



KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

CLIMATE ACTION

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE 7TH OCTOBER 2020

@ 10AM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS CHILL DARA

PRESENT

Councillors: Peter Hamilton (Chair), Bill Clear, Fintan Brett, Ciara Galvin, Naoise Ó Cearúil

Sectoral Interests: Judith Browne, PPN – Community/Voluntary
Allan Shine, Business/Commercial
Tom Malone, Agriculture/Farming

Officials: Joe Boland, Director of Services
Claire Moran, A/Senior Staff Officer, CARO
Stephen Deegan, Climate Action Officer
Geraldine Morris, Clerical Officer,

APOLOGIES: Ali Sheridan, PPN - Environmental/ Conservation
Alan Dunney, Regional Coordinator, CARO

ABSENT: Cllr Fiona McLoughlin Healy,

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all. He gave a brief personal introduction focusing, in particular, on his commitment to the matters at hand.

Agenda item 1: To approve the Minutes of the Climate Action SPC meeting held on 8th July 2020 (copy attached)

Minutes were approved.

Judith Browne asked for the following two amendments be made to reflect her requests at the previous meeting which were omitted from the draft minutes:

In **agenda item 4 meeting of 8/7/20** –A request that KCC staff be permitted to work from home as per the goal of the Programme for Government. It was advised that staff were allowed to work from home and, for example, in fact over 40% of the Environment services staff were working remotely.

In **any other business**, a request that the SPC meetings be recorded so that those unable to travel could access the meeting remotely. Members were advised that this would need to be escalated to the Protocol Committee, as such would not accord with current policies.

The minutes were approved subject to the above amendments.

Agenda item 2: To consider any matters arising from the minutes

No items were raised.

Agenda item 3: Meeting to be addressed by Stephen Deegan, Climate Action Officer – overview of key local priorities

Agenda item 5: To consider update/summary of issues from meetings of Climate Action Team

Agenda item 6: To consider progress report on Adaptation Actions

Stephen Deegan, Climate Action Officer (CAO), introduced himself and also gave some personal background.

He gave a brief outline of the current national/regional priorities with particular emphasis on implications for KCC. KCC Climate Action Team has been established and is progressing well. The Climate Action Adaptation Strategy has been published. In early November, the new Energy Efficiency Officer will commence. Climate Action is a standing item on the agenda of the Senior Management Team meetings as well as other key meetings in line with KCC Corporate Plan. There is also a requirement for climate action to cascade down to all staff through the PMDS/PDPs. The first annual update of the 'Climate Resilient Kildare' Adaptation Plan is due now and he gave a presentation regarding the proposed format which encompasses six thematic areas as follows:

1. Local Adaptation Governance and Business Operations
2. Infrastructure and Built Environment
3. Land use and development

4. Drainage and Flood Management
5. Natural Resources and Cultural Infrastructure
6. Community Health and Wellbeing.

A list of priority areas have also been identified with a view to ensuring some early wins. There is also an ongoing focus on engagement with key stakeholders including in particular, the PPN Climate Linkage Group.

Reference was also made to a SEC webinar [hosted by EM CARO] taking place on 8th October as well as the 'Role of Digital Technology' webinar taking place on 10th October run by MERITs.

The Chair thanked him for the overview and was pleased to note the extent to which climate action was now permeating council objectives. He also expressed the view that there would likely be an increased focus on mitigation/reducing carbon footprint as part of future priorities.

A question and answer session ensued, and it was also agreed that the Climate Action Officer's presentation would be circulated.

In response to queries, he referred to the need to be practical, feasible and open to new ideas. His initial focus was internal but that he would now commence contact with external stakeholders. He agreed that more work could be done with schools (primary and secondary) and that this would be very much a priority. He also emphasised the strong leadership role of the council and that there will be an emphasis on community capacity building. Accordingly, the active involvement of the MDs would also be really important as well as an overall emphasis on a collaborative approach. The forthcoming budgetary process would also be important in this context. Indeed, there were a range of exciting projects emerging particularly in the areas of public realm, sustainable transport etc. There was also reference to the feasibility of bog re-wetting/restoration as well as encouraging further dialogue with Bord na Móna

Actions: It was agreed to recommend that each SPC would focus on two initiatives arising from the thematic areas and that this would be progressed by the Chair through the Corporate Policy Group.

Agenda item 7: To note ongoing CARO projects

- JB gave a high-level overview of some of the 24 initiatives currently being progressed by CARO with the key emphasis being on local engagement, economic opportunities, staff capacity building and training, mitigation, strategic partnerships at a national, regional and local level as well as the linkages with spatial planning.
- €11m was assigned to Just Transition fund.
- The Atlantic Seaboard South are progressing an initiative in relation to Roads assets management.
- A range of community focused initiatives.
- There are 4 SECs at master plan stage in County Kildare and others in the pipeline.
- An interactive presentation for MDs will be rolled out nationally in due course (Claire Moran to talk on this subject in Item 8).
- Work is ongoing with LEADER in relation to community capacity building/training.
- Cappagh GAA club in North Kildare will be a national lead on the GAA partnership.
- Hoping to progress an initiative in conjunction with Age Action Ireland
- A one-day Climate Action festival took place in Castlebar (Atlantic Seaboard North)
- The Economic, Enterprise, Community & Culture sub-committee of the CCMA in conjunction with EMCARO has launched an initiative to find the best and practical way LA's can promote climate action business opportunities.
- EMCARO is progressing a guidance document (and procurement framework) for the establishment of the native woodlands planting on local authority owned lands.
- An App is being created for severe weather warnings.
- A common reporting template for climate adaptation strategies is currently being rolled out nationally by EMCARO.

- A Building Energy Manual for Local Authorities is being created with the aim of assisting LA municipal buildings managers in optimising energy efficiency and saving energy in addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- A training plan for the local government sector is currently being rolled out
- A policy is being agreed on the part of the local government sector in relation to the roll out of EV charging points.
- A report to the CCMA has identified additional resources required within LA's and CARO to meet the ambition and deliver on LA Climate Action Charter.
- Progressing decarbonising zones/towns in the future.
- Donegal County Council is the pilot for working on fleet management energy consumption in terms of both sustainability of fleet and driver behaviour.
- The CAROs are working closely with each of the Regional Assemblies, to organise workshop events with planners, to explore climate action issues relevant to their areas and integrate appropriate policies and/objectives that seek to deliver upon the national transition objective.
- The Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) are on board in relation to training and capacity building
- No Energy Agency in Kildare – but one in Kilkenny/Carlow

A question and answer session followed wherein there was general satisfaction in relation to the range of initiatives being delivered. AS welcomed in particular the ongoing business opportunities initiative and also referred to potential benefits to the SME sector. He also referred to the potential for funding in the context of the EU Green Deal. In addition, County Kildare Chamber of Commerce have established a climate action group and perhaps it could be invited to make a presentation at the next meeting. Reference was also made to the desirability of identifying a pilot decarbonised town. The use of solar panels on council buildings such as MERITs was also suggested. In this context, it was noted that the recently recruited MERITs manager had a strong background in this area.

There were 2 EV charging points placed in the Council's car park and the members would be kept informed regarding emerging policy relating to the local government section.

Action: To invite Kildare Chamber of Commerce to present to a SPC in 2021.

Agenda item 8: New initiative: To receive a presentation on how Municipal Districts can be assisted in shaping/influencing community involvement in climate action

Claire Moran, Acting Senior Staff Officer from EM CARO gave an updated presentation. It included 3 videos and could be summed up in 'We are readyare you?'

Local Climate Action Initiative:



The Eastern & Midlands CARO, in collaboration with the Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) and Kildare's Climate Action SPC have developed a presentation. This presentation is aimed at encouraging elected members to lead local climate action initiatives at municipal district level.



The presentation demonstrates examples of local climate action initiatives already piloted / undertaken in Kildare, namely; the Climate Camp pilot, the Community Training Programme which resulted from a LEADER / CARO partnership and the development of Sustainable Energy Communities, with a focus on Maynooth SEC, which is chaired by Cllr. Peter Hamilton.



The presentation also focuses on the importance of partnerships for community development and local climate action, such as the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, between the GAA and local government, which will see the development of Sustainable Club Workshops and Toolkits under the Green Clubs Programme.



It recognises the leadership role played by our elected members in our communities and within our MDs and the untapped expertise that exists at local level. It explores how we might connect with our communities.



It looks at the framework provided by the Climate Action Charter and some of the important actions it contains, particularly the building of a sustained localised citizen engagement model and connecting with young citizens.

The Climate Action SPC of Kildare Co. Council and particularly its chair, Cllr. Peter Hamilton, have provided invaluable feedback and input into the presentation to date, having facilitated presentation of 2 iterations of the draft, at SPC meetings.

The CARO is now working to produce a more innovative/interactive format of this presentation, to be rolled out from mid-November at each municipal district meeting across the 17 local authorities in the Eastern & Midlands region.

The Eastern & Midlands CARO, in collaboration with the Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) have created a presentation, aimed at encouraging elected members to lead local climate action initiatives at municipal district level.

Judith Browne attended the communities for climate action course that Claire mentioned in the presentation and was very complementary.

Action: The CARO is considering how best to rollout to their region and the final presentation format will be piloted at MD meetings in Kildare and Kilkenny (as CARO partners).

Agenda item 4: To further consider Strategic Policy Committee workplan

A draft workplan was circulated and subsequent discussion was led by the Chair who again referred to the importance of linkage with the thematic priorities to encompass organisational (corporate plan), spatial planning, [decentralised zones] and mitigation. The active involvement of the PPN linkage group was also stressed as well as the future emphasis on mitigation aspects. There should also be an initial focus on policy issues which can be progressed within the next 3/6 months.

It was suggested that the cycling infrastructure should include 'walking'. The need to reinvigorate the green flag scheme and include primary and secondary schools was highlighted. Reference was also made to plastic overload and the increased litter due to COVID; need to reinforce what can be recycled; lead positively and be a core of what is happening.

Concern was raised regarding the back of footpaths on the ring roads – the gap needs to be filled appropriately either by moving fences or as a pollinator, and management of cycle/footpath.

Also need to consider the electric vehicle charge strategy, access European green deal funding, eco village showcase.

Action: SD and Chair to work together on policy prioritisation based on above contributions as well as the thematic areas as already identified and to revert to the SPC.

Agenda item 9: To note date of next meeting

It was requested that a meeting be held in December due to the cancellation of the May meeting due to COVID.

Action: Next meeting will be on 9th December from 10am for max 2 hours. If level 3 or above restrictions remain, meeting will be MS Teams, otherwise it will be in the Council Chamber.

Agenda item 10: Any other Business

JB advised that the Energy Efficiency Officer will be in sited in the next few weeks

There was also a suggestion that a hub/repository/shared file be created for the SPC where key documents could be stored/assessed.

An update on the Just Transition application by EMCARO was requested. It was noted that a decision would likely be made later in the year.