

**Minutes of Meeting of the Physical Development Strategic Policy Committee held on  
Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2020 at 3:30 pm in the Council Chamber,  
Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.**

**Present:**

***SPC Members***

Cllr. J. Crowe, Chair  
Cllr. S Crawford  
Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy  
Cllr. J. Cooney  
Cllr. A. O'Callaghan  
Mr. D. M. Wise  
Mr. P. Hayes  
Mr. J. Giller  
Ms. A. Wheeler

***Staff of Clare County Council***

Ms. C. Kirby, Director of Physical Development  
Ms. L. O'Neill, SEO Ennis MD  
Mr. S. Lenihan, SE, Project Management Office  
Mr. J. Leahy, SE, Roads  
Mr. C. Feeney, SE, Environment and Water  
Mr. J. Corry, AO, Roads

**Item 1 – Confirmation of Minutes of the SPC Meeting of 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2020**

The Minutes were proposed by Cllr. O' Callaghan and seconded by Cllr. Cooney.

There were no matters arising

**Item 2- Presentation on EPA Water Quality Report**

The Water Quality Report titled "[An analysis of the EPA Water Quality Report 2015-2018](#)" was circulated before the meeting and the presentation was delivered by Maura McNulty, Executive Scientist.

M. McNulty advised that currently in County Clare 48 % of rivers have satisfactory water quality (High and Good Status) compared to 64% in 2015. She added that EPA data between the monitoring periods 2010-2015 and 2013-2018 in the county show a deterioration in river water quality of 16%. She advised that waterbodies with less than good status need to be improved and restored to at least good status to comply with the Water Framework Directive. She advised that all sections of Clare County Council were working to protect this valuable natural resource which is fundamental for the development of the county. She gave some of the following examples in this regard:

- Environment and Planning Section work closely together to control and condition developments.
- Planning Section promotes bio-diversity through awareness programmes.
- Environment Section carries out many inspections in the county in response to pollution complaints. There is also an inspection programme for licenced and permitted facilities,

domestic wastewater treatment systems and farms. Water and waste legislation is used to take enforcement action where necessary.

- The Water Framework river sampling programme is carried out by Clare County Council Environmental Laboratory and lake sampling is carried out by a contractor on behalf of the council.
- Water Services Section on behalf of Irish Water monitors urban wastewater discharges, if non-compliances are detected corrective action is taken.
- Environmental Awareness Officer works with LAWPRO community water officer to promote water quality awareness in the community. Grant funding is available from LAWPRO for approved projects.
- Clare County Council is working with Climate Action Regional Office on how Climate Change Adaption and Mitigation Measures can be implemented in the county. A Climate Action Adaption Strategy Document 2019 to 2024 has been published by Clare County Council.

She concluded her presentation by advising how the public could assist.

Cllr. Colleran Molloy thanked M. McNulty for her presentation and asked could the members of the SPC receive a copy of same. She queried the underlying causes of pollution and asked if we don't address the catchment areas would we continue to have ongoing closure of beaches. M. McNulty responded, we have to change our actions, each and every one of us has to think in a different way, we have to change what we do in order to prevent it from getting worse. There is a timeline in place, the Water Framework Directive gives us until 2027.

J. Giller queried as to what was actually meant by urban waste water. M. McNulty responded that it was all the waste water that we generate in our homes and is then collected by a sewer and is treated in a waste water treatment plant.

C. Feeney indicated that the 5 coastal towns in Co. Clare were going to have treatment plants. He added that projects ongoing should be completed in the next 3 years.

### **Item 3- Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Biodiversity.**

C. Feeney gave an update on the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024. He advised that the Strategy outlines the proposed Adaptation Strategy that Clare County Council will implement to adapt to the effects of climate change and to safeguard the biophysical infrastructure and wellbeing of the people and communities of County Clare. He added that the strategy has been developed in accordance with the 2018 Local Authority Adaptation Strategy Development Guidelines which set out a road map for local authorities and ensure a consistent approach across the sector. He indicated that our Strategy sets out the high level vision on how we will transition to a low carbon climate resilient future by adapting a wide range of actions across the different Directorates to adapt to the challenges of climate change. The Strategy will be dynamic and

flexible to respond quickly to the threats and opportunities that will face the local authority in the coming years. The Strategy is based on extensive review, research and stakeholder engagement. The public consultation process which is part of this process will also inform the objectives and actions set out in the strategy. This Strategy will not be a standalone document but its goals and objectives will be incorporated into all future plans and policies of Clare County Council to ensure climate adaptation is at the forefront of our service delivery.

Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy enquired regarding the difference between adaptation and mitigation.

C. Feeney responded that Transportation were involved on a regional Public Energy Efficiency project as a mitigation measure regarding public lighting energy saving. He further clarified that climate change is here now so we must adapt to the storms and we have developed many plans in that area.

J. Giller stated that according to the minutes of the last meeting, 10% of the actions identified in the Strategy have been completed and he requested more detail on the kind of actions that have been completed. C. Feeney indicated that he would update the SPC members on where they have made progress and where issues were ongoing.

Cllr. O'Callaghan indicated that he had concerns regarding the lack of dredging of rivers and streams and he added that there was a lot of silt in streams because they had not been touched for 20 – 30 years. He added that if rivers were opened up and trees and foilage removed it would help alleviate flooding.

M. McNulty responded that dredging can have a negative impact as the ecosystem is disturbed and flooding downstream can cause deterioration of water quality. She added that the aim is to find the best fit solution and stated that a consultation process will be held for River Basin Management in 2021.

C. Kirby indicated that the Local Authorities Water Programme (LAWPRO) was a shared service working with Local Authorities and State agencies to meet obligations under the EU Water Framework Directive for the development and implementation of River Basin Management Plans in Ireland. She added that they could look at the issue of dredging & how this could be considered without damaging water quality further.

#### **Item 4- Any Other Business.**

C. Kirby apologised on behalf of Clare County Council for the audio problems that affected this meeting for those dialing in to the meeting remotely.

**Date of next meeting : 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cllr. John Crowe**

**Chairperson**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**John Corry**

**Administrative Officer**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_