



KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

CLIMATE ACTION

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE 8TH JULY 2020

@ 10AM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS CHILL DARA

PRESENT

Councillors: Bill Clear (Acting Chair), Naoise Ó Cearúil

Sectoral Interests: Ali Sheridan, PPN - Environmental/ Conservation
Judith Browne, PPN – Community/Voluntary
Allan Shine, Business/Commercial
Tom Malone, Agriculture/Farming

Officials: Joe Boland, Director of Services
Tadhg McDonnell, Director of Services, Transport (part)
Alan Dunney, Regional Coordinator, CARO
Breda Maher, Executive, CARO
Claire Moran, A/Senior Staff Officer, CARO
Paul Regan, Assistant, CARO
Geraldine Morris, Clerical Officer,

APOLOGIES: Cllr Fintan Brett
Absent: Cllrs Fiona McLoughlin Healy, Ciara Galvin.

In the absence of Cllr Martin, on the proposition of Cllr Ó Cearúil, it was agreed that Cllr Clear would chair this meeting. It was noted that it would be a matter for full council to appoint a new chair. Good wishes were expressed to Cllr Martin on his elevation to the Seanad.

Agenda item 1: To approve the Minutes of the Climate Action SPC meeting held on 11th March 2020 (copy attached)

Mr Tom Malone asked for Agenda item 4 section 2, bullet point 3 to be amended to include: 'A *balanced approach*'

The minutes were approved subject to this amendment.

Agenda item 2: To consider any matters arising from the minutes

Mr Tom Malone asked if Sectoral Interests could be included in the training of Elected Members and Staff as in Agenda item 9 – update on Elected Members/Senior Staff Training.

Action: The Director of Services agreed that this was a very worthwhile suggestion and that this would be implemented. This was agreed.

Agenda item 3: Declarations of conflict of interest

Noted

Agenda item 5: To receive a presentation from Paul Regan, EM CARO on Sustainable Energy Communities.

A presentation was made by Paul Regan, CARO Assistant which focused on the following aspects:

- Background to initiative
- The 3 different stages – Learn, Plan, Do (now mainly at the 'plan' stage)
- An overview of the SEC network
- Funding aspects were explained
- Linkage with LA Climate Action Charter
- Expected benefits and outcomes
- Examples from other counties

A question and answer session followed which included the following:

- The outcomes and energy benefit of the energy master plans were explained.
- It was outlined that 5 applications were received to date, 4 had been approved and another was being amended; 3 more in the pipeline; master plan costs between 10 to 20k depending on size of SEC and these are fully recoupable.
- Linkage and potential benefits to businesses were also outlined
- The possible merits of Kildare County Council becoming an SEC in its own right was suggested.
- Awaiting appointment of Energy Efficiency Officer and Climate Action Officer –interviews delayed due to COVID - noted.
- JB advised that a pilot initiative was in hand by the EM CARO in conjunction with Meath and Wicklow with the objective of rolling out this initiative nationally.
- The need for a continued bottom up approach was emphasised.
- Energy Master plans to progress.
- An audit to be carried out in due course.

Action: Initiative noted and strongly supported. SPC to be kept informed.

Agenda item 6: To consider draft guidance as to how Municipal Districts can shape/influence community involvement in climate action (currently work in progress by CARO)

A presentation was made by Claire Moran, A/Senior Staff Officer CARO who explained that this initiative is focused on elected members and will be rolled to all MDs nationally. The key aspects outlined were as follows:

- The need to motivate/engage in climate action at local level
- A focus on the MDs being agents for change on the part of local communities
- Linkage with the National Climate Action Plan 2019
- Local level action – an emphasis on a bottom up approach
- An emphasis on partnerships
- Linkage with the Climate Action Charter

A discussion ensued wherein the proposed initiative was warmly welcomed. It was noted that some MDs were already proactive in this area with resulting positive synergies in terms of pride of place, community cohesion etc. There was a suggestion that possibly each MD could agree a local action plan in relation to

climate change. Issues of coordination at local level would also have to be considered. There were also positive aspects from a policy perspective.

Action: It was agreed that this initiative would progress and that the SPC would be kept fully informed. The suggestion relating to local action plans at MD level to be considered.

Agenda items 7: To receive an update on Midlands Just Transition Plan

A presentation was made by Breda Maher, CARO Executive which focused on the following:

- No formal plan is in place yet, however moving quickly in that direction
- Background issues explained
- EM CARO has submitted an application to the transition fund focused mainly on community capacity building
- EM CARO are represented on the Midlands Regional Transition Team
- The 2 main objectives of the MRTT are as follows:
 - To pursue funding opportunities and actions to mitigate the impact of the BnM job losses on the individuals concerned, as well as the impact on the Local and Regional Economy;
 - To position the Region to develop alternative forms of employment, attract investment and maximise existing employment opportunities and resources.

A general discussion ensued which focused in particular on the following aspects:

- There will be an emphasis on local community aspects and this will be reflected in actions prioritised.
- There will be an emphasis on reskilling and retraining of current employees
- Possibly consider Kilcormac and Lough Boora as positive examples of local initiative to date
- Funding has been allocated both at national and EU level – there will be an emphasis on sustainability

Action: It was agreed that the SPC would be kept informed. Funding opportunities to be fully explored.

Agenda item 8: To consider notices of Question:

8.1 Notice of Question: Dr Judith Browne, PPN Representative

The Climate Action Linkage Group request that the questions asked below be answered at the next Strategic Policy Committee meeting on 8/7/20:

Please confirm if Kildare County Council has applied for a share of funding offered by the DTTAS/National Transport Authority to develop walking and cycling infrastructure as a result of social distancing requirements and altered travel patterns.

If not, please provide (1) an estimate of when an application will be lodged, (2) an indicative value of the funding sought and (3) if the views of stakeholders such as the Public Participation Network will be taken into account.

If yes, please provide (1) information on the level of funding applied for, (2) the projects identified to be completed, (3) an update on the progress of identified projects to date and (4) whether the views of stakeholders such as the Public Participation Network will be sought in the identifying of these projects.

Reference: <https://irishcycle.com/2020/05/28/councils-around-ireland-told-to-apply-for-walking-and-cycling-funding/>

The Director of Transport attended at this point and outlined as follows:

- A grant application had been lodged
- The Programme for Government intends allocating c.€1m per day towards cycling/pedestrianisation projects
- Regional cycling design offices will be established – c.8 nationally (one likely to be in Co Kildare)
- Co Kildare will likely be deemed as non-metropolitan
- Design aspects have been delayed due to COVID.
- Section 254 licence applications were being encouraged.

A further discussion ensued as follows wherein the following aspects were clarified:

- A lot of groundwork has been carried out nationally to date with some worthwhile initiatives being identified for County Kildare.
- Audits to be carried out of towns/villages
- Increased emphasis on cycle to school initiatives (refer in particular to new scheme being piloted in Athy and Monasterevan – vehicle free for one hour on either side of school commencement/finish time)
- Ensure maximum use of carriageways to allow for all modes.
- A lot of retrofitting is likely (may be challenging)

Action: Response noted and welcomed.

8.2 Notice of Question: Ms Ali Sheridan

- Glyphosate Update -
 - a request for an update on the glyphosate alternative trials in Kildare
 - whether the budget for alternatives has been drawn down by each MD
 - when we will know the results
 - when a decision will be made on whether to expand the trial to a county level.

Ms Paula O'Rourke, Executive Parks Superintendent was in attendance and replied as follows:

Q. 1. A request for an update on the glyphosate alternative trials in Kildare

1. The Parks Department commenced the Pilot trials in March. The pilot sites will remain in operation until the end of October 2020. The public are informed of the initiative by signage which has been placed on the 21 sites and by monthly connected stories and information on Kildare Community Stories Facebook page under #Biodiversitykildare.

The 21 sites are:

Maynooth -Pound Park & Meadowbrook Link Road,

Celbridge - Entrance to Crodaun Forest Park & Willowbrook open space

Leixlip - Leixlip Library, Maynooth Road & The Wonderful Barn, Celbridge Road at Barnhall Roundabout,

Kilcock - Bawnogues Park

Clane - Clane Ring Road

Naas – Monread Park, Famine Cemetery, M7 Interchange at The Ball & Millenium Link Road,

Newbridge – Moorefield Park &, Green Road

*Kildare – Rathbride Road
Monasterevin – Verge at Hopkins Haven
Athy – Woodstock Industrial Estate, People’s Park & Verge at N78 Roundabout*

The sites are maintained as layered short meadows (cut on 6-week rotation approximately) and self-regenerating meadows which will be mown and harvested towards the end of the season. Works are undertaken in line with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan.

Q2. whether the budget for alternatives has been drawn down by each MD

A2. *To date the budget has not been drawn down due to the implications of Covid-19 on the research aspect. It is possible the MD budget allocations will be required later in the year or in 2021 for research purposes pending the outcome of renewed discussions.*

Q3. when we will know the results

A3. *A second survey will be undertaken in the Autumn of those people surveyed in April. Pending the results of the second survey together with the examination of the operational and financial resources inputted, the results will be made known. The initial survey results show very strong public support for the initiative.*

Q4. when a decision will be made on whether to expand the trial to a county level.

A4. *A decision on the expansion of the initiative will be based on the Autumn results. If the outcome is favourable the expansion can be considered year on year starting in 2021 on sites considered suitable.*

Discussion of the above followed focusing on:

- Surveys have been sent out and second opinion will be sought.
- Use of Facebook which was good for hits;
- Cost to be kept low and MDs to help;
- Hopefully Glyphosate will get banned as the effects on trees and landscaping.
- Weights on carbon capture and meeting economic tender.
- Ensure it is in Tender that Trees are not sprayed.

Action: The response was noted and it was agreed that it would be circulated. The SPC to be kept informed.

Agenda item 4: To further consider Work Programme for 2020 (summary of key climate related issues from draft programme for government attached)

It was generally agreed that 2/3 policy items would be dealt with at each meeting. Committee members should feel free to propose items for discussion. It was suggested that the following would be progressed, possibly at the next meeting:

- climate action and business opportunities
- transport policy – encouraging a modal shift (a staff representative from Transport section to attend)

A request was made that KCC staff be permitted to work from home as per the goal of the Programme for Government. It was advised that staff were allowed to work from home and, for example, in fact over 40% of the Environment services staff were working remotely.

Agenda item 9: to note date of next meeting – Wednesday 7th October at 10am – Council Chamber

The date was noted.

Any other Business:

The Director of Services advised that no Kildare County Council Climate Action Team meetings have been held since the March SPC meeting. A meeting was planned to take place shortly and minutes would be available at the next SPC meeting.

A request was made that the SPC meetings be recorded so that those unable to travel could access the meeting remotely. Members were advised that this would need to be escalated to the Protocol Committee, as such would not accord with current policies.

Councillor Clear concluded the meeting and thanked everyone for their time in attending.