

Minutes of Meeting of Environment & Water Services Strategic Policy Committee held on 13th September 2017

I Láthair:

Baill: Cllr. Shane Donnellan, Cathaoirleach
Cllr. Tomás Ó Curráoin
Cllr. Gabriel Cronnelly
Cllr. Niamh Byrne
Cllr. Noel Thomas
Cllr. Peter Keaveney
Mr. David Courtney
Mr. Aodhán Mac Donnacha

Oifigh: Ms. Ann Dolan, E.S.
Mr. John Conneely, Inland Fisheries,
Mr. Martin Butler, Inland Fisheries,
Mr. Paraic Carroll, A.O.

Apologies: Mr. Jim Cullen, Mr. Mark Green, Mr. Bertie Roche, Cllr's Broderick, Canning

1. Minutes of Meeting of the 14th June, 2017

The minutes of the meeting of the 14th June 2017 were proposed by Cllr. Ó Curráoin, seconded by D. Courtney and agreed.

Matters Arising from Minutes

Cllr. Cronnelly referred to dog control problems at Capira and Craughwell. He also referred to the need for dog owners to upgrade microchips on dogs where there is a change of ownership. Mr Carroll reminded members that if they had recommendations on strengthening legislation on the control of dogs, they should submit them to him, following which their recommendations would be forwarded to the appropriate government department. Responding to Cllr. Cronnelly, Ms Dolan advised that there are 37 identified waste tyre sites and that subject to approved Department funding tyres will be removed from these sites in the near future.

2. Galway County Council Invasive Species Strategy

Mr. John Conneely and Mr. Martin Butler of Inland Fisheries Ireland made a presentation to Members on the ongoing management of Lagarosiphon major in Lough Corrib. The presentation

detailed the background to the detection of Lagarosiphon in Lough Corrib, the fact that it has no natural enemies in Ireland and has a rapid growth rate to the exclusion of native plants. It impedes angling, blocks waterways and is a flooding risk. The Lagarosiphon Management Programme commenced in 2009 through biological control, life cycle studies, hand removal, mechanical harvesting and light exclusion. The presentation showed the spread of the invasive species from 9 sites in 2005, 24 sites in 2006, 64 sites in 2007, 113 sites in 2008 rising to 192 sites by 2012. However, through a combination of measures, including mechanical control, jute matting and hand picking approximately 80-90% of the invasive species is now under control and many previously infested bays have been re-opened for amenity use. Nevertheless in a “do nothing scenario” Lagarosiphon will exhibit “explosive” growth in upper and middle lake, with large canopy-forming populations reappearing in circa 2 to 3 years, recreational use of the lake will be impacted and the lower basin could become impassable to navigation with associated impacts on discharge rates. The costs of the strategy in 2016 was €243,639 with funding of €40,000 from each of Galway County Council, OPW and NPWS. The balance falls due to IFI and it is felt by IFI that there is a need to have a proper funding structure in place and clarity as to which agency is responsible.

Cllr. Thomas stated that the NPWS should be managing this strategy and that the Department should be written to asking it to set up a funding structure to deal with invasive species. Mr Conneely stated that while IFI were managing it, it was not their role. He hoped that the SPC would continue to give its support to the programme. The Members thanked Mr Conneely and Mr Butler for their presentation and confirmed their continuing support to the programme.

3. Anti- Dumping Initiatives 2017

Ms. Ann Dolan, outlined progress to date in respect of anti-dumping initiatives undertaken. She informed the Members that in March 2017 the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment Denis Naughten launched an anti-illegal dumping initiative (ADI) and encouraged all local authorities and communities across the country to avail of a €650,000 allocation for the scheme. Galway County Council submitted a number of applications and these applications were reviewed and funding was allocated through the Waste enforcement Regional Lead Authorities. It was confirmed in May 2017 that County Galway had secured funding of €22,750 under Phase 1 of this campaign and this funding was going towards clean ups at Polleeney, Barna and Station Road, Gort. A clean up of all waste illegally deposited at Polleeney, Barna and Station Road, Gort has been undertaken by Galway County Council in conjunction with the local Community Employment Scheme, probation service, local landowners and Gort Tidy Towns group. Funding has also been secured for the erection of several gates/barriers to prevent further illegal dumping at this location and for the installation of both overt and covert CCTV surveillance. She stated that in May 2017 it was announced that Minister Naughten would be doubling the funding available due to the large number of applications received. Galway County Council secured funding of €46,387.50 for six additional locations under Phase 2 of the initiative, these works have commenced and are due for completion by the end of October.

The sites that have been selected for this funding are as follows:

Pollboy, Ballinasloe,
Abbey Bog,
Cloonrooa, Cloonascragh,
Curraghline, Headford Road,
Parkmore, Tuam,
Thoor Ballylee

Galway County Council has prioritised all illegal dumping blackspots (that they are aware of) in the County and should additional funding become available then applications for funding for the clean-up of these locations will be submitted.

The Members welcomed the initiative and progress made by Galway County Council. Ms Dolan confirmed for Mr Mac Donnacha that where barriers are erected to prevent access to land and subsequent dumping, it is the responsibility of the landowner or landowners to keep the land free of dumped material and not to give access keys to anyone other than those authorised to access the land. She confirmed that the provision of CCTV at sites is not permanent and their use and effectiveness is reviewed from time to time.

4. A.O.B.

Mr. Carroll advised the Members that Galway County Council had submitted a joint proposal with Galway City Council to become the Atlantic Seaboard North Region lead authority to establish and manage a regional climate change office for the Councils of Donegal, Sligo, Mayo, Galway City and Galway County. The proposal was submitted on Friday 8th September 2017.

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on 13th December 2017 at 3.00.

The meeting then concluded.