

Linkage Group Meeting 25th Feb 2021

In attendance: Jennifer Whitty, Ursula King, Ciara Galvin, Ashling Hill, Sean O Broin, Gerry Dornan, Fionnuala Corcoran, Kevin Mullen, Colm Kenny, Ali Sheridan, Judith Browne, Suzanne Murphy, Ann Behan, Gerry Dornan, Bob Quinn, Mary Jennings, Emma Winchcombe, Stephanie Jones

Apologies: Emer Conway, Thelma Stronge

Minutes

Welcome and Introductions (Jennifer Whitty)

Jennifer welcomed everyone and we heard from our new members about their background and community activities.

Update from the recent Climate Action SPC Meeting (Judith Browne)

Eamon Ryan attended the SPC for the first hour:

- Welcome of Eamonn Ryan by Mark Stafford, Chairperson of KCC and Peter Carey, CEO KCC.
- Peter highlighted what KCC has achieved in the Climate Action sphere to date ie CASPC formed and running 1 year, 2 electric vehicles, 2 electric vehicle charging points in car park, KCC has reduced its in house energy usage by 25%, Energy Officer position filled, Climate Action position filled and MDs have been using Local Property Tax for Climate Action Projects.
- Presentation on Climate Action Bill, Objectives and implications for Local Authorities by Minister Eamonn Ryan.
 - Eamonn presented that Ireland has set its target at 51% Carbon reduction by 2030 and how he suggested we will do this is by improving energy efficiency, electrification of vehicles, renewable energy, retrofitting 500k houses to B2 standard in the next 10 years and sustainable land use ie compact growth (developing houses close to facilities and housing that complements active travel (NTA LA led funding)).
 - He predicts people will be working 2/3 days per week from home so we need to make really nice local environments.
 - Further on land use he said we need to rewet bogs, he said the value of the bogs as carbon sinks outweighs their value for horticulture and he said farmers need to be paid properly.
 - On transport he said Athy bypass has been signed off on, DART is coming to Maynooth, better rail service on Cork line is being looked at.
- In response Peter Carey talked about Athy and how KCC are regenerating 2 squares in the town, that the towns model school will house a food hub, Barrow Blue way, Shackleton museum, new primary care centre, library and cultural centre.
- Fintan Brett, councillor suggested if the Cork rail line was upgraded to Kildare it could lead to using one lane on N7 as a bus lane.
- Ciara Galvin mentioned the traffic congestion in Celbridge.
- Bill Clear mentioned that services need to be connected, 300k spent on Sallins bypass but no connection to NS in Sallins so kids could cycle to school. He said we need a cycle connection to Sallins from Naas to connect to rail service.
- Presentation from the Kildare Chamber which will focus their work with the SDGs and the setting up of the Kildare Sustainability Council, followed by a brief update on JT fund for Allenwood from Allan Shine, CE, Kildare Chamber)

Presentation from the Kildare Chamber – Allan Shine

- Allan Shine told us that the Kildare Sustainability Council has been set up which is a lobby organisation which helps small businesses become sustainable, learn about green procurement from big businesses eg Kerry, Pfizer, customs clearance (has certified staff dealing with Brexit) and are involved in trade visits.
- Then Allan spoke about the new green enterprise centre of excellence planned for Allenwood that has received funding of 850k from JT fund. ACDAL already employs 75 people with another 80 to come. ACDAL has been successful in getting funding from Leader, JTF, Meitheal and Droichead so watch this space!
- I asked Allan what helped him get funding? He said a small core group of very committed people who were willing to put in the hrs it took to apply and he said it helped that he had good engagement with LCDC.

Climate proofing the County Development Plan from Jane O'Reilly, Senior Executive Planner, Policy And Research.

- Most people have been to KCC and PPN consultation meetings on this

Notice of question: given the recent experience with the NTA and ORIS funding, how can we improve communications of such funding with the wider community? From Ali

- Word from NTA is that funding window was too tight, had to have projects delivered within 5 months.
- Naoise O'Ceairuil has responded to our questions about this by proposing that his MD create a plan so that they are ready for next ORIS funding opportunity and he suggested that MDs should be liaised with by KCC because the Councillors know which projects are shovel ready.
- Ciara Galvin made the point that she didn't know about it til people were complaining that it hadn't been applied for.
- Peter Hamilton suggested a plenary motion to bridge the gaps in communication.
- Joe Boland said he would raise the issue at senior Management level.

Key Decisions Made

- Some other suggestions from Stephen Deegan, CA Officer were community and voluntary groups need to learn from sports groups re applying for funding and Tidy Towns groups who are getting better at the process too.
- Also there is expertise rising in the SEC sector.
- Another suggestion was that KCC provide seed money or bridging finance just like they do in the SEC sector for other Climate Action projects as raising seed money can be a very time consuming process for volunteers who are working full time.

AOB

- In AOB I raised Gerry Dornan Transport SPC reps question re the Health Economic Assessment Tool developed by the WHO which calculates the Carbon saved by active travel schemes. Peter Hamilton agreed to ask the Transport SPC about when they will make a decision re HEAT tool.

Actions required from Kildare County PPN for next meeting:

1. Prepare a submission from CASPC linkage group to the County Development Plan before 8/3/21.
2. Identify Climate Action projects and progress them to shovel ready point so they are ready when funding arises.

3. Identify what questions/ motions/issues need to be raised by councillors on our behalf at full council meetings in the near future and decide on who is going to follow up with which councillors.
- 4.

Date of next SPC meeting 12th May 21

Deadline for Agenda Submissions: 28th April

Questions from the Group on Judith's Update

- There were enquiries on the LPT Climate Innovation Grant in Celbridge and whether it will be expanded to other MDs?
- Cllr Ciara Galvin suggested that groups approach their Councillors to enquire whether it could be a possibility.
- Ciara has sent details of the Climate Innovation Fund to our email. Deadline has passed.

Climate Linkage Group SubGroups (Jennifer)

- Jennifer brought us through:
 - An overview of the Climate Linkage Group. (Slides Attached)
 - An overview of the Climate Action Linkage Subgroups and why they are in place:
 - To identify projects to be conducted
 - To identify existing relevant local projects that we can invite to the PPN network or look to collaborate with
 - Logging funding streams to for potential projects
 - Identifying barriers to getting the projects up and running
 - To spend more time on key areas that we do not have time to do at full meetings
 - To maintain a policy action plan as we are doing with the CDP
 - Jennifer explained that groups are not expected to conduct all the projects themselves.
 - Leads have been identified for each of the groups except for Sustainable Water.
 - Jennifer gave an overview of the Subgroup Workplan that she has put together and presented a mechanism through Excel for capturing ideas so we are ready for when funding comes along

Ask for the Linkage Group: Can subgroup leads please set up meetings for March. Request to try schedule meetings so they do not clash in case anyone wants to go along to different meetings.

CDP Update (Group Discussion)

- Group discussed the language of climate adaptation and mitigation, and whether we need to request stronger language be used in the CDP
- Monitoring and Reporting should be a key part of the Council's work with better use of metrics
- Trees are being cutting illegally e.g. Carton Avenue
- It was suggested that we all look at our local areas to see what is happening to biodiversity in relation to developments
- A point was made that although the CDP may refer to good practice, implementation is continuously poor.

- A suggestion was raised that we should include a contribution about the consultation process itself as part of the CDP Consultation. For e.g. Can KCC explain what they would like to gain from the consultation? Will it be balanced with expertise and expert insights?
- A suggestion was made to explore how Cash & Bank Bonds may be expanded to include preservation of trees and hedge rows. The system of bonding will be reviewed by KCC this year and it would be appropriate to raise the possibility of inclusion in of the preservation of trees and hedgerows in in future bonds.
- An idea of a petition was raised to encourage KCC to put Climate Action and Biodiversity at the centre of the CDP.
- It was noted that existing commitments such as the Naas Travel Policy, have not been achieved and that we need a better way to ensure implementation of any future commitments.

Ask for the Linkage Group:

- It was requested that the draft CDP submission be shared for other groups to see.
- All submissions are in for the CDP except for energy and water will be received tomorrow. (26th Feb).

AOB

- Fionnuala has launched a Green St. Patrick's Day Poster Trail. Email will be going out to town reps. Stephanie suggested sending it to the Naas Ball for publicity.