

Minutes of Climate Change and Energy Strategic Policy Committee

Monday 13th September, 2021

In attendance: SPC Chairperson: Cllr. Paula Butterly, Cllr. Tom Cunningham, Cllr. Marianne Butler, Cllr James Byrne, Eugene Conlon, Liam Woods

Officials: David Hanratty, Senior Engineer, Padraig O’Hora, Senior Executive Engineer, Liz Duff, Senior Staff Officer.

Apologies: Cllr. Liam Reilly and Catherine Duff, Director of Services.

Proposed by Marianne Butler,

Seconded by Tom Cunningham

That Paula Butterly be elected as chair in the absence of Cllr. Liam Reilly.

1. Minutes Adopted

The minutes of the June Meeting were adopted.

Proposed by Cllr. Tom Cunningham,

Seconded by Cllr. Paula Butterly

2. Matters arising

Paula Butterly advised that at the last meeting Cllr. Liam Reilly had agreed to make contact with a member of SEAI to come to September meeting. Eugene Conlon advised that Cllr. Liam Reilly and C. Duff, Director Services, did make contact with him in this regard, and they felt that perhaps the SPC did not have the required authority to request SEAI to attend and that it should be on the Council Agenda for Council Meeting. Mr. Conlon advised that he was waiting on outcome of meeting with Department. He advised that this was in hand and hopefully there would be some positive messages for next meeting.

3. Update on Draft Energy Policy – Padraig O’Hora

Padraig O’Hora gave a presentation on Louth County Council’s Energy Policy. He advised that 50% of our energy was to operate public lighting, 25% to operate Council owned fleet, and the remainder on our buildings, with the two main buildings being, County Hall and Town Hall. He advised that this policy has not yet gone to the Elected Members to be endorsed/amended. Cllr. Butler stated that the word “most” should be inserted in front of the word efficient in the first bullet point. She also highlighted the fact that there was no mention of supporting renewables, such as EV’s. Eugene Conlon stated that the role of the Local Authorities should be captured in the last paragraph, that while he would not suggest wording change, that some reflection should be given on how to strengthen same. Padraig O’Hora agreed with the points raised and advised that the Council was innovative in its approach to energy and has provided a dedicated energy team. Cllr. Butterly suggested that P. O’Hora make the relevant amendments and bring back to next SPC. P. O’Hora proposed that he make the amendments and bring back to next SPC meeting for formal endorsement and then to full Council for formal adoption. He advised that this would promote the Policy further to the County at large. It was also agreed that e-mail suggestions would also be included.

Marianne Butler asked to be circulated with a copy of the Energy Policy.

4. Update on Draft Development Plan – David Hanratty

David Hanratty advised that the report was presented to members on 23rd August, 2021, that they had six weeks to consider and the deadline for adoption was 4th October, 2021.

5. Update on the Draft Litter Management Plans – David Hanratty

David Hanratty advised that the procedure was laid out in the Litter Pollution Act, that the Plans, one for each Municipal District, would be going to public consultation in the next few weeks and then had to be adopted by their respective Municipal District. Cllr. Cunningham asked that they be sent to community groups, as we rely on them to do cleaning, etc. David Hanratty advised that this would be done through our PPN and would form part of the public consultation process.

6. Update on Climate Action – David Hanratty

David Hanratty gave an update on Climate Action. He advised that Dundalk was a Decarbonisation Zone. He advised that a proposal was forwarded to Department on 30th April, 2021, that we had to develop a baseline carbon study and benchmark it for developing progress. He advised that the deadline for doing this was the end of the year but that we were unlikely to meet that deadline, similar to other Councils, and that a full time Graduate was working on this.

He advised that the Climate Adaptation Plan was currently being compiled and that we had to have report back to CARO by beginning of October and that a brief report will be presented to Councillors mid/end October. He advised that the Climate Action Plan will be an all encompassing Plan and that we were awaiting guidance from CARO and that a full time Graduate was also dedicated to this. He stated that a lot was happening throughout the Council, that all sections had to report on climate action for Chief Executive's report.

Eugene Conlon queried whether the baseline carbon report would delay the actions in the Plan and as Louth County Council were already doing a number of actions, could we accelerate these rather than analyzing where we are at moment.

David Hanratty advised that Portlaoise had a baseline carbon study of 100,000 tonne of carbon and that we could use this as a starting figure, but that we need to measure against our own baseline. He advised that with regard to accelerating our own actions, that people resources were a huge issue, and getting people in place, that we needed to resource-up our Climate Action Section. He advised that an application was made to Department for a Climate Action Officer, which would be at Senior Executive Engineer/Grade 7 level, but that it would take 4 – 6 months if approved, before that person would be in place.

7. Workplan Update– David Hanratty

David Hanratty advised that the workplan was across the lifetime of the SPC and gave update on the actions in the plan:

1. Draft Development Plan – as above
2. Biodiversity Plan – previously presented to SPC
3. Developing a policy in regard to Sustainable Energy Communities for Louth – previously presented to SPC

4. Develop a Policy Involving Young Citizens in Climate Change Policy – will be progress on this in 2022.
5. Event – Not feasible in current climate – will progress in 2022
6. Litter Management Plan – as above
7. Bicycles and Scooters Policy – need to develop policy – no progress as yet and technically illegal to use scooters on road.
8. Hedge Cutting Policy – to be developed
9. Climate Action Plan –dependent on legislation and advice from CARO.
10. Energy Policy – needs to be refined, as above.

Padraig O’Hora advised that he requested Paul McCormack, from GENCOMM to attend the December meeting and he agreed to attend. He advised that GENCOMM is all about development of hydrogen as a sustainable energy and asked to be mindful of the use of same in our County. He asked that members consider this for the workplan.

Eugene Conlon commended Cllr. Cunningham’s earlier suggestion of reaching out to the Community and advised that this was also relevant for climate issues, that we should reach out to other organisations as we need all hands on deck, e.g., Teagasc, SEAI.

Cllr. Butterly stated that Eugene Conlon’s point regarding consulting with others was important and that perhaps we could consider reactivating the IFA interest in this SPC.

Next Meeting to take place on 13th December, 2021, at 4.00 p.m.

The minutes were confirmed at a meeting of SPC held on: Date: 13th December 2021

SPC Chairperson:



