

MINUTES OF THE CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY ACTION STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 17th FEBRUARY AT 3.00PM BY ZOOM

PRESENT: Cllr. Lourda Scott (Cathaoirleach)
Cllr. Peir Leonard
Cllr. Rory O'Connor
Cllr. Dermot O'Brien
Cllr. Jodie Neary
Ms. Sharon Jackson
Mr. Justin Ivory
Mr. Franny Raven

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms. Breege Kilkenny, Director of Services
Ms. Jackie Carroll, Senior Executive Officer
Ms. Mary Cahill, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. Deirdre Burns, Heritage Officer
Mr. Jim Callery, Environmental Awareness Officer
Mr. Marc Devereux, Senior Engineer

Item 1: Minutes of Meeting held on 9th of September 2021

The Minutes of the Climate and Biodiversity Action Strategic Policy Committee held on the 9th of December 2021 were proposed by Cllr. Pier Leonard and seconded by Cllr. Jodie Neary.

Item 2: Matters Arising from the Minutes

No matters arising

Item 3: Draft Glyphosate policy:

Ms. Mary Cahill gave an overview of the draft Glyphosate policy.

Cllr. Scott enquired as to the volume of glyphosate currently used across the County. MC to revert and advised that Dept. of Agriculture legislation restricts the sale of Glyphosate in large quantities to registered purchaser only. MC advised that it might be necessary to introduce a similar register in the non-agri sector.

Cllr. O'Connor commented as follows:

- Establishment of Round Up baseline to enable reduction by 2025 – MC confirmed round up baseline will be figures from 2020.
- Linking into the CE Report by reporting monthly usage – MC confirmed it should be permissible to link the stats to report.
- Possibility of IT including a feature in the app allowing the public access to where glyphosate is being used – MC had no issue with app being public facing.

Cllr. Neary commented as follows:

- In agreement with Cllr. O'Connor's points Cllr. Neary further commented that monthly statistics would assist with transparency and monitoring at what time of the year the product is being used and on what, i.e. invasive species.
- Enquired as to a rota amongst the MD's for use of the foam stream – MC to advise and said that WMD are currently sharing the machine with the harbour.
- Important to educate residents associations on the danger of widespread use and other methods of control – MC agreed and confirmed one of the actions is an awareness campaign. Mr. Jim Callery said that the best way to approach the residents associations is through Tidy Towns. Applicants in the Tidy Estates category are marked down and penalised for the use of glyphosate. Tidy Towns will be receptive and assist in helping to change habits within the community.
- Cllr. Neary stated that new estates under construction use landscapers before the estate is taken in charge. She asked if there is a way to get the message across to pending constructions sites about using less weed killer. It would be good to include this sector as part of the overall messaging project.

Mr. Justin Ivory commented as follows:

- In agreement with all previous points.
- Advisable to make the point that some invasive species will require a technical approach.
- Would like to see more positive phrasing i.e. plant control as opposed to weed control – MC confirmed she will look for different terminology.

Cllr. Pier Leonard commented as follows:

- Enquired as to what discussions have taken place with the foremen in the MDs as to how and why glyphosate is used around the base of trees – MC confirmed she has spoken to the District Engineers and there is a disparity between MDs as to the amount being used.
- Suggested an incentive for more CE work spaces on Tidy Towns and more community projects meaning manual removal of weeds.
- Incentives i.e. supply of equipment to residents associations and tidy town groups – MC agreed these can be looked at.

Cllr. L. Scott commented as follows:

- How to manage expectations as she is receiving complaints about untidy surroundings – community education needed in terms of what to expect if WCC are using alternatives.
- Would like detail from Bray MD as to success of the foam stream and what they were using previously – MC responded no feedback has been received to date.

Cllr. Scott requested recirculation of the updated draft policy.

Item 4: Update on Decarbonisation Zone

- J. Callery outlined the stakeholder engagement meeting which took place on February 3rd with 24 participants from a wide range of backgrounds. RPS is working through the Register of Opportunities and implementation plan should be completed by end of March.
- In response to a question on timelines, JC responded this as yet until he has sight of the plan but is hopeful of implementing some projects this year as funding is available. A good starting point will be engagement through sports clubs etc. to get citizens thinking about their transport and household emissions.
- Cllr. Leonard suggested that posters encouraging people to submit ideas may be necessary and JC agreed that it would be very beneficial to get more input. He will discuss the topic with the Tidy Towns, schools and other stakeholders and see how best to get baseline information across the town before the end of March completion date.
- JC confirmed that Arklow SEC will commence Energy Master Plan with SEAI approved funding. As some of the info usually collected is already available through the DZ baseline plan he has asked the consultants to look into other areas i.e. the engagement process. The SEAI offers an audit to any business with energy spend over € 10k and JC to encourage businesses to start their own transformation.
- WCC are collaborating with Kildare & Meath County Councils in setting up an Energy Bureau consisting of senior executive, executive and community energy officer levels to assist with the SEC's.
- Out to tender to: Set up bureau - Put staff in place - Tender assessment board last week of February with consultant in place by end of March. First appointment will be Senior Executive with others to follow.
- Ms. Breege Kilkenny developing Memo of Understanding with the SEAI.
- Service level agreement must be put in place with Kildare, Meath and Wicklow as lead.
- Awaiting clearance to get MOU out. BK has sent reminders that return date for tender is 28th February.

Item 6: Update on Tree Management Policy:

- Four protocols still require action and need to be put in place with the MDs. Forms have been drawn up with easy steps to these protocols.
- Protocol 1 - Development of the app is being worked on to record all operations in respect to trees. The IT section will develop an app for recording the use of Glyphosate first as this is more straight forward. The app for the Trees will follow.
- Goal 2.4 – Biodiversity Officer needed to implement this. Cllr. Scott and BK have been pushing Central Government in relation to recruitment of same. €600k has been put aside for recruitment of these officers.

Item 7: Update on Green Team

- Established in Jan with 24 members and growing.
- Climate Champion training was completed thru CARO with representation from each section.
- Terms of Reference have been drawn up.

- Actions include a travel survey and paper usage with benchmark to be put in place as a target for reduction in use.
- Awareness campaign around the recycling stations in County Building.
- Use of paper towels to be phased with return to hand dryers.
- Guest speaker to talk to staff about retrofitting in their own homes.
- Demos of electric cars to coincide with mobility week which takes place in September.
- Logo for the Green Teem is being run as a schools competition through the Library Services.

Item 8: Any Other Business

- Native oyster restoration – possible upcoming presentation. Cllr. Leonard to link in with Maritime Strategy Committee
- Cllrs. Scott and Leonard to discuss role of the SPCs in relation to community allotments – strong policy in support of same in the Community Development Plan.
- Hedgerows – MC will look at including same in the next review of the Tree Management Policy in 12-18 months' time

Next meeting: 28th April 2022

END