

**Minutes of Meeting of the Environmental and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee held on  
Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2016 at 3:30 pm in the Conference Room (316),  
Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.**

**Present:**

**SPC Members**

Cllr. J. Cooney, Chair  
Cllr. C. Curtin  
Cllr. A. O'Callaghan  
Cllr. M. Hillery  
Mr. D. M. Wise  
Mr. A. St. Ledger  
Mr. J. Higgins  
Cllr. C. Crowe

**Staff of Clare County Council**

Mr. J. Leahy, S.E., Environment Section  
Mr. S. Ward, S.E., Water Services  
Mr. J. Corry, A.O. Roads Section  
Ms. E. McCooey, A.O., Environment Section  
Mr. T. Tiernan, S.E., Roads Section  
Mr. P. Stephens, Energy Agency Manager  
Ms. B. Greene, A.S.O. Roads Section

Apologies: Martin McMahon; Bill Slattery; Anne Haugh

**Item 1 - Confirmation of Minutes of SPC Meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2016.**

The minutes were proposed by Cllr. M. Hillery and seconded by Cllr. A. O'Callaghan

**Item 2 –Transfer to Irish Water of non-domestic billing and collection:-**

Sean Ward gave an update on this item. He stated that since the previous Monday this function had transferred to Irish Water. He indicated that the transfer of non-domestic billing & collections was still in the transitional phase. Cllr. Hillery queried the procedure in relation to outstanding bills – monies owed to the Council. Sean indicated that it was his understanding that any outstanding debts and liabilities would be transferred to Irish Water also. Cllr. Alan O'Callaghan stated that it was disappointing to see another service being taken from the local authority.

**Item 3 – Preferred scheme for a new water supply for the East & Midlands Region – Irish Water's fourth consultation phase:-**

Sean Ward indicated that Irish Water had narrowed down a preferred scheme for a new water supply for the East & Midlands Region down to one preferred option where Lough Derg would provide the water source. He added that there was a pre-consultation exercise ongoing at the moment until some time next year. John Higgins stated that he had a great difficulty with taking water from the Shannon serving the East & Midlands region. Cllr. Joe Cooney indicated that all the Cllrs in the Killaloe MD had made their feelings known on this that they were opposed to this proposal. Cllr. O'Callaghan made the point that it was still only at the consultation phase. Cllr. Hillery raised concerns that one third of the population lived in Dublin and suggested that rather than transferring water from here to Dublin that there needed to be a decentralisation of jobs to down here. Andrew St. Ledger suggested that it might be time to look at the idea of Regional Government.

**Item 4 – Energy & Climate Change**

Pat Stephens gave a detailed presentation to the meeting on Energy & Climate Change. He indicated that the average annual costs of extreme weather events in Ireland had increased from €45m to €144m since 2009. He also made reference to the Climate Action & Low Carbon Act 2015 and the National Mitigation Plan & the National Adaptation Plan. He added that there was a significant role for Local Authorities as to how they would protect their communities into the future. Damon M. Wise requested that a copy of the presentation would be shared with the PPN. Cllr. Hillery raised his concerns regarding the erosion that was happening along the coastline as well as the impact of coastal storms such as in 2014 as well as the fluvial flooding which was being caused partly by blocked rivers & streams. He indicated that he was worried about the timescale involved in dealing with these matters and the funding that was required. Cllr. Curtin indicated that the Energy & Climate Change strategy was being considered as part of the Co Development Plan.

Pat Stephens confirmed that this was a high level Strategy Plan – vision to 2030 or even beyond that again. Andrew St. Ledger emphasised the importance of forests and a no. of sites that were blown down in 2014 which were yet to be replanted in 2017. He suggested that a meeting should take place between the Local Authority & Coillte before they replanted the same tree types, which were not suitable in absorbing water & preventing flooding. He added that this was an opportunity now that the Council should not miss out on. He suggested that funding may be available to replace conifers with broadleaf trees along riverbanks.

Cllr. Curtin stated that funding was essential for Energy & Climate Change & that it would be essential to have Central Government involved at an early stage.

#### **Item 5 – Any Other Business:-**

- Cllr. O’Callaghan complimented the Environment Section on the use of CCTV to curb illegal dumping. Cllr. Cooney supported this & suggested that there might need to be a name & shame approach taken in a further effort to curb illegal dumping. John Leahy, SE confirmed that they had a successful prosecution recently and more cases were presently going through at the moment. He added that they were looking at a no of known black spots throughout the county. Damon M. Wise stated that there was an ongoing situation in Shannon in the Estates.
- Andrew St. Ledger stated that he had met the new Environmental Awareness Officer for Clare Co Council the previous day and he was informing her that there were funds available for woodlands from the Forest Service called “The Neighbour Wood Scheme”
- Cllr. Cooney stated that the hedgecutting going on at the moment was making our roads a lot safer – great work was going on in this regard.
- Andrew St. Ledger stated that there was a need for training and a consistency of the actual methodology for the hedge cutting and tree trimming . He suggested that there needed to be an assessment of trees carried out as not every tree needed to be cut.
- T. Tiernan provided an update on the Roadworks Programme for 2016 which was now almost completed

- Cllr. Cooney wished everybody a Happy Christmas and thanked everyone for their commitment.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**Next meeting set for 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2017**

**Signed:**

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**Cllr. Joe Cooney  
Chairperson**

**Date:**

**Signed:**

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**John Corry  
Administrative Officer**

**Date:**