

Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee 4
Environmental Protection, Climate Action & Energy
Held on Friday 4th December, 2020 at 11.00am
Remotely by MS Teams

In the Chair: Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh

In Attendance: Cllr. Deirdre Cullen, Cllr. David Fitzgerald, Cllr. Joe Lyons, Cllr. Maria Dollard, Noel O'Donoghue, Laurence Conroy, John Hurley and James Murphy

Also Present: Mr. Sean McKeown, Director of Service; Mr. Frank Stafford, A/Senior Engineer; Mr. Tom Brennan, Executive Engineer; Ms. Bernadette Moloney, Environmental Education/Awareness Officer; Mr. Paul Murphy, Executive Engineer; Mr. Paul Byrne, Executive Technician; Ms. Catherine Millea, Senior Staff Officer.

Apologies: None

Item 1 Declaration of interests

None reported.

Item 2 Confirmation of Minutes

Proposed by N. O'Donoghue, seconded by J. Hurley and agreed: *"that the minutes of SPC4 meeting held on the 4th September, 2020, a copy of which was circulated to each member with the Agenda, is hereby adopted,"* subject to amendment to Item 9 – Amenity Grants: should read 166 Organisations approved and received funding – Average grant €900.

Item 3 Matters Arising

Update on Item 14: S. McKeown advised no response has been received to date from DAFM in relation to the SLA in place with the ISPCA. He said the newly established Animal Welfare Committee has also written to the ISPCA and DAFM seeking clarification as to why County Kilkenny is not covered by the SLA.

Item 4 Progress Report

Circulated to the Committee in advance of the meeting. S. McKeown gave a brief summary of items contained in the report as follows:-

1. RMCEI (Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections) Plan 2020

There is are over 2,000 planned inspections across Waste, Water, Noise and Air. EPA are understanding of fact that local authorities will be unable to fully deliver on the targets set in their RMCEI Plans this year owing to the impact of Covid-19. Notwithstanding, at least 90% of the planned inspections will still be completed by Kilkenny County Council by year end.

2. Environmental Complaints

The number of complaints logged and investigated this year to end of October has seen a significant increase, with 1,127 cases logged compared with 957 for the same period last year. This represents an 18% increase year-on-year and a 29% increase since Covid-19 restrictions were introduced.

3. Enforcement Actions (Litter & Waste)

Since January over 220 litter fines have been issued under the Litter Pollution Act. Under the Water Pollution Act, a further 6 Notices have issued and 3 warning letters issued. Over 50 actions

have also been taken so far this year under the Waste Management Act. There are also a number of court cases being progressing in relation to significant breaches of the Waste Management Act.

4. Waste Management Bye-Laws

There has been a significant increase in the number of households that are now availing of a three-bin waste collection service. There are still a limited number of cases where a waste collection service is not practical or available, such as households that lack space for bins or located on narrow roads and laneways. In this regard, the Council has made provision within the Bye-laws to enable householders to apply for an exemption to continue with the use of branded bags for waste collection.

5. Anti-dumping Initiative

Kilkenny County Council received grant funding of €102,000 from the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment for a wide range of anti-dumping initiatives in 2020 and some of these will be discussed later in the meeting.

6. Historic Landfill Sites

There are 14 Historic Landfill Sites (i.e. closed landfills) in County Kilkenny. Table circulated in the report provides the current status of remediation works in relation to each. These works are fully funded by the Department and Kilkenny County Council makes an annual application for funding to continue remediation works on all of these historic landfill sites.

7. Dunmore Civic Amenity Site (CAS)

Activity at Dunmore CAS has increased with customer numbers up c9.5% to the end of October 2020, compared to the same period for 2019. Over 61,000 customer visits have been made to the CAS so far this year. The tonnage of waste and recycling material collected at the facility has also increased by c7.3% with over 2,477 tonnes of waste and 1,248 tonnes of recycling material collected.

8. Bikes for Africa

Kilkenny was the first local authority in the country to engage in the 'Bikes for Africa' initiative in conjunction with the Rotary Club, Kilkenny. Minister of State Malcolm Noonan launched this initiative nationally at the Dunmore CAS on 7th September last. The initiative has been a great success, with 11 Local Authorities now involved and over 4,000 bikes donated to date.

9. Bring Banks Usage

The Council provides and manages 46 Bring Banks across the City and County. There has been a c50% increase in usage at these facilities over the past year, with a total of 1,526 tonnes of glass, tin and aluminium collected so far this year, representing an additional c500 tonnes, compared to the same period last year.

10. Home Energy Savings Kits

Home Energy Saving Kits are now available to borrow from every library branch in the County. The kits can be used to detect potential energy savings and to explore energy conservation.

11. ISO 50001

The Council's Energy Team is currently working towards attaining ISO 50001 certification, the internationally recognised energy efficiency standard and auditing system. The first stage in the audit took place last Friday and the second stage is planned for January 2021.

12. Animal Welfare Standards Committee

The newly established Animal Welfare Standards Committee had its first meeting in September and a follow-up meeting will be held on 11th December next.

13. Horse Bye Laws

The Draft Bye Laws have gone to public consultation and the closing date for submissions is 4.00pm on Tuesday 15th December next. The bye-laws will also provide for the introduction of horse exclusion zones in Kilkenny City.

14. Dog Shelter

The Department recently published the Annual National Dog Statistics based on returns from all Local Authorities. The statistics show that the number of dogs euthanised in the Carlow/Kilkenny Dog Shelter is very low at 0.75% compared with the national average of 4.4%. This is despite the fact that on average the number of dogs kept at shelters nationally fell by 8%, whereas the number of dogs kept at the Carlow/Kilkenny Shelter increased by 45%. In 2019 400 dogs entered the shelter and 3 had to be euthanised on health or behavioural grounds. This year to-date 222 dogs have entered the shelter, 2 have had to be euthanised for worrying sheep. There were 5 dogs in the shelter at the end of November. In line with HSE/Government guidelines on essential services during Covid 19, the Carlow/Kilkenny Dog Shelter remains open to the public by appointment only.

15. IBAL Results

Kilkenny City has topped the poll once again and is deemed to be the cleanest of 40 towns and cities surveyed twice annually by business group Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL).

16. Ferrybank Neighbourhood Park

The Park in Ferrybank is now open to the public since 12th October last. It is a major new amenity and one that has been delivered in conjunction with Waterford City & County Council under the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF).

17. South East Greenway (incorporating the Kilkenny Greenway)

The project received a great boost recently with the announcement that the overall estimated project costs for constructing the 24km Greenway, in the amount of €15.5m will be grant aided under the National Greenway Fund. The rail and sleeper removal is almost complete, and the detailed design is almost complete. The construction of the Greenway will be tendered in Lots and the first of these – the urban sections in Ferrybank and New Ross will be tendered in the next 2 weeks, and it is anticipated that these will go to construction in March. Part 8 planning approval for two of the public car parks to facilitate access to the Greenway in South Kilkenny has been secured. A public engagement process is underway with the local community in Ferrybank to help identify a preferred location for a car park to access the Greenway in the Ferrybank area.

Cllr. M.H. Cavanagh, thanked S. McKeown for the updates. A brief discussion took place with contributions from Cllr. M. Dollard, Cllr. J. Lyons, L. Conroy, J. Murphy and Cllr. D. Cullen. The following issues were raised:

- use of branded refuse bags;
- procedure for making complaints to the Council about litter and dumping incidents;
- illegal dumping on private lands;
- dog attacks on sheep;
- dog fouling;

S. McKeown, F. Stafford and T. Brennan responded to the queries raised.

Item 5 Consideration of Policy Issues (for recommendation)

Amenity Grants

S. McKeown confirmed the Council have agreed to maintain the annual funding for Amenity Grants at €140,000 in the adopted budget for 2021. Following discussion, it was unanimously agreed that SPC4 will

recommend to Council that insurance costs be included as an eligible expenditure item in Amenity Grant Scheme.

Graveyard Grants

F. Stafford updated. Kilkenny has 14 active burial grounds within the city and county maintained by the Council. There are over 150 Historical Graveyards that are vested to the local authority and there are a similar number of parish owned graveyards. Any Committee or Group maintaining a graveyards can apply for a Graveyard Grant. Following discussion, it was unanimously agreed that SPC4 will recommend to Council that insurance costs be included as an eligible expenditure item in the Graveyard Grant Scheme.

Item 6 Consideration of Policy Issues (for recommendation)

LAWPRO Update / video – 3rd Cycle RBMP

T. Brennan presented.

Contributions from: Cllr. M. H. Cavanagh, J. Murphy, Cllr. M. Dollard and Cllr. J. Lyons.

Draft Litter Management Plan

B. Moloney presented on the timeline for adoption of the Litter Management Plan and challenges to be addressed in same. Noted that a draft of the Plan will be available in advance of the next meeting of SPC4.

Biodiversity & Recreational Countryside Park at Dunmore

F. Stafford presented. Noted that a Part 8 planning application will be lodged in the coming weeks and an application for funding has been made under the Outdoor Recreation and Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS).

Kilkenny Quiet Area

P. Byrne presented.

CARO Projects

Deferred to next meeting.

Climate Change Adaptation Strategy CAS Review

Deferred to next meeting.

Cllr. M.H. Cavanagh thanked staff for their very informative presentations and asked that they be circulated to the Committee.

Item 7 AOB

There was no other business.

Item 8 Date of next meeting

The date for the next meeting was set for **Friday, 5th March, 2021 at 11.00am**. Arrangements to be confirmed subject to public health advice and Government restrictions that may be in place at the time.