

Climate Change, Biodiversity & Environment Strategic Policy Committee
Minutes of Meeting – Thursday 8th February, 2024 in County Hall, Wexford & Remotely

Cathaoirleach: Cllr. Mary Farrell.

Present: Cllr. Donal Kenny (Remotely), Cllr. Maura Bell (Remotely), Cllr. Tom Forde (Remotely), Cllr. Jim Moore (Remotely), Mr. Danny Forde (PPN Member), Mr. James Brennan (Agriculture), Ms. AnnMarie Neville (Construction Industry Federation), Mr. Kevin Molloy (PPN Member - Remotely), Mr. Joe Ryan (Trade Union), Carolyne Godkin Director of Services, Frank Burke Climate Change Co-Ordinator, Gerry Forde Senior Engineer, George Colfer Coastal Engineer (Remotely), Clare Kelly Climate Change Officer, Rory O' Mahony Senior Executive Engineer Cliona Connolly Environment Education & Awareness Officer, Captain Phil Murphy Senior Marine Officer, Mick Mahon Marine Officer/Relief Pilot, Hugh Maguire Administrative Officer, Jodi Somers Clerical Officer, Ian Ludlow PPN Co-ordinator.

Apologies: Cllr. Oliver Walsh.

1. Confirmation of Minutes of SPC Meetings held on 6th December, 2023

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th December, 2023 were noted and proposed by Cllr. Donal Kenny and seconded by Cllr. Jim Moore.

2. Coastal Management Update

George Colfer, Coastal Engineer gave a brief update on coastal matters and projects noting the following matters:

- Coastal erosion is being monitored on an ongoing basis with no major storms noted for winter 2023/2024 to date.
- Rosslare Costal Erosion & Flood Relief Scheme to go to public consultation Q2.
- Seaview Coastal Protection Scheme to go to Part 11 Planning Process (Feb).
- G. Colfer met with the Water Safety Officer in advance of Bathing Season 2024.
- Curracloe won the Irish Independent Readers Best Beach in Ireland 2024.

Following the update the SPC Members had some queries that received responses;

- A query was raised about danger signs for beaches and if they would be ready to be used for 2024.
- There was a brief discussion on the extent of the coastline and other areas of the County that could be vulnerable to flooding. It was noted that flooding relief projects for towns such as Enniscorthy and Wexford are dealt with by the Special Projects Department of the Council. Significant recent flooding in the Rosslare area was also discussed. It was suggested that a report or presentation by the Special Projects Department on the flooding relief projects for towns could be made at a future SPC Meeting.

3. Climate Action Plan Update

Frank Burke and Clare Kelly updated the Committee and their presentation covered;

- Details of the public consultation period and the 20 submissions received.
- A summary of the main issues raised in the submissions received.

- Submissions were received from Government, Voluntary and Environmental Organisations and the general public.
- The topics covered by the submissions included energy, biodiversity, transport, just transition, nature-based solutions, cross sectoral co-operation and the community.
- Modifications to the Draft CAP were made for 10 of the 20 submissions received.
- The remaining submissions related to action already included in the Plan or others were outside of the scope of the Plan.
- The Natura Impact Report (NIR) did not require any changes.
- All the submissions were detailed with recommendations in the CE Report.
- The timelines for the adoption of the CAP were outlined in the presentation.

After the presentation the Committee Members raised a number of questions which were responded to by Frank Burke & Clare Kelly.

- There was a query concerning the number of submissions from state agencies and the extent of public consultations involved. It was pointed out that there were a series of stakeholder and consultation events in the lead up to the publication of the Draft Climate Action Plan (CAP).

The Draft Climate Action Plan was proposed for adoption and referral to the full Council by Joe Ryan, this was seconded by Cllr. Jim Moore.

4. Biodiversity Update – Frank Burke.

Frank Burke gave an update to the SPC Committee on Biodiversity matters covering some of the following items:

- The short-listing for interview for the Biodiversity Officer is complete .
The following projects under Biodiversity are ongoing;
 - Wetlands Survey Phase 2.
 - Pond Restoration Project.
 - The Mayfly recording Project.
 - The Nightjar (bird) Survey.
 - Dune Restoration Projects.
 - The Planting of 2 Council owned plots of land with native woodland.

Following the presentation there was a number of queries to which F. Burke responded;

5. Draft New Ross Port Explosives Bye-Laws

Captain Phil Murphy gave a presentation to the Committee on the Draft New Ross Port Explosive Bye-Laws 2024. The presentation outlined;

- The proposed Bye-Laws should increase the volume of shipping in the Port.
- This may see an increase in revenue for New Ross Port.
- The Area of importing explosives is highly regulated.
- This would mainly involve serving the needs of the Defence Forces.
- Facilitating munitions for exercises.
- The Legislation involved is complicated commencing in 1875 with various Orders and Statutory instruments over the years.

- There would be a designated berth at Marshmeadows covering the arrivals and departures on the Barrow River.
- Details of explosives limits were highlighted.

Following the presentation the SPC Members had some queries to which responses were given as follows;

- A query was raised about how often it was necessary to import ammunition for the Defence Forces and when does it normally occur. No specific information was given but it was expected during quieter port times.
- It was noted that the Bye-Laws require a responsible person to be present for the controlled discharge of each cargo.
- In response to a query regarding the timescales involved with the Draft Bye-Laws. Carolyne Godkin said that it was hoped that they could be adopted as soon as possible.

6. Domestic Waste-Water Treatment System Grant Scheme.

Hugh Maguire informed the Committee Members of recent changes to the Domestic Waste Water Treatment System Grant Scheme, the changes included;

- To be eligible for the DWWTS Grant Scheme, a household must either be inspected under the National Inspection Plan and failed or be in a Prioritised Area for Action and received a letter under the LAWPRO Waters Programme or be in a High-Status Objective Catchment and have a report on the condition of their Septic Tank.
- The maximum grant available has increased to €12,000 from €5,000. The grant is up to a maximum of 85% of the cost of the work or €12,000 whichever is the lesser.
- Homeowners can now register their DWWTS at any stage before applying for the grant to their Local Council following an Inspection.
- The DWWTS must serve the primary residence of the applicants, not be connected to a public sewer and the house must be built more than 7 years ago and the works must be completed in accordance with the Advisory Notice.
- Applications that have not been completed yet may be eligible for the increased grant amounts provided they meet all other grant eligibility criteria.

There followed a brief discussion with the Committee, it was agreed that the changes to the DWWTS Grant Scheme would be up on the Council's website and the public advised of same.

7. Any Other Business

Cllr. Jim Moore and Captain Phil Murphy advised the Committee that the KIMO International Board Members Meeting will be held in Wexford on 14th and 15th May, 2024.

Gerry Forde noted that the Ports, Past and Present Project involving Rosslare Harbour and a number of other Irish Ports and Welsh Ports was coming to an end and on behalf of the Committee he would like to pay sincere thanks to Cathrine Agnew Project Officer for all her dedicated work over the last 4 years. It was noted that the provisional date for the next CCBDEV SPC Meeting is Thursday 25th April, 2024 at 14.30.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.

Signed: *Mary Linnell*
Cathairleach

Date: *25/4/2024*

