

**Minutes of Meeting of the Environmental and Transportation Strategic Policy Committee held on  
Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2016 at 3:30 pm in Council Chamber,  
Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.**

**Present:**

**SPC Members**

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

**Staff of Clare County Council**

Ms. A. Haugh, Director of Services  
Mr. J. Leahy, S.E., Environment Section  
Mr. J. Corry, A.O. Roads Section  
Ms. E. McCooey, A.O., Environment Section  
Mr. S. Lenihan, S.E.E. Water Services  
Mr. P. Stephens, Energy Agency Manager,  
Ms. M. Eustace, A.S.O. Environment Section

**Item 1 - Confirmation of Minutes of SPC Meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2016.**

The minutes were proposed by Cllr. C. Curtin and seconded by Cllr. M. Hillery.

**Item 2 –Irish Water’s Draft Mitigation Plan for lead in drinking water:-**

S. Lenihan informed the meeting that the Draft Plan was prepared in order to mitigate the risks to human health posed by the presence of lead in drinking water as a result of lead pipework. He said he felt this was not a huge issue in Clare, however he added that there may be a number of private houses affected. He advised that there was a grant available through the plan, should it be required. He further advised that a project was beginning in Limerick where orthophosphate was being added to the Limerick Water Supply at Clareville plant and this would line the lead pipes and form a barrier. He said that this plant also supplied Clare consumers. Members were notified that the deadline for submissions on the Draft Plan was the previous week.

Andrew St. Ledger questioned if it was the Department of Environment who were issuing the grant, & this was confirmed by S. Lenihan.

D. M. Wise said the colour of the water in Shannon was non transparent due to supply problems from Sixmilebridge and there was also a trace of lead and asbestos on the pipes. He said he and his family have had to put in their own water supply due to a number of his family being hospitalised and he felt that the public water supply did not meet best standards.

S. Lenihan responded that all water supplies must adhere to strict testing of water and that same applied to Castl lake. He said he was not aware of any problem with this supply.

### **Item 3 – Establishment of an Energy Forum:-**

Cllr. Crowe proposed that an Energy Forum be established and this was seconded by Cllr. Hillery.

A. Haugh informed the meeting that arising from a notice of motion by Cllr. J. Flynn at a recent meeting of Clare County Council it was agreed to refer the matter to the S.P.C. as it was felt that this fell under the remit of the Environment & Transportation S.P.C. A. Haugh indicated that energy was a major component of Climate Change.

A. Haugh advised the committee that the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment required LA's to prepare Local Climate Action Adaptation plans and Climate Change Mitigation Plans. She added that Clare County Council was presently establishing an in-house Climate Change adaption team. She advised that training was ongoing currently for staff members that would be participating on this team. She added that as part of the development of the Climate Action Plans on adaptation and mitigation that there would be extensive consultation with stakeholders and the general public.

A. Haugh proposed that Energy and Climate change be put on the S.P.C. Agenda as a standing item going forward. She said that the P.P.N had established an energy forum and the link was there with the Community. She continued that Clare was committed to being a low carbon county. A. Haugh then introduced Pat Stephens, Energy Agency Manager for Clare & Limerick.

P. Stephens said he felt there were three issues to be addressed in establishing an Energy Forum

1) The degree to which a Local Authority could request or require public or private organisations to incorporate renewable energy. He felt there was no point in making a requirement on an organisation which cannot be enforced. He added that it was preferable to encourage organisations to adopt renewable energy as much as possible. He added that the County Clare Renewable Energy Strategy made an important contribution to developing renewable energy in County Clare.

2) Access to external funding: Ireland was not as pro active as other European Countries in drawing down European Funding for energy efficiency and energy infrastructure projects.

3) Awareness and Engagement with communities: Community engagement had been on hold for 18-24 months while the new community structures were being established. He advised that access to Leader funding and the administration of same had just been resolved in Clare.

Cllr. C. Curtin agreed with P. Stephens and A. Haugh on Climate Change becoming a standing item on the SPC agenda.

M. McMahon also welcomed this as a standing item on the agenda. He questioned that if Clare was going to be a low carbon county, would other counties be doing the same or would it be a case of Clare doing the hard work with no effort from other counties?

P. Stephens said that Low Carbon is not well enough defined, but a very commonly used term. He said there should be a move away on dependence on imported fossil fuels especially where oil and

gas increase in price. He added that the main advantage was to create a county with access to low and clean energy as a means of attracting foreign direct investment eg. Apple, who want to power a factory through renewable energy. This he added would be very attractive to businesses. With regard to Agriculture he indicated that there was a fear if there was a cap put on carbon, there may be a cap on animal numbers. The cap on animal numbers would be a result of the national carbon allocation at national level. He advised however that it had been shown that food production in Ireland was less carbon intensive than elsewhere in Europe, and it was argued that our lower carbon intensity of food products and abundant grass should enable Ireland to increase its herd numbers.

M. McMahon said looking from an agriculture view point, if we went low carbon it may be at a detriment to farming and suggested that this would be looked at at a national level & not at a county level.

A. St. Ledger said that low carbon in Agriculture led to low green house gas emissions and there was fertiliser issues as well as overharvesting going on, not being balanced. He said there needed to be more sustainability.

J. Cooney concluded that there was no need to establish an energy forum presently however the issue would be left as a standing item on the SPC agenda.

#### **Item 4 – Update on CFRAMS**

J. Leahy informed the meeting that the OPW were presently working on Catchment Flood Risk Management Plans. He added that they were currently on public display and he was arranging meetings with all the Municipal Districts in the coming weeks to collate a response which would go before the Full meeting of Clare County Council in October.

M. McMahon said he was disappointed with the report with regard to the Shannon. He said the plans were to build walls at certain points however he said that this was only moving the problem on. He suggested that the only solution was to clean/dredge the Shannon, and this submission had gone in. He also said that Castleconnell was never mentioned in the plan and he felt that the report would have to be revised.

Cllr. Crowe said the CFRAMS was far from being signed off on and referred to a vote being taken to build the Limerick Northern Distributor Road through some of the worst flooded areas. He suggested that there needed to be more joined up thinking.

A. St. Ledger agreed & continued that one problem was the speed of the water and the need to slow it down. He referred to a study in Wales where native trees were able to absorb more water and that building walls only moved the floods on. He added that areas that cannot absorb water become channels for speeding water.

M. McMahon spoke about an island that was forming on the Shannon completely from debris that had come along the river and said it was a mistake that banks were S.A.Cs.

Cllr. Curtin said the question of deciduous tree's should be put into the submission going forward.

J. Leahy responded that the cleaning of the Shannon was a live issue for all the counties and emphasised that local knowledge was very important.

J. Cooney commended Paul Moroney on his work which was very much appreciated and wished him the best in his future role in Galway.

#### **Item 5 – Update on CIS Scheme for 2016:-**

J. Corry informed the meeting that the aim of the Community Involvement Scheme was to carry out improvements to public roads part financed by the community, which otherwise may not be dealt with by the local authority. He added that Local Authorities finance 85% of the cost of the works and 15% was financed by the community. He further added that the scheme was advertised in April/May. He indicated that in 2016, €325,000 was provided for the Scheme as part of its Schedule of Municipal District Works. He indicated that twenty seven applications were received in 2016, 16 jobs were approved of which 10 were in the Killaloe MD, 5 in the West Clare MD and 1 in Shannon MD.

#### **Item 6 – Update on Community Hedge cutting Grant Scheme for 2016:-**

J. Corry informed the meeting that a press release issued three weeks ago and it was hoped this would raise awareness with landowners of their responsibility under the Road's Act, with regards to hedges bounding public roads. He added that in 2015, 41 applications were received for the Community hedge cutting grant scheme, 31 were approved and 25 proceeded with. He indicated that the scheme allowed a grant of €50 per kilometre of hedge cut & that the closing date for applications was the 30<sup>th</sup> of October.

A. St. Ledger suggested training for Hedgegrow Management and said this could feed into community energy schemes, and also could be extra income for farming.

Cllr. Hillary said that €50 was too low per kilometre, and next year this needed to be increased. He added that the impact of the scheme was minimal in relation to the problem that was there & he added that the scheme needed to be more attractive.

Cllr. Crowe agreed that the amount was too low.

#### **Item 7 – Any Other Business:-**

Cllr. Crowe mentioned with regard to bags of rubbish being dumped on the Limerick border and that in certain circumstances, people were being offered passes to bring the rubbish to a transfer station. He suggested that a system be put in place in partnership with Limerick County Council, for people to be able to use the Limerick transfer stations as they would be nearer to them.

D. M. Wise said that voucher schemes do not exist in Clare.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**Next meeting set for 28<sup>th</sup> of November.**

**Signed:**

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**Cllr. Joe Cooney  
Chairperson**

**Date:**

**Signed:**

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**John Corry  
Administrative Officer**

**Date:**