

**Chairperson's Report of the Blended Meeting of Limerick City & County Council Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee held on
Tuesday 11th March 2025 at 2.30pm.**

Item 1 – Limerick City and County Council Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030 – presentation - Ms. Sinéad McDonnell, Biodiversity Officer.

Ms. McDonnell gave a detailed presentation on the draft of the new Limerick City and County Council Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP). This plan is based on Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 (NBAP). The Limerick Biodiversity Forum supported, informed and advised on the Discussion Paper and draft LBAP and in February 2025, the draft was proposed and seconded during a meeting of the Forum. Following a detailed presentation Ms McDonnell requested the Committee to recommend the Plan to Full Council Meeting for adoption on the 31st March 2025.

Cllr. Bridie Collins proposed that the Plan be recommended to the Full Council for adoption and Cllr. Shane Hickey O'Mara seconded the proposal.

Item 2 – Introduction to the Environment and Climate Action Department, including Mayoral Programme and Budgetary Overview – presentation – Mr. Aidan Finn, Senior Engineer

Mr. Finn gave an overview presentation on the functions and services of the Environment and Climate Action Department including roles, responsibilities, budgets and challenges. Areas covered were –

- Environmental Enforcement
- Parks, Playgrounds & Green Spaces
- Cemeteries Capital
- Environmental Strategy
- Laboratory and Rural
- Midwest Region Energy Unit
- Climate Action
- Litter Enforcement, Veterinary Services, ECA Corporate
- Cemeteries Operations and Maintenance

Mr. Finn gave an overview of the Mayoral Programme for Environment, in particular the creation of high-level expert group to develop a masterplan for heritage and public nature parks across the county. He set

out programme objectives such as; investing in the public realm of key towns in the County, developing community projects, promoting green therapy initiatives and leveraging the natural assets we have across the county and city and other objectives such as reducing our carbon footprint, tree planting and the provision of seed packs to promote gardening.

A discussion took place on aspects of the presentation including climate action, cemeteries and parks/playgrounds. Members asked for the presentation to be circulated.

Item 3 – Irish Business against Litter, Update and Progress Report – Ms. Sinéad Hourigan, Administrative Officer

Ms. Hourigan gave a detailed presentation on the results of the Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) report for 2024. Limerick City and Galvone were both given a position of 37th out of 40 towns/cities surveyed which was quite disappointing. Main areas of Limerick City received 'A' ratings including O'Connell Street, People's Park and Colbert Station whereas poor grades were reserved for some laneways, vacant sites and basements in the city. Ms Hourigan then gave an overview of the cross directorate work being completed by Council staff to rectify the poor graded blackspots. She criticised some aspects of the report such as inconsistencies in sites surveyed and unclear addresses; a vacant building between 30 Cecil Street and Engine Buildings being mentioned as an example for where huge effort was not acknowledged in the subsequent report.

Members expressed their disappointment at how the IBAL survey is run and proposed writing to IBAL asking them to highlight the areas where improvements have been made.

Item 4 – Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor E. O'Donovan

Cllr. Hickey O'Mara asked if he could propose the Notice of Motion on behalf of Cllr. O'Donovan who was unable to attend. Cllr Leddin advised that non-members are entitled to bring Notices of Motion before the SPC and to attend.

I will move at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that a cost price municipal refuse collection scheme be piloted in illegal dumping hot-spots in the city including St. Mary's Park, Ballinacurra Weston, Lenihan Avenue, Coonagh/Clondrinagh, Johnsgate and Kilmallock Road.

Response:

In October 2024, under the Anti-Dumping Initiative a free Bulky Waste collection was offered to all residents in St Mary's Park, Ballinacurra Weston and the Hyde road area. It is intended to repeat this initiative in 2025.

In November 2024, the Minister for Environment, Climate Action and Communications asked the Department to commission a comprehensive study to explore the feasibility and benefits of transitioning Ireland's municipal waste collection market from its current model of side-by-side market competition to a franchise tendering system for local authority areas or regions.

Study will include –

- Comparative analysis with other jurisdictions

- Legislative & policy changes required
- Cost implications for both consumers and industry
- Potential environmental impacts

Consultants are to be appointed in coming weeks and I recommend awaiting an outcome of this report in advance of taking actions at local level that may be superseded by the recommendations of the feasibility study.

This response is to be circulated to all members.

Recommendations:

The Committee recommends that the Limerick City and County Council Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030 be adopted at the next sitting of the full Council.

Cllr Joe Leddin

Chairperson of the Climate Action Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee

14/03/2025