

Minutes of Meeting of Environment & Water Services Strategic Policy Committee held on 15th March 2017

I Láthair:

Baill: Cllr. Shane Donnellan, Cathaoirleach
Cllr. Tomás Ó Curráoin
Cllr. Gabriel Cronnelly
Cllr. Ivan Canning
Cllr. Niamh Byrne
Mr. Aodhán Mac Donnacha
Mr. Mark Green
Mr. David Courtney
Mr. Bertie Roche

Oifigh: Mr. Jim Cullen, D.O.S.
Mr. Paul Moroney, S.E.
Ms. Patricia Morley S.O.
Mr. Mark Molloy
Mr. Paraic Carroll, A.O.

Apologies: Cllr's Broderick, Thomas and Keaveney

1. Minutes of Meeting of the 14th December, 2016

The minutes of the meeting of the 14th December, 2016 were proposed by Cllr. Canning, seconded by Cllr Ó Curráoin and agreed.

Matters Arising from Minutes

Cllr. Cronnelly stated that dog fouling bins were needed in Athenry. Cllr. Donnellan stated that business owners do not want them outside their premises while campaigns do not seem to be getting the message across. Mr. Moroney replied that the proposed new national initiative on dogs might include measures to deal with dog fouling.

Cllr Cronnelly asked if bin bags could be made available to pensioners on affordability grounds. Mr Moroney replied that a person can apply to the Council to have refuse in a bag rather than a bin, which is then assessed by the Council but while the application is usually rejected on economic grounds alone there may be medical reasons to allow use of a bag. He added that there is the possibility of a national initiative that may allow bin sharing

2. Publication of draft River Basin Management Plans for Ireland 2018 - 2021

Mr. Moroney advised of the publication of the draft River Basin Management Plans for Ireland 2018 -2021 and that the Department for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government has invited views on the Plan from interested parties. He advised that the general principle of water directives hasn't changed and that the aim of the process is to maintain all waters that are of high quality at the same level while trying to raise low quality waters to at least medium level.

3. 2017 National Anti-Dumping Initiative

Mr Moroney informed the Members of a national Anti-Dumping Initiative launched by the Minister for Communications, Climate Action & Environment at the Shearwater Hotel, Ballinasloe on Monday 13th March. The aim of the initiative is to support local authorities working with local community organisations and other state agencies to tackle the problem of illegal dumping. Applications have been invited to be submitted to the relevant WERLA office by 20th March who will then evaluate the projects submitted. He advised that Galway County Council will be submitting a number of projects under this initiative.

Cllr. Cronnolly stated that it was unfair that landowners had to clean up areas of their land where illegal dumping had taken place. Cllr. Canning said that the law is not strong enough and needs to be strengthened in relation to prosecutions.

4. Anti Litter and Waste Campaign County Galway 2017

Mr. Moroney informed the Members of a new initiative developed locally which involves the Council linking with a number of community organisations and the Garda to tackle dumping countywide. The initiative will include spot checks of known problem areas in collaboration with the Gardai. He stressed that education and awareness are an integral part of this process.

5. Burning of Agricultural Waste – Revised Procedures

Mr. Moroney referred to revised procedures for the burning of agricultural waste, details of which had been circulated. Increased fire safety responsibility is placed on the applicant with regard to the control and notification of burning. He confirmed to Mr. Roche that there is a ban on burning from 1st March to 31st August in any year under the Wildlife Act, 1976 as amended.

6. A.O.B.

Mr. Cronnolly referred to the poor water quality in Athenry and that water quality testing should be carried out both upstream and downstream. Mr Cullen said that while he was aware of the poor water quality, some improvements in quality had been noted. He added that the River Basin

Management Plan provided for a programme to be in place to identify pressure areas and what is required to be done to improve water quality.

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on 14th June 2017

The meeting then concluded.