

**Minutes of Meeting of Environment, Recreation & Amenity Strategic Policy Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018 in the Council Chamber, Galway City Council.**

**Presiding:** Cllr. Terry O'Flaherty

**Present:** Cllr. Pdraig Conneely,  
Cllr. Donal Lyons,  
Cllr. Cathal O'Conchuir,  
Cllr. Billy Cameron,  
Cllr Colette Connolly,  
Cllr. Peter Keane,  
Ms. Eleanor Hough,  
Ms. Caroline Stanley  
Mr. Dermot Mahon, A/Director of Services  
Mr. Stephen Walsh, Senior Executive Parks Superintendent,  
Ms. Helen McDonagh, Administrative Officer,  
Mr. Paul Batty, Executive Engineer  
Ms. Mary O'Leary, Environment Enforcement Officer  
Ms. Carmel Kilcoyne, Senior Engineer  
Mr. Damien Redington, Executive Engineer  
Ms. Catherine Jennings, Assistant Staff Officer,  
Ms. Louise O'Toole, A/Assistant Staff Officer,

**Apologies:** Cllr. Mike Crowe,  
Mr. Brendan Smyth,  
Mr. Simon Heaslip

Cllr. Terry O'Flaherty opened the meeting by welcoming Mr. Dermot Mahon as the new Acting Director of Services and Ms. Carmel Kilcoyne, new Senior Engineer. She thanked Mr. Tom Connell and Mr Gary McMahon for their contribution to the role previously.

**1. Minutes of meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

On the proposal of Cllr. Donal Lyons, seconded by Cllr. Peter Keane the minutes of the Meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018, were agreed and adopted by the members.

**2. Matters Arising**

- Ms. Eleanor Hough referred to her request at the previous meeting for a Biodiversity Officer and the roll out of the Biodiversity Plan.
- Cllr. Colette Connolly queried hazardous waste disposal such as paint and requested that there be a joint approach between the City Council and the County Council when setting a date for the next hazardous waste disposal event.
- Cllr. Terry O'Flaherty referred to the Red Flag status at Ballyloughane.
- Cllr. Donal Lyons requested an update in relation to the Part 8 for the Kingston and South Park masterplan.
- Cllr. Pdraig Conneely referred to the allocation in the budget for the Woodquay Park project and requested an update.
- Ms. Caroline Stanley requested an update on the Draft Parks, Open Spaces and Beach Bye Laws.

Mr. Dermot Mahon responded to the matters raised as follows:

- Funding has been approved for a number of positions which will be filled in 2019. The Council remains committed to the recruitment of a Biodiversity Officer.

Mr. Sean Langan responded to the matters raised as follows:

- Provision has been made in the 2019 budget to run a Hazardous Waste Collection event within the City. A date for 2019 will be agreed following consultation with Galway County Council. May have a joint event on the same day.
- Flag status at Ballyloughane will be reviewed in 2019.

Mr. Stephen Walsh responded to the matters raised as follows:

- He stated that the Kingston and South Park Plan will be progressed to Part 8 in 2019.
- Details re the Draft Parks, Open Spaces and Beach Bye Laws will issue to Blake & Kenny Solicitors for their observations prior to being placed on the agenda for the full Council
- No commencement date yet for Woodquay Park project.

Ms. Caroline Stanley expressed her disappointment that there will not be a specific person appointed for the role of Biodiversity Officer.

It was agreed by the members to take items 8 & 9 on the agenda.

#### **8. Agree 2019 Strategic Policy Committee Work Programme**

Mr. Dermot Mahon went through the list on the Works Programme and asked if the members had any additions. Cllr. Donal Lyons requested that the Kingston and South Park projects be added and Cllr. Terry O'Flaherty requested that up to date reports on Playgrounds be included as there is money in the budget. Mr. Dermot Mahon advised that both were already included in the heading listed under Recreation & Amenity. Cllr. Peter Keane queried the procedure regarding pitch licences.

Mr. Stephen Walsh responded as follows:

- Facilities are under used and should be accessible to as many people as possible.
- Want to maximise facilities in all areas around the city as per Recreation & Amenity Needs Study 2008. New policy will be advanced in 2019.
- Recreation & Amenity Department currently working with ICT on a new booking facilities model.
- Under current system the users are invoiced and requires administration follow up.
- Galway City Council incur costs relating to repairs to facilities.
- Licences have issued into 2019.

Mr. Dermot Mahon advised if there is going to be any significant change it will come back to the committee. Ms. Caroline Stanley requested a more comprehensive work programme as there is no mention of biodiversity in the programme. Cllr. Colette Connolly concurred with Ms. Stanley and stated that the SPC is a policy forming group. She also referred to enforcement in particular the Parks Bye Laws and stated the need for facilities for older children in playgrounds. Cllr. Pdraig Conneely requested a list of the capital projects under Recreation and Amenity.

Mr. Dermot Mahon advised that 3 year capital programme will go before Council in the December meeting. The Annual Service Plan will be presented to the full Council in January and will include the current status of each projects. Mr. Stephen Walsh referred to the Recreation & Amenity Needs Study 2008 & advised that a copy will be circulated at next SPC meeting.

#### **9. Agree Meeting Dates 2019**

The following dates were agreed by the members with a start time of 2 p.m.

- Wednesday, February 27th
- Wednesday, May, 1st
- Wednesday, September 18th
- Wednesday, November, 27th.

## 5. Cemetery Development

Ms. Carmel Kilcoyne advised that a number of possible sites have been identified and testing will commence this week and there may be a possibility of a crematorium at the new cemetery.

Mr. Stephen Walsh updated the members as follows:

- A Part 8 Planning Application for the extension to Ragoon Cemetery will be lodged in early December.
- There is one remaining grave space at Bohermore cemetery and undertakers have been advised. New burials must go to Ragoon cemetery.
- Currently designing a system to facilitate the burial of urns at Bohermore cemetery.

Ms. Eleanor Hough requested that there be adequate parking at the new cemetery as there are issues at Ragoon and also asked if there can be alternative access at Ragoon. Ms. Stephen Walsh advised that there is adequate parking in the area however, there would never be enough parking provided for large funerals and the Gardai monitor and supervise such events.

## 6. Draft Litter Management Plan 2018 – 2021 (LMP)

Mr. Sean Langan referred to the draft Plan that was circulated last week and updated the members as follows:

- He requested that initial observations and comments be submitted to the Environment Department by the 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2018.
- Public consultation early 2019.
- Report following receipt of submissions will be circulated in advance of next SPC meeting in February thereafter draft before Council for adoption.
- Any household waste issues will be dealt with, within the new Draft *Segregation, Storage and Presentation of Household and Commercial Waste) Bye-laws, 2018*. Litter Management objectives are to minimise waste, education and enforcement are key.
- It's difficult to police all cases and there needs to be a change in mindset.

Cllr. Donal Lyons referred to 'on the spot' fines and the lack of cases being taken to court for non-payment of fines and referred to black spots and that there are not enough litter wardens. He referred to the number of households not availing of a litter collection service.

Mr. Dermot Mahon responded as follows:

- Aim to capture all measures available and to have infrastructure in place to deal with education, enforcement, disposal of litter etc.
- Environment awareness may be more successful than enforcement.

Ms. Caroline Stanley disagreed with households sharing bins to dispose of their waste. Cllr. Cathal Conchuir referred to dog fouling and lack of bags available. He suggested the use of biodegradable bags used by Galway County Council. He referred to the removal of bins in South Park and Rusheen, lack of bins in parks and the need for CCTV in Parks. He referred to the importance of education in particular secondary schools, and referred to an excellent booklet on plastics which was recently circulated.

Mr. Damien Redington responded as follows:

- CCTV is monitored by a private operator and that the information is passed on to Galway City Council within Data Protection Guidelines.
- CCTV is not the end solution as there are 60-70 locations and it is not possible to have a camera at each location and also it is not always possible to capture the footage on the CCTV as the cameras are fixed and captures footage only on one direction.
- Education, is key in addressing the issues with the help of Residents Associations and the Tidy Town & Garden Competition
- Salthill Beach was awarded the cleanest beach in 2018 and this is through the great work of the residents, businesses and the Litter Management Unit staff.

Ms. Eleanor Hough made reference to “ticker” tape used in switching on and off the Christmas lights, the Macnas Parade and Loving Galway Festival with regards to reducing the use of plastic and recommended that it be included as a condition when issuing a permit. Cllr. Terry O’Flaherty said it should be brought to the attention of the organisers.

Cllr. Terry O’Flaherty raised the following queries;

- Audio device in Salthill and Ballyloughane is working well.
- Drone surveys and questioned if we had done any.
- What back up does the one Environment Enforcement Officer get.
- Are there any prosecutions with regard to litter fines
- The amount of waste generated as a result of cigarettes and packaging from online shopping should be addressed.

Mr. Dermot Mahon responded as follows:

- Staff resources are an issue.
- He will consult with Galway 2020 in relation to “ticker” tape
- Litter Management Plan will be requested from organisers of events.
- Additional seasonal staff are hired and will be increased for 2020.

Mr. Sean Langan responded as follows:

- Galway City Council welcomes all comments on the Draft Litter Management Plan
- Dog fouling signs are ordered
- Will look into getting the biodegradable bags
- Drone surveys are effective where there are illegal activity and may be explored in more detail in 2019
- Recreation and Amenity Department liaise with the Environment Department when processing an application for an event permit.
- Prosecutions are difficult as it can cost €600 approx. per case to collect a €150 fine.
- Prosecutions through the courts are in the public domain and on occasions are reported in the local media.

Ms. Helen McDonagh advised that Galway City Council were successful with cases taken to court recently, however the cost of taking a case to court far out ways the fine of €150. She also advised that a part- time Dog Warden is due to commence in 2019. This will be an additional resource.

### **3. Presentation on Anti-Dumping Initiative Scheme**

Mr. Damien Redington provided a presentation on the Anti-Dumping Initiative 2017 & 2018 Schemes. Cllr. Donal Lyons complimented Mr. Redington on his presentation and sought an update in relation to the areas that were cleaned up in 2017. He referred to the cost of the clean ups and the total Litter Management budget of €2.5m.

Cllr. Pdraig Conneely stated he felt disappointed after seeing the presentation. He referred to the Council estates shown on the presentation where he feels that the battle is lost and there is no respect for their properties. He queried the number of fines issued, if fines are paid and the number of prosecutions. He feels the way forward is to target the schools with awareness and education. Ms. Eleanor Hough referred to where the waste is being generated, white goods disposal and the need to increase awareness re disposal of waste. Cllr. Cathal Conchuir agreed that education in schools is the way to go and referred to plastic week which he deemed fantastic but coincided with school holidays. He said there is need to target 13-16 year olds and engage in a pilot programme with transition year students with regard to clean-up programmes.

Ms. Caroline Stanley referred to the areas cleaned up in 2017 however, they are still dumping in these areas. She recommended a Secondary School Education Programme. Also target food outlet businesses that generate waste.

Cllr. Terry O’Flaherty complimented the work done by the Council and referred to areas which were cleaned up however, very disappointed with what the Council has to deal with.

Mr. Damien Redington replied to the comments as follows:

- There is varied success rates when they look at the before and after photographs.
- Planting is still in locations, however dumping is still occurring and Galway City Council is monitoring same.
- Liaising with community groups however this doesn’t work everywhere.
- Reviewing CCTV locations.
- Review Enforcement and the need for additional resources.
- Majority of the dumping is done after hours.
- 190 litter fines have issued so far in 2018 and will provide further information in relation to these fines.
- He agreed that schools are key in particular secondary schools
- He referred to the Bulky Goods Service provided by Galway City Council where the use has increased by 20% in 2017 and another 20% in 2018. Further promotion of the service in 2019.
- The built in behaviour is in the minority.
- WEE scheme – increase awareness of same in 2019

Ms. Helen McDonagh updated the group as follows:

- There is an increase in the income from litter fines
- The Litter Pollution Act 1997 is very restrictive as it only allows 6 months from the date of issue of the fine to prosecute.
- Reminders are issued as soon as possible following the issue of the fine.
- Can be difficult to establish who the offender is and to get evidence which will stand up in Court.
- Legal costs are approximately €600 for taking a case to Court.
- If successful in Court the responsibility falls on the Court Services to collect the money and in some cases, the Council may never get the money.

Cllr. Terry O’Flaherty thanked Damien Redington for his presentation.

#### **4. Draft (Segregation, Storage and Presentation of Household and Commercial Waste) Bye-Laws 2018**

Mr. Dermot Mahon referred to the report on the Draft Bye-Laws. 2 no. submissions received. He referred to the revised Draft following receipts of submissions and asked for the member’s approval to proceed to Council for adoption at their next meeting. Ms. Mary O’Leary further clarified the document as follows;

- If something is covered in national law it cannot be included in the Bye Law.
- If waste falls out of a bag while being collected the collector must pick it up.
- If waste is interfered with before the collector reaches it the collector does not have to pick up.
- The bins should not be overflowing or damaged when presented.

Cllr. Cathal Conchuir referred to a number of large bins outside of restaurants on the footpaths around the city which leave residue on the footpaths. He will send on the information to the Environment Department for follow up as requested by Sean Langan. Ms. Eleanor Hough asked what process is in place for inspection of waste. Ms. Mary O’Leary advised that the obligation is on the owner of the premises to keep the area clean and must clean up spills. Galway City Council Officials work with waste collectors and arrange inspections from time to time.

Mr. Dermot Mahon advised that Officials will be authorised to carry out inspections when the Bye Laws are adopted. They will be enforceable 30 days after adoption and an update will be given to the SPC members next year.

**The Draft was proposed by Cllr. Cathal Conchuir, seconded by Ms. Caroline Stanley and agreed by the members.**

## **7. Climate Change & Sustainability**

Mr. Paul Batty gave a presentation on Climate Change and Sustainability. Cllr. Terry O’Flaherty complimented Paul on the excellent presentation.

Cllr. Cathal Conchuir thanked Paul for the presentation and referred to the rate of global warming and climate change and brought up this topic at the last Council Meeting. He referred to LED lighting around the city and express his delight that it is being rolled out. Ms. Caroline Stanley stated that she feels that the issues are not being addressed such as traffic, green spaces and stated that the City Council should make it a priority. Ms. Caroline Stanley asked that it be recorded in the minutes her dissatisfaction that all but one elected member of the SPC committee, had left the meeting early and were not present for the presentations.

Ms. Eleanor Hough thanked Paul Batty and expressed her support with Caroline Stanley comments. She commented as following:

- The issues raised need to be dealt with as matter of urgency.
- She highlighted the importance of trees, and the loss of biodiversity.
- Page 6 international EU Policy documents – green infrastructure and would like this included.
- Referenced an excellent presentation given by Hans Visser, Fingal County Council, Biodiversity Officer and Professor John Sweeney, Maynooth University as part of ‘Loving Galway Festival’ which highlighted the importance of how we deal with climate change and suggested that they be invited in to address the Council.
- Need to set up a Galway Environmental group and stressed that partnership and collaboration is very important.

Mr. Dermot Mahon advised that an Action Pack will be put together shortly and the views of the committee can be given.

Cllr. Cathal Conchuir stressed the importance of micro hydro being advanced and need to monitor air pollution.

Ms. Carmel Kilcoyne referred to the transport issue and advised that there is an initiative to move cars out of the city and get people onto busses. Lighting is being dealt with, poles that are removed are replaced with LED lighting. She also referred to CFRAM which is currently being worked on.

Mr. Paul Batty advised that the ESB Networks have to upgrade their systems to facilitate microgeneration. The LED contract is to progress. The first lights won’t be up until early 2020. He referred to retrofitting and advised that we do not have the resources. Tipperary County Council have a full time agency which Professor Sweeney has fed into and we can invite him to give a presentation.

## **10. Correspondence**

None.

## **11. A. O. B**

None

Cllr. Terry O’Flaherty thanked all that came and stayed at the meeting. She confirmed the start time of the next meeting at 2pm.

**Meeting concluded.**