

**Draft Minutes of the Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment (CBDEN) Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) Meeting held on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2025**

**Attendance Members:** Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy (Chair), Cllr Leonard Kelly, Cllr Pat Kehoe, Cllr Lisa McDonald (remotely), Joe Ryan (ASTI – remotely), Jer O'Mahony (IFA).

**Staff:** Michael Mahon, Eoin Kinsella, Brendan Cooney, Melissa Goff, Aoife Hennessy, Claire Goodwin, Cliona Connolly, Eamonn Hore,

**Apologies:** Natasha Ariff (PPN), Cathy Lee (PPN).

**1. Minutes of the last meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

The previous minutes were proposed by Jer O'Mahony and seconded by Joe Ryan. Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy (Cahir) signed the minutes.

**2. Annual Service Delivery Plan and the SPC Work Programme**

Melissa Goff introduced the Annual Service Delivery Plan (ASDP), noting that it was adopted by the Council on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2025. She outlined that the ASDP clearly identifies the Environment Department's objectives on pages 43-48. There are 14 objectives in total that are broken down into each Team within the Department to achieve them as a collective. Melissa stated that an SPC work programme has been created, it highlights the Environment Department's main initiatives and capital projects. Melissa then read down through the work programme.

Cllr Barbara-Anne Murphy asked if a member of the public can report invasive species that they have spotted in the County. Brendan Cooney replied that the legislation in this area is limited, the Council's remit concerns Wexford County Council property. The Council has no authority with regards to private property and invasive species. Claire Goodwin noted that invasive species are mentioned in the Draft Biodiversity Action Plan which is a later item on the meeting agenda. She also noted that ultimately National Parks and Wildlife Services are responsible however they do have limited resources. Cllr Leonard Kelly requested that information regarding the procedures the public should take regarding reporting the invasive species should be included on Wexford County Council's different media platforms to help get the correct information circulated. Claire Goodwin noted that the Municipal Districts and Borough District Staff are carrying out good work in dealing with invasive species. Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy noted that she was at a meeting recently where a LAWPRO representative noted that they can help communities with grants.

**3. Election Poster Update**

Melissa Goff addressed the matter of election posters, she noted that following the July SPC Meeting an email was sent to Brian Dawson, Communications and Public Engagement Manager of the Electoral Commission, to ask if he could provide any update into the main points of discussion from the public consultation and possible direction of the findings if possible. A response was received from Mary-Claire O'Sullivan, Head of Electoral Integrity and Research. She noted that there is a team from Dublin City University that are conducting the research after a competitive procurement process. The research and findings will be based on a review of international practice in relation to election posters and additional data collection and stakeholder consultation through interviews and focus groups. It is believed that there will be a report possibly with national guidelines provided about the issue in early 2026.

#### **4. Biodiversity Plan Draft Actions**

Claire Goodwin updated the Committee regarding the Biodiversity Action Plan draft actions, she noted that she was grateful for the working group and if the group were happy with the draft actions, then the Council would proceed to the next stage. A discussion ensued around the use of the word encourage in Biodiversity Action number 21 (use of native plants). Cllr Leonard Kelly asked if the word ensure could be used instead of encourage. It was agreed that was not feasible due to stock limitations within the country and other issues such as certain species of pollinators may not be native. However, Claire noted that we must as a local authority work on our own projects as priority. Eamonn Hore noted the proposed Actions.

#### **5. Coastal Matters**

No update provided.

#### **6. New Ross Port Explosive Bye-Laws Report on Public Consultations**

Michael Mahon. Senior Marine Officer gave a brief synopsis on the New Ross Port Explosive Bye-Laws 2025, explaining that it is a new source of revenue for the Port and should help to increase shipping business. He noted that the Defence Forces would be the primary user and that the Bye-Laws are specific to New Ross Port and therefore do not apply to any other port. Michael also noted that the five-week consultation finished in August and that two submissions were made mostly around why the purpose of the Bye-Laws were introduced. He explained that they looked at timber and aggregates also, but it was decided to go with explosives. If the Defence forces are importing the explosives, the Defence forces must be there to remove from the boat, if it is being imported for private industry then the armed Gardai must be present to escort. Explosives are not to be stored on-site only in case of a safety issue.

The Draft Bye-Laws 2025 were proposed by Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy and seconded by Cllr. Pat Kehoe.

#### **7. Water matters including Our Lady's Island Lake Update**

Brendan Cooney spoke about the water quality issues in Our Lady's Island Lake, he noted that there has been some multi- agency meetings including the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Teagasc, and LAWPRO. Brendan noted that a consultant was recommended by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and that a report was received this week. He also noted that the Lake could recover over time. Meetings are ongoing with consultants and IFA. Farmers need to be involved in finding a solution. Drone surveys have been carried out in the area and Brendan is waiting to collate all the information together to produce a full report. Joe Ryan mentioned that perhaps what was done in Lough Sheelin regarding the removal of slurries from the area should be looked at when putting together a plan for Our Lady's Island Lake and mentioned that there are also issues in Tacumshane lake. Brendan noted that the removal of slurries from the area would not be feasible, and it would be more likely that a project involving the mapping of nutrient status of fields and advising farmers on spreading of slurries would have to be carried out. He noted that Tacumshane lake has no committee in place whereas Our Lady's Island currently does, and National Parks and Wildlife Services own the lake and therefore are responsible for it. Eamonn Hore noted that at the Oireachtas meeting earlier in the year it was mentioned that it could take twenty years for the lake to get back to a good status.

## **8. Waste Management Matters including CCTV**

Melissa Goff provided a brief update to the Committee noting that Hugh Maguire and Rory O'Mahony were dealing with this project. The work surrounding the business cases and the Data Protection Impacts is in progress.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September a public advertisement for the public consultation went live and will remain open for submissions until the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October at 4:30pm. An email was issued to all Municipal and Borough Districts and Wexford County Council Members to create awareness and in local newspapers. The proposed areas for the CCTV for the prevention of litter and illegal dumping are: 1. Tesco bring banks, Wexford Town, 2. Tesco bring banks, Gorey Town, 3. Tesco bring banks, New Ross Town, 4. Bring banks in Wellingtonbridge, 5. Priory Lane, New Ross, 6. Turret Rocks, Enniscorthy Town.

Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy noted that it is a disgrace that Wexford County Council must go to such lengths to catch people dumping. Joe Ryan noted that since the clothing banks were removed at Tesco in Wexford there seems to be less dumping occurring. Cllr Pat Kehoe noted that while the bring banks are a good idea, there are several places where dumping is continuous and these need to be looked at for the use of CCTV. Cllr Leonard Kelly acknowledged that Wexford County Council are doing what they can with what legislation and structures are there however it is not tackling the issue of fly tipping. He noted that while the progression is good so far, more is needed. Eamonn Hore noted that Wexford County Council has made the conscious decision to get this up and running and noted that it may be possible that in the future a list of areas will be inputted on the one document however at the moment each site requires a separate business case.

## **9. Environment Education and Awareness Activities and Events**

Cliona Connolly gave a report about Environment Education and Awareness current activities including the Planting Grant Scheme noting that there were 101 applications approved this year. The Community Clean Up Programme for 2025 (as of the 18<sup>th</sup> of Sept) supported 800 clean ups. Cliona thanked all volunteers in local communities and to the Holmestown Clean Up Crew. She noted that there is a good system in place currently. The Environment Awards are to be held on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November this year. In 2024 €12,150 of prize money was awarded. The Keep Wexford Beautiful competition received 113 entries for 2025 with 60 groups involved. Cliona mentioned that there are several other events coming up such as the Christmas Decoration Competition, Halloween Costume Swap event and The Toy Library event. Cllr Barbara Anne Murphy thanked Cliona for her hard work and noted that The Toy Library is a great idea to help reduce the amount of plastic toys that are produced. Eamonn Hore also thanked Cliona for her brilliant work and noted that good work is being done by the Environment Section.

## **10. AOB**

No matters were discussed.

**Date of next meeting:** Friday November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 09:30am

**This concluded the business of the Meeting.**

Signed:



Cathaoirleach

Date:

