

**Minutes of meeting Climate Action, Environment, Recreation & Amenity Strategic Policy Committee held on Wednesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 via Microsoft Teams & in Council Chamber, City Hall, College Road, Galway.**

**Presiding:** Cllr. M. O'Connor

**Present:** Cllr. D. Lyons, Cllr. D McDonnell, Cllr. T O'Flaherty, Cllr. N Murphy, Cllr. C. Connolly, Cllr. J. Connolly, Ms. E. Hough, Ms. C. Stanley, Mr. B Smyth, Mr. P. Greene, Director of Services, Ms. S. Connolly, Senior Engineer, Mr. U. Finn, Senior Engineer, Ms. L. Smyth, A/Senior Executive Parks Superintendent, Mr. D. Redington, Senior Executive Engineer, Mr. M. Headd, Administrative Officer, Ms. P Kearney, Biodiversity Officer, Mr. C. Shaughnessy Executive Engineer, Mr. J. Craughwell, Local Sports Partnership Co-Ordinator, Mr. T. McCusker, Environmental Education Officer, Ms. M. Collins, Staff Officer, Ms. C. Jennings, Assistant Staff Officer, Ms. S. Carroll, Executive Scientist, Mr. B. Vaughan, Ms. E. Oldroyd & Mr. J. McCarthy ARUP

**Absent/Apologies:** Mr. C. Ryan

**Item 1. Minutes of Meeting held on the 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2022**

The Minutes of the SPC meeting held on the 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2022 were proposed by Cllr. D. Lyons and seconded by Cllr. T.O Flaherty and adopted by members.

**Item 2. Matters Arising**

The members requested updates on the following:

- The audit on Kissing Gates and the importance of finding a solution was highlighted.
- The trial removal of Kissing Gates at Terryland and South Park.
- There appears to be confusion between Blueways work and Blue Spaces Strategy and a commitment was sought that the works agreed at the SPC meetings in December 2021 and February 2022 will go ahead.
- An update was sought on the appointment of a Tree Officer, Wardens for Parks and the replacement of Mr. Paul Batty, Executive Engineer.
- Updates were sought on Blueways Strategy, Kingston masterplan and timeframe for works at McGraths Field.
- Disappointment was expressed in relation to the Waterways Strategy and a request was made for a completion date.

The issues raised were responded to by Mr. P. Greene and Ms. S. Connolly as follows:

- The Blueways Strategy is being dealt with by both Economic Development along with the Recreation and Amenity Department however, there are no resources to progress at present.
- The post of Tree Officer is due to be advertised in Q2 of this year.
- There are 10 Wardens currently in place out of a quota of 12. A number of which are currently being trained the Parks areas will come under their remit which will be monitored and will report back to members.
- Paul Batty's position of Executive Engineer is currently under offer.
- The removal of the Kissing Gates will need to be dealt with on a case by case basis prior to removal. The Recreation and Amenity Department are working with the NTA team in relation to this item.
- The Kissing Gates at Terryland and South Park will need to be replaced with a suitable replacement as safety needs to be considered.
- The Kingston Masterplan document should be available over the coming weeks. The main Masterplan projects are Kingston, Southpark, Renmore and Millars Lane building and pitch.
- The Blueways Strategy is underway at present and the River basin Management Plan will feed into it. There has been Stakeholders involvement.

### **Item 3. 2023 Work Programme**

The adoption of the work programme was proposed by Cllr. D. Lyons and Seconded by Cllr. D. McDonnell.

The members raised the following matters:

- The work programme is not as extensive as in previous years. Some items were omitted such as the Tree Management Strategy, Seaweed Management Strategy and Energy Management Strategy.
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- Updates were sought on the Masterplans.
- The Climate Monitoring Group meeting hasn't taken place and update was sought.
- Updates were sought on the Casual Trading Bye Laws, Dog Bye Laws and Waste Management Plan and if the delays is as a result of waiting on national policy.

Mr. P. Greene, Ms. S Connolly, Ms. L Smyth, Mr. U. Finn and Mr. D Redington updated members on issues raised as follows:

- Updates will be provided on the Strategies as they progress. GCC are reviewing how they treat seaweed on all beaches, it will take into consideration biodiversity, protection of existing sand dunes, habitat and use of beaches. The Tree Strategy is not dependent on the Green Space Strategy but will be done in tandem.
- The Woodquay Masterplan project has been awarded to consultants and a meeting with the Consultants has been arranged.

- There are a number of Climate Action positions due to be advertised by the HR Department.
- We are waiting on Ministerial direction in relation the Climate Action Plan which will cover all of Galway City Council's strategies on to 2030 and beyond.
- The new building at Crowne Plaza will result in reduction of emissions.
- Galway City Council are working with Climate Action Regional Office and will come before the SPC in 2023.
- ARUP have been appointed and Galway City Council are working with them in relation to Local Authority Climate Action Plans.
- Work is ongoing in relation to De carbonizing zones and there will be stakeholder engagement.
- There is new national guidance in relation to Waste Management Plan and an update will be issued to elected members.
- Galway City Council are waiting on National Guidance in relation the Dog Bye Laws and the next step in the Casual Trading Bye Laws is public consultation which will take place over the coming months.

#### **Item 4. John McCarthy, Arup and Colm Shaughnessy, Galway City Council Presentation – Galway City Council Strategy on e-charging -EV Policy**

The following matters were raised by members following the presentation:

- The need for charging points across the city with Cappagh Park and Renmore proposed as possible suitable locations and it was requested that green space would not be used for the installation of charging points.
- If Galway City Council are liaising with the ESB and Electric Ireland and if grant aid available was availed off to install charging points.
- If there will be adequate energy supply and if there are various types of charging points or if one type will suit all vehicles including electric bikes and scooters.
- If it is a planning requirement for new developments to have EV Charging points.
- If the e charging points can be installed at sports grounds and petrol stations.
- Consideration should be given to the lower paid when installing EV Charging points as obtaining an electric vehicle is not possible for many at present.
- If the charging points are vandal proof.

Mr. C. Shaughnessy, Mr. P Greene and Mr. J McCarthy responded to queries raised as follows:

- A guidance document has issued from Government with requirements.
- 80% of people will be able to charge at home and the remaining 20% in apartments and others will be the focus for Local Authorities and it should not be more expensive for the 20% who don't have EV Charing points in their home.
- Galway City Council will not be involved in the long term but will be involved in the transition period.
- Public Spaces including Sports Clubs and Libraries are being considered.
- There is an EV map with one on the West of the city being looked at and will identify areas of demand and which will be targeted.

- A number of charging points have already been installed but Galway City Council have not installed any.
- The cost of installation of one EV Charging point is between €30k to €40k. A request for €100k was put into the budget for 2022 for policy implementation and roll out but this funding was removed from the 2022 budget. A €5k grant towards a €30k-€40k charge would not be sufficient.
- Engagement is ongoing with ESB Networks in relation to charging points.
- A club in Mervue has applied for a EV Charging Point but the club must take responsibility for charges for its use.
- The main focus at the moment is residents.
- The new Development Plan 2023-2029 has provision for EV Charge points which must have appropriate infrastructure with ducting which enables future installation of EV Charge points.
- EV Charging Points is part of Planning Conditions and must be catered for.
- Application for sports clubs is completed by them through POBAL where ZEVI will be in the application process.
- Two parking spaces must be made available to the public along with fast taxi spots.
- Tesla use a particular type of connector but EV Charge points will be standardised.
- APPS will be a focus of making it user friendly.

#### **Item 5. Emma Oldroyd , Arup – Galway City Council Green Spaces Strategy**

Ms. E. Oldroyd, Arup gave a presentation.

The members made observations and raised the following queries:

- Very impressive strategy with great potential.
- Queried the cost of the consultation, the completion date and what brief the consultants were working to.
- Ensure that as many organisations are consulted with and to include Galway City Network, Councillors and SPC members.
- A request was made for workshops to be held in the evenings so that most people can attend.
- Ensure that the Recreation and Amenity Needs Study, Kissing Gate Audit and CFRAMS will feed into the Strategy and that it takes into account policies and the resources available.
- Look at the reduction of footfall in some areas to protect habitat and wildlife corridors and ensure that new buildings are not placed on flood plains.
- Disappointment was expressed that Blue Infrastructure was regarded as minor and a request was made that Blue spaces are not ignored.
- Reference was made to a presentation to SPC members in 2020 which highlighted the lack of facilities such as playing pitches in the West Ward which needs to be addressed.
- In relation to Green Spaces, the need to look at what is already in place and that Amenity is only one side, need also to look at flooding and a query was raised if any green spaces can become an SAC.

- Reference was made to a recent Housing development in the city which has used artificial grass.

**Item. 6. Mr. J Craughwell, Galway Sports Partnership, Galway City Council – Active Cities Galway**

Item No. 6 was deferred due to time.

Cllr. M. O'Connor apologised that the Committee didn't get to cover this item on the Agenda.

**Item No. 8. AOB**

The following issues were raised.

- The felling of trees at Merlin Park by the HSE and the need for the HSE to engage with Galway City Council on the matter.
- Unauthorised works at Lough Atalia.
- The role of the SPC in the Development Plan was raised with a request for an update at the next meeting.
- An update sought in relation to the Parks and Community Wardens and their presence in the Parks.
- Lack of enforcement of the Busking Bye Laws.
- The Waterworks are working in Terryland and there has been no engagement.

Mr. P Greene and Ms. L Smyth gave the following update:

- The felling of trees at Merlin is disappointing but it is on private land and there isn't much that Galway City Council can do when on private land unless there is a Tree Preservation Order. Galway City Council are trying to engage with the HSE to build a relationship and help with the management of the woodlands.
- The Council are working on taking legal action in relation to unauthorised works at Lough Atalia with a number of Departments involved.
- The Development Plan had a consultation process which all members had an opportunity to feed into.
- The Wardens are out on duty with the number of traffic fines issued dramatically increased.
- There are 10 Warden positions filled out of 12.
- The Waterworks are carrying out works on the Dyke Road and will reinstate the land. There was planning permission for the works, and they are ongoing. The Recreation and Amenity Department are working with the Planning Department and the Contractor.

**The Meeting concluded.**