officer), Mr A. Finn (Senior Engineer), C. Brodie (Senior Executive Scientist), Ms S McDonnell (Environmental Awareness Officer), Ms P King (SRWM), Mr K. Reeves (Climate Action Coordinator), Mr D. Barry (Community Climate Action Officer)

Apologies:

Caillum Hedderman

Item 1 - Adopt minutes of the Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 13th June, 2023.

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th June 2023 were proposed by Cllr. Collins (B) and seconded by Cllr. Talukder

Item 2 – Presentation and discussion on the development of the Westfields Management Plan (Executive Scientist, Cathal Brodie)

Senior Executive Scientist, Mr Cathal Brodie gave a presentation on the Westfields Management Plan. The objectives of the plan were to;

- Assess the water quality and the ecological health of the area as measured by the habitats, flora and fauna in the area.
- Use this information, and feedback from a process of public engagement, to provide a framework to facilitate on the long term management and maintenance of Westfields.

Members queried the following; what were the next steps in implementing the plan, how would improvements to the area be assessed going forward.

Item 3 – Presentation and discussion on the development of the Limerick Climate Action Plan (Climate Action Coordinator, Kieran Reeves)

Kieran Reeves gave a very detailed presentation on the Limerick Climate Action Plan. The presentation outlined in detail the major changes happening under the plan. The plan was outlined in 4 stages

- Context
- Requirements
- Work done to date
- Timelines

The timeframe of the Limerick Climate Action Plan is for the plan to be drafted, going to public consultation in October/November 2023 with the plan to be adopted by March 2024.

Members discussed the following, whether the Council is committed to reducing emissions by 50% by 2050; the recent flooding event in Cappamore and the need flood risk assessment and for flood mitigation measures, the important role of the agricultural sector in reducing emissions; the importance of retrofitting and the installation of renewables in Council social housing stock and regarding the installation of solar panels on protected structures.

Item 4 – Presentation and discussion on the launch of the Community Climate Action Fund (Community Climate Action Officer, Darren Barry)

Community Climate Action Officer, Darren Barry gave a detailed presentation on the Community Climate Action Fund which is to be launched shortly. The presentation outlined there are 2 strands to the fund.

Members welcomed the fund as an important source of funding for communities to supporting localised climate action. A discussion took place around the role out and implementation of the fund.

Item 5 - Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr J. Leddin: (Referred from the Metropolitan District Meeting held on the 19th June 2023.)

I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that the Council introduce a bye law to address the growing problem of unused cars left in housing estates and driveways, which are an eyesore for residents and a magnet for antisocial behaviour

Answer

The Waste Management Act 1996 (as amended) addresses the problem of abandoned vehicles. Under Section 71 of the Act it is an offence to abandon a vehicle on any land and both the person who placed the vehicle at the place where it was abandoned and the registered owner are liable to be prosecuted with fines of up to €5,000 and/or 12 months in prison.

The local authority may enter on any land upon which a vehicle has been abandoned and remove the said vehicle. Where a vehicle is removed from land by the local authority, the local authority will endeavour to contact the registered owner by way of written notice as soon as it is possible thereafter.

Abandoned vehicles may be claimed by the registered owner under certain circumstances and conditions but shall be subject to payment of recovery and storage costs incurred by the local authority before the vehicle can be returned. It is important to note that the local authority has powers to dispose of vehicles under certain circumstances without notification to the registered owner.

To date in 2023, 27 cases of abandoned vehicles have been reported to the Council, this represents a 58% increase on reported cases on the year to date in 2022.

A discussion took place regarding the problem of abandoned cars in private housing estate and the role of the Roads Department with regard to the issue. It was agreed to refer the query to the Roads Section to get clarity on their role with regard to abandoned vehicles.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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Liam Galvin

Chairperson of the Climate Action Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee

14th September, 2023