

Chairperson's Report of the Blended Meeting of Limerick City & County Council Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee held on Wednesday 13th December, 2023 at 2.30pm.

Item 1 - Adopt minutes of the Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 10th October, 2023.

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2023 were proposed by Cllr. Collins (B) and seconded by Cllr. Hartigan

Item 2 – Limerick Hedgerow Survey Presentation and discussions of the findings. David McGillicuddy (Veon Ecology)

Mr David McGillicuddy (Veon Ecology) gave a detailed presentation on a hedgerow appraisal survey which was carried out in County Limerick in 2023. The survey outlines the unique value of hedgerows to the landscape, agriculture, water quality, flora and fauna and how hedgerows provide vital habitat corridors for biodiversity.

The summary recommendations of this survey are as follows:

- Established hedgerows should be left grow upwards and outwards.
- Hedges managed rotationally for a diverse range of ages and structures.
- Include mature hedgerow trees which are of particular value for bats and insects, as well as standing dead wood.
- Where possible Include buffer strips of ungrazed or uncut grassland, which provide additional habitat for wildlife.

The Committee welcomed the detailed work done to survey the status of hedgerows in the County and a discussion took place on topics including, the role of farmers in preserving and maintaining hedgerows and the effect of road developments in reducing hedgerows.

Item 3 – Energy Management Update- Mr Aidan Finn, Senior Engineer

An energy management (electricity, thermal and transport) review has been completed which included a review of costs and consumption. Staff awareness plays an important role in consumption reduction. In 2022 Limerick City and County Council had energy costs of €5,000,000 but are on target reduce consumption by 4.8% in 2023. Public lighting is the biggest energy cost with transport coming second. By

2023 public sector organisations must achieve a 51% reduction in CO2 and current indications are that Limerick City and County Council are on target to achieve this. The following action will be required in order to achieve the required target

- Form regional energy unit to access 50% matched funding available from
- Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) through Pathfinder
- Review accommodation needs to 2030 & beyond
- Identify buildings earmarked for exit / disposal
- Upgrade energy efficiency of retained buildings
- Introduce renewable energy heating to buildings
- Seek to replace light commercial vehicle fleet with Electric Vehicles
- Explore usage of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) which has zero emissions as diesel substitute for larger fleet-medium term
- Continue maintenance programme with installation of LED lighting
- Continue with forthcoming Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project (PLEEP)

Cllr. Hartigan welcomed the reduction in LCCC energy consumption rates.

Item 4 – National Waste management Plan for a Circular Economy Update – Mr Aidan Finn – Senior Engineer.

The Waste Management Act 1996 requires each local authority to make a waste management plan and allows two or more authorities to jointly make a plan which must be evaluated once in every 6-year period. The evaluation of the existing regional waste management plans and the national policy document “A Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy” recommended the replacement of existing plans with a single National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy.

Following the completion of the statutory consultation period and engagement process, a Consultation Report was produced summarising the submissions received and the proposed alterations to the Draft Plan. Each submission was considered in detail in conjunction with the feedback from the engagement with the local government sector and key stakeholders and a determination was made as to whether a revision to the plan was required. The consultation report contains a schedule of proposed revisions to the draft plan to be included in the final plan.

Having considered the Consultation Report produced following the Statutory Consultation period for the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy together with the independent peer review of the Draft Plan, the CCMA National Oversight Group has recommended that the proposed revisions to the draft plan be applied and that the final plan be prepared. The group further recommended that the chair of the National Oversight Group recommend to the CCMA Executive that the plan be made collectively by all Local Authority Chief Executives on a date to be agreed.

Item 5 – Draft Litter Management Plan 2023 to 2026, Presentation & Discussion – Ms Sinead Hourigan – Administrative Officer.

Under Section 12 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997, local authorities are required to make and implement a three year Litter Management Plan. Outlined within the plan are the objectives and actions pertaining to

awareness, prevention, control, and enforcement of littering from 2023-2026. A commitment to an annual review, mandated by Section 10(3) of the Litter Pollution Act 1997 as amended, ensures the plan's adaptability. The Plan;

- Builds on previous initiatives and plans underscoring the Council's dedication to effective litter prevention.
- Sets out objectives, actions and challenges pertaining to the awareness, prevention, control and enforcement of litter management.
- Recognises the persistent challenge litter presents to communities and business.
- Emphasises the essential cooperation of the entire community to amplify awareness around the detrimental effects of Litter.

Councillors welcomed the draft plan and a discussion took place around a number of challenges including, enforcement, illegal dumping, litter related to fast food establishments and 'man in a van' collections.

The plan will be published on the Council's MyPoint platform and hard copies will be available for the public in Council offices. Once the consultation is complete, a report of the process will be prepared and the plan will be submitted to full Council for adoption in Q1 2024.

Item 6 – Climate Action Plan Update, including launch of Community Action Plan Fund, Creative Climate Action Fund - Mr. Kieran Reeves, Climate Action Coordinator

The draft Climate Action Plan will be published the week of 18th December 2023. Following that the draft plan will go on public display and will remain on display in libraries all through January 2024 until 5th February 2024.

The launch of the **Community Climate Action Programme** and **Síolta Glasa: Creative Climate Action Fund** aims to empower and strengthen communities and support the Climate Action Plan for Limerick City and County.

A total of €811,000 has been allocated for the Community Climate Action Programme to Limerick City and County Council for investment in small sized community climate action projects. The overall objective of the Community Climate Action Programme is to support and empower communities, in partnership with Limerick City and County Council region, to shape and build low carbon, sustainable communities in a coherent way to contribute to national climate and energy targets. The Programme aims to support small and large, rural and urban communities to take positive climate action.

Councillors welcomed the launch of the Community Climate Action Fund and requested details of how to access the funding be distributed to Committee members.

Liam Galvin
Chairperson of the Climate Action Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee
09/01/2024