

**MINUTES OF THE CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY ACTION STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON 6<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2023 AT 10.30AM**

**PRESENT:** Cllr. Lourda Scott (Cathaoirleach)  
Cllr. Peir Leonard  
Cllr. Rory O'Connor  
Justin Ivory PPN Representative  
Gary McKenzie Business/Chamber Representative

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Breege Kilkenny, Director of Services,  
Jackie Carroll, Senior Executive Officer  
Mark Costello, Climate Action Co-ordinator  
Jim Callery, Climate Action Officer  
Marc Devereux, Senior Engineer  
Declan Keogh, Regional Energy Manager  
Julie Sammler, Community Climate Action Officer  
Hannah O'Kelly, Assistant Environmental Awareness Officer  
Paul Brophy, Executive Technician

**APOLOGIES:** Cllr Mark Barry  
Ken Sweeney Coillte  
Sharon Jackson PPN Representative

**Item 1: To note the Minutes of the Meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2023**

Minutes noted - proposed by Cllr O'Connor and seconded by Cllr Scott. Quorum reached.

**Item 2: Matters Arising from the Minutes**

No matters arising.

**Item 3: Receive presentation on Draft Climate Action Plan and Chief Executive Report on submissions.**

BK re-iterated that the adoption of the CAP is a reserved function and the timeline for adoption is tight.

MC shared a presentation on the Draft Climate Action Plan and gave a general overview to the process involved in getting to this stage and also highlighted the need to get feedback in as soon as possible.

The public consultation process was advertised across different media and the feedback received shows that WCC had approximately twice the amount of submissions in comparison to other LA's.

Questions –

BK noted that there was a huge effort in getting stakeholders engaged – there will not be many modifications expected and members submitting their feedback, if any, in a timely manner will facilitate the Feb 2024 deadline.

Jl asked if WCC, similar to some other LA's would review the CAP annually – a living document – MC confirmed that WCC would follow national policy in this regard.

PL thanked the staff involved in putting the plan together and noted that staff are proactive and work beyond their roles – great response through the public consultation process.

LS echoed PL's comments and asked MC to run through the process again and expressed concern that issues highlighted may not be addressed in the coming weeks with staff on leave. MC presented the timeline to adoption again and confirmed that staff would be available to address any queries that come in by email over the coming weeks.

LS requested that communication is made back to members of the public once the plan is adopted acknowledging their input – via PPN

MC confirmed that communication will include promotion of the adopted plan with coverage on an ongoing basis on monitoring and reporting on actions and deliveries based on the CAP.

LS noted that questions have been received on the work of the SPC and noted that the website is not intuitive - live updates may improve this – members of the public do not find it easy to navigate progress and this could be improved.

BK acknowledged this and stated that WCC are trying to be more pro-active - a proposal has been made in relation to using different media to promote the CAP – Radio, short videos, social media platforms. It is intended to fully promote the CAP and follow through on all initiatives.

J Callery confirmed that the lead could be taken from other organisations, Brighton – Hove Council for example have a piece on their website. The PPN will also be updated on actions.

PL suggested a separate domain name may be the way to go – similar to LAWPRO – the more we get the information out to the public the sooner it will embed in people's minds.

Jl asked if it was possible to email all that who made a submission – outlining how their submission has been included.

BK confirmed that the CE report will do this – each submission is addressed. Contacting individuals would be admin heavy. The focus should remain on the timeline for getting the CAP adopted and your suggestion will be taken on board.

(GMcK in attendance – Quorum reached)

#### **Item 4 – Launch of Community Climate Action Programme**

JS gave a presentation on the CCAP. A total of €646,000 has been allocated from a national fund of €24m. Project proposals received can be streamed as small up to €20k , medium €20k - €50k or large €50 - €100k. JS gave an overview of the application process and confirmed that she would be available to meet any groups/communities interested in making an application.

JS suggested that the CCAP 2023 summary document captures the whole plan and is an excellent guide for all.

BK stated that the allocation is not a big amount and the hope is that this will assist SEC's and encourage community groups to target areas highlighted by SEC's.

Jl Thanked JS for the presentation and asked if and when groups are awarded CCAP funding, can they expect to get the funding up front or will they need to seek bridge funding to complete

projects. JS confirmed that there has been pushback on this aspect of the funding and it is proposed that the funding could be released in tranches as projects progress.

Jl insisted that this can be a barrier to many groups getting projects up and running. Also mentioned that in the case of installing water fountains there have been issues around UE connections – may need higher level discussion.

J Carroll confirmed that discussion is in train with UE in relation to this issue and also noted that Credit Unions are amenable to groups applying for bridge funding for projects under public funding.

Other organisations in a position to assist would be Clann Credo and Community Finance Ireland – Interest may apply.

PL highlighted the issue of digital waste – can talks be arranged on this subject – start the conversation.

Jl raised the issue about the possible requirement for projects to have feasibility plans in place to get the project moving.

JS confirmed that this point has been made and most groups applying may have these reports done and this funding stream would suits those groups.

Jl suggested that a different type of fund be put in place to facilitate groups getting feasibility plans in place.

JS confirmed that this has been raised with the working group.

LS stated that there is a need for a second strand of funding – project impacts need to be greater – continuation of projects is crucial.

JS agreed and the focus should be on the potential to grow projects. A second round of funding may come down the line and all should keep in mind that there does not need to be just one theme in an application and that the impact can be greater.

Discussion continued on what types of projects could qualify for funding and how to overcome obstacles – need to be focused on making one application across multiple themes with the potential for growth if further funding comes down the line. Potential there also for partnerships between groups.

MC encouraged engagement as soon as possible where potential project locations could be on public ground and would need the MD's involvement – We may be able to assist.

Jl suggested that Towns Teams could submit applications for funding.

LS thanked JS and stated that the information is food for thought.

#### **Item 5 – AOB**

RO'C referred to a recent NOAC report and claimed that the Climate Change Section in WCC is quite weak with only 3 employees assigned. The SPC should talk to NOAC on how to improve the situation – resources need to be in place to implement ideals.

BK noted the suggestion and said that a submission from the SPC could be done – forward a draft to J Carroll and we can go from there.

J Carroll confirmed that the latest KPIs are to be circulated and these are deemed the most appropriate metrics nationally. A submission would be timely.

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RO’C raised the issue of resistance from WCC to install recycling bins in the Enniskerry region.

J Callery replied that the collection service for segregated bins is not in place – focus is currently on returns schemes coming into place in February 2024.

MD gave an overview of how the returns scheme will work, its advantages and impact on WCC recycling operations – open to retail outlets only.

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PL raised concerns around the fact that appliances are being replaced in properties that are being re-let or retrofitted by WCC – wasteful practice.

Secondly, being involved in the art gallery opened in Bridgewater Centre PL has noticed that does not seem to be a lot of “green” behaviour in the centre – is there a charter available with Economic Development that retailers can sign up to? Would it benefit to have a business representative on the SPC.

Thirdly, PL recommended that an East Coast Task Force is needed in relation to coastal erosion – something needs to be done on the ground to halt the human destruction of the coast including anti-social behaviour – no clear path if a person wants to report an incident.

MD suggested that MODOS could possibly reach out to LEO to provide resources to businesses to become as sustainable as possible.

JCallery suggested that a representative from Waste Management visits the operating company in Bridgewater to ensure that they are compliant.

PL agreed to link in with the manager in Bridgewater to discuss this further.

JCallery stated that this will be a focus for the Decarbonisation Zone and will be working closely with SME’s – ‘Green for Micro’ etc.

BK noted that PL’s idea was a good one in relation to the East Coast Task Force – We are waiting for a post to be filled and it has been highlighted that the coastline most at risk is the Wicklow to Wexford stretch. There is staff already looking at actions to mitigate issues highlighted.

PL clarified that this was not her idea alone – Sheila Fogarty from Coast Care has brought this to the JPC also.

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Jl asked that the East Coast Greenway is put on the agenda for next meeting – discussion is needed around this and whether or not it is viable.

MD stated that this was with TWES – BK also noted that expectations needed to be tempered and that this is a matter for TWES.

Jl stated that this SPC needs to be involved also.

BK replied that we may be able to discuss the project but we are not the drivers for the greenway and we can certainly feed in to the process – all suggestions are valid.

LS clarified that the SPC are not looking to take on a body of work but would be receptive to an information piece for discussion.

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LS brought the discussion back to waste management – No physical way for WCC to accept segregated waste?

J Callery replied that accepting the waste is not the issue but quality of what is in a public bin is so bad that segregation does not work.

LS asked if something could be done with the bin design to restrict what can be placed in the bin. On Greystones Beach visitors need to bring their litter home with them.

MD Rather than investing in collection of litter the intention is that the deposit return scheme will reduce general litter waste and reduce the need for collection. Street waste should now be residual – this can be reviewed once the Deposit Return Scheme is up and running. The school of thought will continue to be having no bins outdoors and that said there must be a balance struck.

Options in relation to outdoor public bins design was discussed – wire transparent bins for plastics/cans etc.- Would depend on budget constraints. This may be something for communities to consider.

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MD confirmed that the National Waste Management Plan has been circulated and is set to be adopted by CCMA – to members for information only. WCC has the opportunity for input only. Will keep all updated.

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JCarroll gave an update on recruitment within the Section.

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Schedule of meetings to be set at the next meeting.

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Meeting concluded – BK thanked all and noted that this is one of the most active SPCs.