

**Minutes of the Meeting of Limerick City & County Council Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee held on Wednesday 08<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at 2.30pm.**

**Members Present:**

Cllr. J Leddin (Chairperson), Cllr. S Kiely, Cllr. S. Hartigan, Cllr. N Stokes, Mr. B Murphy, Mr. B. Harper, Cllr. D. McSweeney

**Members in attendance:**

Cllr. K. O'Hanlon, Cllr. P.J Carey, Cllr. B. Collins, Cllr. J Pond, Cllr. F. Foley, Cllr. L. Galvin, Cllr. E Secas, Cllr. J. Sheahan, Cllr. T Hartigan, Cllr. S Hickey O'Mara, Mr. C Hedderman

**Apologies:**

Cllr. F Daly, Cllr. E. Ryan, Mr. S. Lavery, Mr. C. Joy. Ms. M. Gallagher

**Officials Present:**

Mr. K. Lehan (Director of Service), Mr. A. Finn (Senior Engineer), Ms. S. Hourigan (Administrative Officer), Ms. C Lynch (Senior Executive Engineer), Mr. B. Henry (Senior Executive Technician), Dr. D. Barry (Community Climate Action Officer), Ms. Y. Rowland (Staff Officer), Mr. O. Enright (Assistant Staff Officer)

**Officials in attendance:**

Ms. A. Mellett (Senior Executive Engineer), Ms. S. McDonnell (Biodiversity Officer)

**Item 1 – Adopt minutes of the Climate Action, Biodiversity and Environment Strategic Policy Committee Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025.**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025 were proposed by Cllr. L. Galvin and seconded by Cllr. K. O'Hanlon.

**Item 2 – Notices of Motion on the Tree Policy**

**Cllr S. Kiely (referred from September Council meeting) - I will move at the next Meeting of this Council that we review with speed the tree policy of this Local Authority to address shortcomings of the Council in this regard.**

**Cllr D. McSweeney (referred from the September Metro Meeting) - I will move at the next meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick that we immediately review and amend the Limerick City and County Tree Policy 2024-2030.**

Cllrs. Kiely and McSweeney opened the discussion by highlighting their concerns around tree management in the City and County.

A lengthy discussion took place on the LCCC Tree Policy and on all aspects of tree management in the city and county. Members outlined multiple issues they have encountered regarding tree management and questioned if the Tree Management policy is adequate and is being implemented properly. Issues included,

- Health and safety issues,
- Tree encroachment of property and footpaths,
- Trees blocking light to homes and businesses
- Risk of storm damage.
- Trees on private property and the Cost to property owners
- Resources to carry out works
- Ash Die-back

Councillors highlighted the need for more tree management works to be carried out before the end of the year to address these issues. Senior Engineer Aidan Finn responded to the specific concerns and outlined the inadequacy of the annual budget allocated to tree management as a key factor in successfully implementing the Tree Policy. He advised that roadside trees are the responsibility of the Roads department, mentioning specifically Section 70 of the Roads Act and these incidents need to be reported to the Roads Team. Lighting is also a responsibility of the Roads department – the Tree Policy is not applicable here. Following further discussion, the members agreed the following recommendation.

**Having regard to the need for more active tree management, this Council seeks a supplementary allocation in 2025 to address urgent cases and an increase in the 2026 allocation to €300,000.**

**Item 3 – Notice of Motion - Cllr D. McSweeney (referred from July Council Meeting) - I will move at the next Meeting of Limerick City and County Council that we examine the rollout of a Community Contracts Grant Scheme in advance of budget 2026.**

I will move at the next Meeting of Limerick City and County Council that we examine the rollout of a Community Contracts Grant Scheme in advance of budget 2026.

Cllr McSweeney outlined his motion and added that there is a Community Grant scheme running successfully in Cork County Council. Communities are being awarded funding for all the work they carry out. Grants from €1,500 to €20,000 are given to Cork communities. There are some grant schemes in Limerick, but they are not adequate to meet the costs to community groups.

Response –

‘The Environment and Climate Action department issue a number of grants to communities across Limerick. There is a community grant available for grass cutting where communities apply and receive a grant dependent on the amount of grass that is being maintained. There is also a grant for burial ground maintenance and both grants are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that communities receive an appropriate grant amount. There are also grants available under the Communities Climate Action Fund and also Going for Gold which are administered by the Environment and Climate Action Department. There may be a case for the Council to

review community grants in general across the organisation to see the level of grants that are currently available and whether there is a need to provide further grant aid.’

A discussion took place around the work of communities particularly Tidy Towns groups and the budgetary implications of the motion.

**A majority of members indicated their support for the motion and the motion was recommended.**

**Item 4 – Discussion in advance of Public Consultation - New Cemeteries Byelaws – Brian Henry, Senior Executive Technician, Cemeteries Operations.**

Mr. Henry presented on the review of the Cemeteries Byelaws which is underway. The currently Byelaws date from 2015 and require updating in line with the Limerick City and County Council Burial Ground Strategy. The review aims to clarify the rights and responsibilities of all key stakeholders.

Several issues have arisen since the last bye-laws were issued;

- ▶ Instances of non-adherence by key stakeholders in relation to the bye-laws
- ▶ The actions and/or sanctions available in the event of breaches of bye-laws
- ▶ The management of those cemeteries designated as lawn cemeteries, and addressing non-compliance with those bye-laws which govern them
- ▶ Interactions between Limerick City and County Council staff and the public

MyPoint Consultation opens October 2025 for six weeks. The Terms of Reference will be published on MyPoint. Participants will be asked whether they are satisfied with current bye-laws or wish to see changes. The consultation will be advertised via social media, LCCC website, email, and newspapers.

Target timeline: Bye-laws ready for ratification in Q2/Q3 2026.

Mr. Finn clarified that the consultation relates to the current bye-laws and seeks input from members, the public, and other stakeholders.

Members raised a number of issues with regard to the current Byelaws; Maintenance, Monuments (including oversized/unauthorised), Health and safety, Availability of grave spaces, Furniture/seating on graves, Enforcement of current bye-laws

On enforcement, Mr. Finn noted that while enforcement occurs, current powers under the bye-laws need to be strengthened, which is why stakeholder input is critical at this stage.

**Action Agreed:**

Presentation will be circulated to all members. The PPN will be contacted directly to ensure relevant organisations are consulted throughout the process.

**Item 5 – Community Climate Action Fund, relaunch 2025 – Dr. Darren Barry, Community Climate Action Officer, Environment & Climate Action.**

Dr. Barry presented on the launch of Phase 2 of the Community Climate Action Programme. A total of €811,000 has been allocated to Limerick City and County Council to partner with communities in Limerick to build low-carbon communities in a structured way.

Funding categories: Small-scale projects: < €20,000 (10% of projects), Medium-scale projects: €20,000–€50,000 (40% of projects), Large-scale projects: €51,000–€100,000 (50% of projects)

Key requirements:

Community groups must be not-for-profit, registered, hold tax clearance, and have a bank account. Projects must be completed within 18 months and 100% funding will be provided. Programme themes: Community/Energy, Travel, Food and Waste, Shopping and Recycling, Local Climate and Environmental Action. Timeline: Launch: 21 October 2025, Successful groups notified: 31 March 2026.

Committee members welcomed the launch and discussed Phase 1 outcomes and other climate action projects. Key discussion points:

Communications Protocols: Concerns were raised about communication with communities regarding application process and results. Dr. Barry noted that Phase 1 was subject to strict Department instructions before sign-off, but improvements are expected in Phase 2.

Active Travel Scheme Maintenance Costs: Members expressed frustration regarding the medium of long-term maintenance of Active Travel Schemes. Mr. K Lehané advised that while the Department funds capital works, maintenance costs fall on Local Authorities. He acknowledged the deterioration of some schemes and stressed the need for maintenance funding. To date, over €50 million has been spent on Active Travel measures. He stated that future Part 8 proposals should consider full life-cycle funding.

**Action Agreed:**

The Council will write to the Department of Transport requesting maintenance funding for Active Travel measures.

**Item 6 – Environment & Climate Action, Budgetary Considerations – Aidan Finn, Senior Engineer, Environment & Climate Action.**

Mr A Finn gave a presentation on the Environment and Climate Action Budgetary Considerations for 2026. He advised the support of this SPC is being sought to address several areas of underfunding in the Cemeteries and Parks Sections. It is intended to propose:

- 1. Raise a loan of €10,027,500 to fund - Capital Development Programme of €8,355,000 and Specific Maintenance Backlog of €1,672,500.**
- 2. Increase in Cemeteries Specific Maintenance budgets from €185,986 to €400,000. Maintain budget of €153,000 for Cemeteries Maintenance Grants and Awards.**
- 3. Increase tree maintenance funding from €94,000 to €200,000.**
- 4. Increase Westfield Wetlands maintenance budget from €5k to €50k.**

**It was agreed that these recommendations would be brought forward to the budgetary process.**

Following the presentation Mr A Finn advised of two upcoming awards ceremonies that all Members are invited to – the Burial Ground Award Ceremony on 22<sup>nd</sup> October and Going for Gold on 23<sup>rd</sup> October.

This concluded the business of this meeting.

**Cllr Joe Leddin**

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