

**Minutes of Meeting Climate Action, Environment, Recreation & Amenity
Strategic Policy Committee Tuesday 26th May 2020
held in the Council Chamber, City Hall and via Zoom**

Presiding: Cllr. Martina O'Connor

Present: Cllr. D. McDonnell, Cllr. D. Lyons, Cllr. T. O' Flaherty, Cllr. C. Connolly
Cllr. O. Hanley, Cllr. J. Connolly, Mr. B. Smyth, Ms. C. Stanley, Ms. E. Hough, Mr. C. Ryan

Mr. D. Mahon, A/Director of Services, Ms. C. Kilcoyne, Senior Engineer, Mr. S Walsh, Senior Executive Parks Superintendent, Ms. H. McDonagh, Administrative Officer, Mr. D. Skene, Senior Executive Engineer, Mr. K. O'Byrne, Executive Engineer, Mr. D. Redington, Senior Executive Engineer, Mr. P. Batty, Executive Engineer, Mr. R. O' Reilly, Senior Executive Engineer, Ms. C. Jennings, Assistant Staff Officer

Ms. H. McDonagh opened the Meeting by outlining the protocol regarding the use of teleconferencing and video conferencing which was agreed by the members. Following a query raised by Cllr. C. Connolly, Mr. D. Mahon clarified that in-person meetings are not required for Strategic Policy Committee meetings as the Committee is a policy committee and not one with statutory decision-making obligations or requirements.

As former Cllr and SPC Chair Ms. P. O'Reilly was no longer a member of the SPC, Ms. H. McDonagh requested a nomination for a member to chair the meeting in the absence of an approved Chairperson. Cllr. D. McDonnell proposed Cllr. M. O' Connor for the position of Chairperson for the meeting. This proposal was seconded Cllr. T. O'Flaherty and agreed by the members.

Item No. 1 Minutes of Meeting held on the 25th February 2020

The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 25th February 2020 were proposed by Cllr. D. McDonnell, seconded by Cllr. T. O'Flaherty and adopted by members.

Item No. 2 Matters Arising

While awaiting Ms. E. Hough's attendance at the Meeting, Ms. C. Stanley spoke her behalf. She on behalf of Ms. E. Hough referred to the Minutes of the previous Meeting, item no. 6 and requested that the Minutes specified the need for increased awareness with regard to Bio-diversity and Pollinator Plan.

Updates were requested on Recruitment of Biodiversity Officer and Tree Officer, the Waterways Conditional Assessment Report, if funding is ring-fenced for Blackrock Tower, Hazardous Waste disposal. Cllr. C. Connolly requested a copy of the consultant's report in relation to the Blackrock Tower

Mr. D. Mahon and Ms. C. Kilcoyne responded as follows: Due to the COVID 19 crisis, staff recruitment is currently suspended. A number of projects are on hold pending a financial review in June, the Annual Service Plan for 2020 will be reviewed, a Tree Officer was appointed but has since taken up another post, the Waterways Conditional Assessment Report remains in draft form and is therefore currently not for issue, a number of issues on the report have been addressed. A request has been submitted to Corporate Services for inclusion of Waterways on the agenda for full Council. A new proposal for the Blackrock Tower project will be brought back to the SPC committee and an update in relation to the funding will be circulated to members at a later date. A copy of the consultant's report re the Blackrock Tower will be circulated.

Item No. 3 All Ireland Pollinator Plan

Mr. S. Walsh provided a presentation on the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (copy of presentation previously circulated to members). He recommended that the SPC members view a number of links on the presentation, in particular one by the WHO in relation to Urban Green Spaces and to a BBC video.

The members comments included: Grass cutting in line with what was signed up with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, disappointment was expressed in relation to vacancies not being filled, pollarding should be a last resort, the importance of education and awareness in relation to the new strategy from the EU, the importance of parks and biodiversity in cities, the need to invest in green natural areas, the advantage of getting schools, business and communities involved, the success of Terryland Forest Park, the need to resume the Healthy Green Spaces Initiative and to maintain the uncut areas to ensure that weeds do not become an issue, the need to protect scrub land under planning and in the absence of a tree policy how pollarding and issues with trees on private land can be addressed. Requests were made for information on the following; the number of estates that have signed up to the new initiative in relation to grass cutting, information on Color by Nature and the 2020-2025 EU Strategy.

Mr. S. Wash responded as follows: Pollarding must only be carried out where absolutely necessary and retaining trees where possible is the best solution, the grass cutting initiative must be carried out by consensus and the Foremen are identifying suitable areas, Resident Associations should express their interest by sending an email to Parks, the Healthy Green Spaces initiative will re-commence, the EU Strategy is a new document and it appears that the EU will enforce it. The Legislation and Acts relating to trees were outlined, the public can make a submission via the planning system and when the Development Plan is being reviewed in relation to the protection of scrub land, issues relating to trees on private land is a civil matter and not the responsibility of a Local Authority, the aim is to have a policy that covers trees on public lands.

Item No. 4 Cemeteries Development 2020-2022

It was agreed by the members to defer this item.

Item No 5 Litter Management Plan

Mr. D. Redington provided an overview of the report previously circulated to the members.

Updates and clarifications were sought on the following: reduced number of bins in the city, the increase in the level of illegal dumping, the need to name and prosecute offenders, the number of clean ups by Galway City Council and costs associated with same, when full street cleaning service will resume, the Spring Clean initiative, plans for the disposal of hazardous waste, if the hours of the Civic Amenity sites will be extended when it re-opens.

The members requested if consideration could be given to the following; additional dog fouling waste bins in South Park, businesses to provide bins outside their premises to deal with the disposal of gloves. Cllr. C. Connolly requested the costs for the CCTVs for 2019 and costs associated with illegal dumping.

Mr. D. Mahon, Mr. D. Redington and Ms. C. Kilcoyne responded to the issues raised including; Litter fine prosecution through the courts is timely and expensive, names of offenders cannot be published. The Council's long-term aim is to reduce the number of litter bins and promote anti-litter initiatives and programmes. The Civic Amenity will reopen on 8th June with extended hours, funding in the 2020 budget for the disposal of hazardous waste however is currently under review, areas have been identified as "black spots" for illegal dumping and these are being targeted by the Wardens, Housing and Recreation & Amenity Departments, CCTV is not an option for all locations due to costs, storage of data and for data protection regulations. The level of illegal dumping has increased during Covid 19 and is a national issue,

overflowing Bring Banks are being monitored. Servicing of the Bring Banks have increased.

Cllr. Martina O'Connor proposed that another meeting be scheduled to complete the Agenda. It was agreed by the members to move to item 7 for an update and the remaining items to be discussed at another meeting.

Item No 6 CFRAM – Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management

This item was deferred

Item No. 7 Climate Change Adaption Plan

Mr. P. Batty provided an update to members. It was agreed that member's questions would be discussed at the next meeting.

Item No. 8 Derelict Sites

This item was deferred

Item No. 9 AOB

Cllr. J. Connolly requested an update in relation to the market. Ms. C. Kilcoyne advised that the market will only be permitted to trade under a reduced capacity and a proper queuing system must be in place along with proper social distancing measures to ensure that all can comply with the 2 meter rule. Galway City Council's mobility team are also currently monitoring the market.

Cllr. T. O'Flaherty raised the issue of water quality results at Ballyloughane and requested that they be published in the weekly paper. Ms. C. Kilcoyne advised that all results are updated on www.beaches.ie

Cllr. C. Connolly requested that only items deferred on this meeting's Agenda be included in the next Agenda and that no additional items to be included.

Mr. D. Mahon will agree a date with the Chair for the next meeting and will revert to members.

Meeting Concluded