

Chairperson's Report of the Blended Meeting of Limerick City & County Council Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee held on Tuesday 10th October, 2023 at 2.30pm.

Item 1 - Adopt minutes of the Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 12th September, 2023.

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 2023 were proposed by Cllr. Tesky and seconded by Cllr. Hartigan.

Item 2 – Presentation and discussion on Building Resilience into your farm (Senior Executive Scientist, Cathal Brodie)

Senior Executive Scientist, Mr Cathal Brodie gave a presentation on the building resilience into your farm. The presentation focused on all aspects of farm resilience particularly on fundamental areas such as

- Ecological Status of Waters
- Sources of Agricultural Pollution
- Invasive Species
- Environmental Impact Assessments
- Organic Dairy Farming
- Farm Plastics
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Cathal Brodie also explained how Limerick City and County Council would oversee the implementation of the regulations.

Cllr Galvin questioned the overall role of local authorities in farm inspections and raised the increase in reporting requirement for farmers as an issue.

Members were broadly welcomed the presentation and thanked Cathal Brodie for very detailed report.

Item 3 – Presentation and discussion current and future Parks and Open Space Projects (Senior Executive Engineer, Carmel Lynch)

Senior Executive Engineer, Carmel Lynch gave a detailed presentation on the current and future of Parks and Open Space Projects. The presentation included recently completed People's Park and O'Brien Park New Playgrounds, two public consultations for the New Adare Sensory Garden and the Masterplan for the Demesne NCW. In addition, Ms Lynch provided details of other ongoing projects

including Garryowen Green, New Bridge works at Lough Gur, Biodiversity Projects Roundabout Sponsorship Scheme, New Trim Trail at Baggott Estate.

Members welcomed the quality and volume of work being implemented by the Parks Department and expressed how positive it was to see new projects completed.

Item 4 - Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor J. Leddin

“I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that the Council undertake an assessment of all playing equipment in Mungret Playground and prepare a plan to upgrade and invest additional resources into the playground”

As this matter is an operational issue the Chairperson requested this item be referred to the relevant to the Area Briefing Meeting

Item 5 - Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor S. Hartigan

“I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that Limerick City and County Council introduce a total ban on the use of glyphosate or other toxic chemical pesticides by Limerick City and County Council staff and contractors, except in exceptional circumstances such as control of alien invasive species”.

The following response was provided to Cllr Hartigan by Mr. Cathal Brodie, Senior Executive Scientist.

The use of Plant Protection Products (PPP), Herbicides & Pesticides, are used on a limited basis by Limerick City and County Council. At all times only EU approved licenced Plant Protection Products (PPP's) are used. Council Operatives are trained in the correct application procedures. Any use of products containing glyphosate is subject to the appropriate risk assessment and compliance with safety requirements in relation to their use and application. Limerick City and County Council is committed to reducing its use of PPP across the organisation. The Parks & Recreation Section of the Council are leading the way with PPP use having been phased out over the last few years. Parks staff or contractors working on the Councils behalf are not permitted to use PPP in any parks or recreation areas. Alternative methods such as stinging are employed.

Encouragement of biodiversity including the growth of wildflowers and the promotion of initiatives like “No Mow May” emphasise the importance of minimising the use of PPP. Roadside margins are now becoming better managed for pollinators; more Council owned amenities and recreational areas are being managed for biodiversity. Limerick City and County Council is a committed Council partner to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, and Council Action 19 states that councils reduce or eliminate pesticide use so as to help pollinators.

“Guidance for Local Authorities to ensure compliance with the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive”, issued recently by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, has been circulated to relevant staff so as to ensure compliance with said directive.

In relation to Invasive Alien Plants, the use of PPP is also limited and only used where necessary. In the Loobagh, Hogweed removal program, plants are removed manually with pesticide use only employed in inaccessible areas or extreme infestations. However, PPP, is essential for the control of Japanese Knotweed and must be retained as an option.

The combination of measures outlined above will have the overall impact of reducing the dependency and usage of pesticides.

Item 6 - Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan

In proposing the motion Cllr Donovan outlined what a valuable resource allotments can be particularly to urban communities in terms of health and well-being.

“I will move at the next Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that this Council carry out a feasibility study for allotments and community garden space to be used for and by Limerick City residents”.

The motion was seconded by Cllr Talukder.

Ms Carmel Lynch provided the following response

The Council wishes to advise that there are green spaces in the city that could be considered for use as allotment space or community gardens. However, the Council wishes to advise that any proposed allotment space must be community driven in the first instance, as allotments require ongoing maintenance and watering. This aspect must be considered from the outset. There have been previous situations where allotment space was allocated but they are no longer in use by the community.

Any community group, who wish to be considered for an allotment project, should contact the Council expressing their wish to lead an allotment project in an identified area. The Council can consider the area for suitability and subject to agreement may consider a lease arrangement for the area of land for an allotment.

Following a discussion it was agreed that, where a community expresses an interest to the Council, a pilot could be considered on a case by case basis

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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Liam Galvin

Chairperson of the Climate Action Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee

15/10/2023