

Minutes of Meeting of Environment & Water Services
Strategic Policy Committee held on 25th September 2018

I Láthair:

Baill: Cllr. Shane Donnellan, Cathaoirleach
Cllr. Ivan Canning,
Cllr. Gabriel Cronnelly
Mr. David Courtney
Mr. Aodán MacDonnacha
Mr. Bertie Roche
Mr. Mark Greene

Oifigigh: Ms. Eileen Ruane, Director of Services;
Mr. Kevin Swift, Regional Waste Coordinator;
Ms. Sinead Ni Mhainnín, Reg. Waste Prevention & Resource Efficiency Officer;
Ms. Bernie White, Catchment Manager, LAWSAT;
Mr. Peter Mitchell, Catchment Scientist, LAWSAT;
Mr. Cormac McConigley, Catchment Scientist, LAWSAT;
Mr. Ronan Conway, Assistant Engineer;
Ms. Ann Dolan, Executive Scientist;
Mr. Paraic Carroll, Administrative Officer.

Apologies: Cllr. Tim Broderick, Cllr. Peter Keaveney, Cllr Tomás O Curráoin, Cllr. Niamh Byrne, Cllr. Noel Thomas, Mr. Diarmaid Kelly

1) Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th June 2018 and which had been circulated were proposed by Mr. D. Courtney, seconded by Cllr. G Cronnelly and agreed.

2) Waste Presentation Bye Laws

Mr. Kevin Swift, Regional Waste Coordinator, Connacht-Ulster Waste Region, informed the Members of revised waste presentation bye-laws template prepared by the 3 waste regions, Connacht-Ulster, Southern and Eastern-Midlands and which attempted to have as much as possible common and comparable bye-laws throughout the country. He advised that while there is a commitment in each Waste Management Plan to make new/revised waste presentation byelaws, the adoption and enforcement was at the discretion of each local authority as is the use of the template presented, recognising that different local authorities may have different requirements in preparing the bye laws document. He informed Members of the route map in preparing for adoption of these bye laws, from preparation of the draft

bye-law text, consideration of submissions, making of amendments, approval by Elected Members to publication of the adopted bye-laws. The template bye-law sets out the following

- The obligation to participate in a waste collection service,
- the requirement for proper maintenance & management of containers,
- collection times and container removal,
- segregation of waste,
- provisions for households not available of a kerbside collection service,
- provisions affecting multi-use buildings, apartment blocks etc,
- provisions for commercial waste,
- interference with orderly waste collection and enforcement provisions and fixed payment notices.

He stated that he required the SPC's approval to proceed to display period. Cllr. Canning welcomed the presentation but said that enforcement was at the discretion of local authorities who cannot deal with the epidemic of waste throughout the country. He said that there were no repercussions for people who break the law, tenancy agreement documents do not contain a requirement to show how a tenant's waste collection service is provided and that the law needed to be changed to allow for proper enforcement. He suggested privatisation of enforcement. Mr. Swift agreed that enforcement resources were not sufficient to deal with waste but that the adoption of these bye-laws was another step in the right direction. Privatisation of enforcement would lead to a significant cost increase in fines issued and was not presently being considered at National level. He added that local authorities should consider targeting small areas within their resource capabilities. Ms Dolan confirmed that there have been targeted inspections of small areas seeking evidence of their waste disposal arrangements. Mr. Swift confirmed for Cllr. Cronnelly that brown bins are only required in population centres over 500. Mr. Mac Donnacha queried the position with regard to single households where collection costs are high relative to the amount of waste generated. He stated that it was a mistake handing over waste collection completely to private operators. Mr. Swift replied that the use of a flat fee didn't incentivise households to reduce waste and hoped that over time households will be incentivised with targeted pricing for household types. Referring to the collection service by private operators, he said that there is side by side competition in the market, while there is a review at National level of the robustness of this competition. Mr Donnellan stated that a few individuals have a detrimental effect on estates or business near estates and welcomed the targeting of certain estates.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. Swift for his presentation.

3) Local Authorities Waters Support and Advice Team- Project Update.

Ms. Bernie White, Catchments Manager – Western Region, Local Authorities Waters Support and Advice Team (LAWSAT) informed the members that the Water Framework Directive (WFD) requires River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) and Programme of Measures (POMs) to be developed and implemented in six year cycles. We are currently in the second cycle of the Plan (2018 to 2021) and deliverables include the following steps:

- Catchment characterisation – defining the problems
- RBMP & POMs – setting targets and programmes
- Implement measures – delivering improvements

- Monitor and evaluate – gather data and information
- Report to EC – summary of progress and outcomes

A new structure has been established to implement this cycle of the River Basin Management Plan, with formal arrangements for cooperative working relationships and knowledge transfer between Local Authorities, agencies and stakeholders. The new governance structure also allows for improved WFD implementation with greater responsibilities placed on the Minister, the EPA and Local Authorities. With ultimate responsibility with the Minister.

During the development of this Plan, a prioritisation exercise was undertaken by the local authorities, the EPA, agencies and other stakeholders to identify those water bodies that require immediate action within this plan cycle to 2021.

The Catchments Assessment Team is the scientific and technical personnel recruited to join the Local Authority Waters Programme, formalised during 2018 in line with the second cycle of the river Basin Management Plan (2018-2021).

Ms White stated that she is the Western Catchments Manager, and working with her are a team of six catchments scientists, three based at the Galway office in Liosban and a further three scientists based in the Castlebar offices of Mayo County Council and all coming from varying backgrounds such as environmental scientists, agricultural scientists, biologists and researchers with a wide range of expertise.

The team will work closely with the new Agricultural Advisors under the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme, of which there are 30 nationally (20 advisors from Teagasc and 10 from Dairy Co-ops). The Programme Manager, Noel Meehan is based in Teagasc Galway and the programme is funded by DHPLG, DAFM and the dairy co-ops.

The Local Authority Waters Programme will hold public meetings in each of the Priority Areas for Action as required between now and 2021. Following that the catchment scientists will carry out surveys and assessments in rivers and waters in that PAA. The ASSAP team (Agriculture Sustainability Support and Advice Programme) will be engaging with farmers through knowledge transfer sessions and one-to-one meetings to develop farm plans for farmers in these areas. LA Waters Programme staff will also work with other stakeholders in the catchment to identify issues and solutions. Ultimately a programme of measures required to tackle water quality pressures will be identified for each area. The team will track implementation of the measures and report on progress to the Western Regional Operational Committee.

The overarching aim of the Local Authority Waters Programme include:

- Build the foundations and momentum for long-term improvements.
- Regional work programmes to be developed and implemented by local authorities and agencies working together.
- The new governance structures will underpin effective implementation.
- Support for community led projects and initiatives.
- Better approach to water quality management both locally and nationally.

Cllr. Cronnelly welcomed the announcement by Minister Sean Kyne of funding of €300,000 towards the control and removal of invasive species on Lough Corrib. He referred in particular to the damage caused by mink. Ms. White confirmed to Cllr. Donnelan that while their role does not include enforcement, they will be making referrals to local authorities and other relevant agencies where they come across obvious enforcement issues. Mr. Green asked if there were reporting guidelines for the general public to be of assistance in the Waters programme. Ms. White confirmed that the team will use any and all opportunities of engagement with the public

The Cathaoirleach thanked Ms. White for her presentation.

4) Climate Action Plan

Mr Ronan Conway referred to the Climate Action Plan for County Galway, a copy of which had been circulated to Members. He stated there is a legal need to prepare and deliver a Climate Change Adaptation Plan with a target date of September 2019. A Climate Regional Office has been established in Mayo County Council and who will be a support to local authorities in the preparation of the plan. He referenced 13 work areas or groups in the plan – Flooding, Storm Surge, Water Supply, Energy Efficiency, Ecology & Biodiversity, Waste, Environmental Awareness, Planning Control, Emergency Services, Roads & Transportation, Tourism, Economic Development and Health. While the Plan will be led by the Environment Section it will require that each section in the Council be involved in the plan preparation and implementation. There will also be engagement with other agencies and the wider community in terms of implementation and delivery of the plan. This Committee will also be asked to provide input in how to shape and introduce the plan. He advised that the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment will have responsibility for allocation of a fund of at least €500 million over the period to 2027 and the fund will support initiatives that contribute to the achievement of Ireland’s climate and energy targets. The first call for applications will provide grant funding to larger scale projects, seeking total support in excess of €1m and that are scheduled to commence developments in 2019 or 2020. Ms. Ruane stated that the plan will be developed across all departments and areas and will require buy in from all. She added that very real projects were being geared up for under this plan. Responding to Cllr. Donnellan, she stated that each local authority will develop its own plan with help from the Regional Office.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Mr. Conway for his presentation

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on 19th December 2018 at 3.00.

The meeting then concluded.