

Minutes of Meeting of Environment & Water Services

Strategic Policy Committee held on 21st March 2018

I Láthair:

Baill: Cllr. Shane Donnellan, Cathaoirleach
Cllr Tomás O Curráoin
Cllr. Peter Keaveney
Cllr. Gabriel Cronnelly
Cllr. Noel Thomas
Cllr. Niamh Byrne
Mr. Aodán MacDonnacha
Mr. Bertie Roche
Mr. Mark Greene

Oifigigh: Ms. Eileen Ruane,
Mr. Paraic Carroll
Ms. Ann Dolan
Mr. Ronan Conway

Apologies: Cllr. Ivan Canning, Cllr. Tim Broderick, Mr. David Courtney

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Director of Services Ms. Eileen Ruane to the meeting. He thanked Director of Services Jim Cullen for his work with the Committee over the last number of years.

1) Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th December 2017 and which had been circulated were proposed by Cllr O Curráoin, seconded by Mr. Roche and agreed.

There were no matters arising.

2) Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections

The Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI) 2018 was circulated to the Members. Ms. Dolan informed the Members that Galway County Council is required to prepare implement and review an annual inspection plan in accordance with RMCEI. This follows the recommendation of the European Parliament and Council 2001/331/EC which requires the setting of minimum inspection criteria for environmental inspections in EU member states. The 2018 Plan sets out the environmental inspections to be carried out by the Council in 2018 and includes inspections to be carried out under the Waste Management Act, Water Pollution Acts, Air Pollution Act, Planning and Development Acts. It also includes inspections on foot of complaints received and incidents of environmental pollution that may arise during the year. The inspections are prioritised in terms of risk to public health and the resources available.

Responding to Cllr. Thomas, Ms. Dolan stated that in respect of the work area “RBD and Catchment Management” the 126 inspections carried out related to minor rather than major issues. She stated that farm surveys and septic tank inspections were carried out where there was a threat to water quality. She confirmed to Mr. Green that comparative figures for inspections in 2017 were available. She confirmed to Mr. Roche that there was cross reporting to the Department of Agriculture where deemed necessary. Responding to Cllr. Cronnelly, she stated that all waste collector permits are issued through Offaly County Council, while waste facility permits are issued by this Council.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Ms Dolan for her presentation

3) Anti-Dumping Initiatives 2018

Ms. Dolan informed the Members of a further Anti-Dumping initiative for 2018 approved by the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment following the successful delivery of over 200 projects nationwide in 2017. €83,000 has been applied for by Galway County Council with 9 clean-up sites applied for together with an awareness media campaign.

Cllr. Donnellan stated that a good proposal had been made at plenary meeting to link domestic waste households to the number of houses registered for local property tax. Ms. Ruane stated that Galway County Council would need to ensure it could initiate such a cross check legally in the context of the General Data Protection Regulations due to come into force shortly. The Council are liaising with WERLA in relation to a methodology regarding same. Cllr. Cronnelly stated that there was an excess of packaging in use and efforts should be made to reduce this. Ms Dolan confirmed to Cllr. Cronnelly that over 120,000 tyres were removed last year under a once off grant and that the onus is on those who stockpile tyres to dispose of them in a proper manner. Cllr. Thomas said that plastics were the big problem

4) Any Other Business

Mr. Conway circulated for information leaflets produced by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) on home energy grants and the sustainable energy communities programme, advocating change in the way your community thinks about energy

Mr Roche said that there was very little take up on sustainable energy and that development charges for solar farms were very high. Ms. Ruane replied that the Council were looking at a review of development charge, with regard to renewable energies.

Cllr. Cronnelly referred to an estate taken in charge by the Council in Athenry where the treatment plant was to be decommissioned and that other estates will be looking to have treatment plants decommissioned.

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on 20th June 2018 at 3.00.

The meeting then concluded.