

## **Linkage Group Meeting 15 December 2021 (Post Q4 SPC)**

**In attendance:** Jennifer Whitty, Judith Browne, Mary Jennings, Gerry Dornan, Fionnuala Corcoran, Ursula King, Sean o Broin, Bob Quinn

**Apologies:** Ali Sheridan, Cliona Keliher, Emer Conway, Liz Cullen

### **Minutes**

#### **1. Q4 SPC Minutes Review**

Jude took us through the draft SPC minutes for the Q4 SPC which took place on 1<sup>st</sup> Dec.

#### **Presentation from Donal Hodgins Senior Engineer on Sustainable Transport & Active Travel:**

Feedback from the linkage group on the sustainable transport presentation received by the SPC was that a lot of the projects listed are NTA driven and that KCC's main area of control would be around walking and cycling. GD being the rep on sustainable transport SPC outlined the work that he had been doing to engage the members in setting more ambitious targets around active travel. GD has had a meeting with Donal Hodgins and mentioned there is a new SPC chair and is looking forward to the year ahead. BQ mentioned that the LAP in Naas was recently approved but with very unambitious active travel targets despite submissions being made around this. GD mentioned that the targets are in line with those of Cork & Galway and that targets are set by officials in the NTA but suggested targets should be set by elected officials. BQ also raised the issue of the importance of KCC having a communication strategy around engaging the community in decisions relating to greenway building for Sallins to Naas and more generally. Parson's St. in Maynooth was mentioned as an example of a communication failure as public backlash to proposals to making 1 way street meant the plans did not go ahead.

#### **Mainstreaming of Climate Action across all SPCs**

Jude mentioned this item was not discussed in depth at the SPC due to time constraints. Linkage group members were disappointed about this. The members had a lengthy discussion about the effectiveness of the SPCs which is outlined under section 2 below.

#### **Draft Just Transition Plan for West Kildare**

Jude took us through the minutes and mentioned that she felt positive about the discussion; that there was more focus on KCC getting all stakeholders together to figure out how to split the BnM land for the various interests - carbon sequestration, Biodiversity, waste management etc. SOB suggested that we need to see the annual report of BnM which will outline their strategic plan. Jude mentioned that their plan is

known but that pressure is coming on BnM now from the community groups but it was agreed that BnM are not being challenged by KCC.

### **Issues with agendas/minutes/presentations**

It was noted and welcomed that Ali raised the fact the linkage group meeting was cancelled in November due to the non-issuance of the SPC agenda in a timely manner. This has been raised in the past and it is welcome to see this documented in the SPC minutes. It was separately noted that the issuing of the SPC minutes within a week of the SPC was a great improvement.

## **2. Review of Linkage Group 2021**

Jennifer proposed a group discussion and review of how the linkage group was progressing within the SPC system. Jennifer has been tracking all items brought to the SPC by the linkage group in 2021 and their resolution. 21 questions were brought to the SPC by the linkage group over the 4 SPCs in 2021.

A summary of the status/resolution of the questions is presented below:

- 24% were items of a recurring nature such as issuing of agendas/minutes/presentations in a timely manner
- 20% were referred to other SPCs
- 14% were resolved (questions were satisfactorily answered)
- 14% were ongoing (engagement from the SPC on the question but needs further follow up)
- 10% needed central government guidance
- 10% were pushed out due to time constraints
- 10% were not resolved to the satisfaction of the LG

The group welcomed the presentation of the data and it was suggested that this type of data collection should be used as a template across all linkage groups as a tool to highlight where the system is failing.

There followed a lengthy discussion between the members present covering the history of the formation of the linkage group, the creation of the system to have a pre and a post SPC linkage group meeting and the frustrations experienced by all members on the lack of clarity and progression of actual climate action in the SPC.

The data shows a number of areas for improvement and focus going forward. The fact that the items of a recurring nature make up the highest pareto of inputs by the LG is unacceptable and needs to be brought to zero. It was noted that this issue is unfortunately experienced across all SPCs/Linkage groups. This item is being tackled by the PPN both locally and nationally but the linkage group's visibility into this is limited which needs to be rectified.

It was agreed between the members present that

- the precise terms of reference of the Climate Action SPC and all SPCs needs to be clarified.
- We receive an update from the PPN secretariat on the actions being taken/proposed to tackle the issues experienced across all linkage groups
- It was suggested that we invite a PPN member from another county to the linkage group to discuss their experiences.