

Minutes of Meeting of Climate Change, Environment, Recreation & Amenity Strategic Policy Committee

25th February 2020, City Hall, Galway

Presiding: Cllr. M. O'Connor

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

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. P. Faherty, Executive Engineer, Mr. P. Batty, Executive Engineer, Ms. C. Jennings, Assistant Staff Officer.

Apologies: Cllr. P. O'Reilly, Mr. C. Ryan

On the proposal by Cllr. T. O'Flaherty, seconded by Cllr. C. Connolly and agreed by the Members, Cllr. M. O'Connor assumed the role of Chair in the absence of Cllr. P. O'Reilly.

Item No. 1 Minutes of Meeting held on the 19th December 2019

Minutes of SPC Meeting of the 19th December 2019 were proposed by Cllr. T. O'Flaherty, seconded by Ms. C. Stanley and adopted by members.

Item No. 2 Matters Arising

Updates were requested on the following: Blackrock Diving Tower project; Terryland Master Plan and the allocation of funding; appointment of staff including a Tree Officer and a Biodiversity Officer; if the Quarterly reports was circulated to Sectoral Representatives and the inclusion of Nolan Park in the work programme. Requests were made for the calendar of meetings to be made available on the Extranet due to the number of meetings scheduled for the same period.

Mr. D. Mahon, Ms. C. Kilcoyne and Mr. S. Walsh responded to the issues raised as follows: The dates of the SPC meetings were agreed at the previous SPC meeting, details of same were forwarded to Corporate Services Department. A calendar with all meetings dates and times was circulated to all Council members at the Full Council meeting held in early February. The Quarterly Reports were circulated. An update was given in relation to vacancies filled (including the Tree Officer) with the further appointments to be made for the post of Assistant Parks & Landscape Officer, Biodiversity Officer, Executive Scientist for Waste Enforcement, and Craft Gardeners. Work is continuing on the Terryland, Merlin and Rusheen Master Plans. Nolan Park is included in the work programme agreed for 2020.

Item No. 3 Sports and Amenity Projects

Mr. P. Faherty, Executive Engineer delivered a presentation in relation to Sports Capital Projects (copy of presentation circulated via email). The presentation included an update on each project, a summary of projects completed and future projects. The following comments / issues were raised by members: Consultation process with the community, if environmental or scientific studies have been carried out in relation to All-Weather facilities, the multi-functional aspect of the Corrib Park project, clarity on Cluain

Mhuire project and a request for more lighting, whether the Millar's Lane is part of the Kingston Masterplan project, the suitability of McGrath's Field for a hurling wall, an update on Bothar Waitman following the refusal of the application, if Plots at Woodquay are included, the need for facilities to reach UEFA standards, location of exercise equipment at Renmore, analysis of the 200 submissions received during Part 8 process for Blackrock Diving Tower.

Mr. D. Mahon and Mr. P. Faherty responded to the issues raised noting the required consultation period where members of the public can make observations and objections to a Part 8 planning applications, passive recreation, playgrounds and parklands are not included in the presentation as it relates to sports capital projects only, the Blackrock Diving Tower - analysis of submissions being carried out by consultants, project currently with the Planning Department. Galway City Council own Chluain Mhuire, the completion date was delayed due to bad weather and damage to site is to be addressed, there are other projects in the pipeline which will have multifunctional spaces, future projects are listed in presentation. An additional path will be installed in Renmore, the exercise equipment is for day time use. There are no plans for the Plots currently, Galway City Council will promote passive facilities, walking trails etc. The online booking facility is being rolled out. Mr. S. Walsh has appealed the refusal decision in relation to funding for Bothar Waitman.

Item No. 4 Significant Water Management issues in Ireland Consultation Document

Ms. Kilcoyne referred to the report issued and noted that an explanatory cover letter and a link to the document was previously circulated to the members. Ms. C. Kilcoyne advised that the public consultation closes on Friday, 26 June 2020. Submissions can be made online or by completing a template.

The Members raised the following queries: Can submissions be made in relation to Ballyloughane and Grattan Beaches, will Galway City Council be making a submission, what works have been undertaken in relation to the waterway networks, River Corrib is moderately littered, are canals included, what funding is available to Galway City Council for enforcement and dealing with invasive species, disposal of hazardous hospital waste, what information is available in relation to illegal discharge into the water, will this process take account of storm surges, the consequences of hidden canals not flowing, will the locations of invasive species be mapped, issue of environment pollution ongoing for 20 years.

Ms. C. Kilcoyne addressed the queries raised as follows: This is a nationwide consultation process, written submissions can be submitted in addition to the five questions on the template, water quality issues in Terryland river are being addressed (comes under the Water Services Department), water samples taken from the River Corrib and Claddagh Basin are very good, the Canals are not included in the document, however can be included in the submissions, hazardous hospital waste not included in this consultation process, storm surges can be submitted as a threat to river quality. Galway City Council have a digital map with the invasive species marked, which was included in a workshop held recently to discuss awareness and methods of treatment of invasive species, Galway City Council has no power where the species is on private lands. In relation to water quality at Ballyloughane the EPA sets standards and samples are tested under four categories. Ballyloughane and Grattan samples are averaged over a four year period and Grattan meets the standard. A meeting was held with EPA in relation to the issues at Ballyloughane. Ms. C. Kilcoyne advised that surface water pipe may be an issue and this is being investigated, this involves tracking all the manholes that discharged into the pipe network. High rain fall is another issue. Work is ongoing with Water Services Department.

Ms. E. Hough requested that a meeting be arranged of Waterways Stakeholders Forum and referred to the Conditional Assessment report which has not been circulated.

Cllr. J. Connolly proposed that this item be discussed at a future Council Meeting and that relevant stakeholders might be asked to attend. Mr. B. Smith seconded the proposal. Cllr. J. Connolly agreed to consult with the Mayor.

Item No. 5 Climate Change Monitoring Group

Mr. P. Batty Executive Engineer provided an update to members in relation to the meeting held by the Climate Change Monitoring Group on the 19th February. The following issues were raised: A request was made for an update to be circulated, if the committee is going to follow up on funding requests from Europe, who makes decisions in relation to financial issues.

Mr. D. Mahon advised that this is a monitoring group, not a decision making group and policy issues will come back to the SPC and funding issues will go before Council. Cllr. C. Connolly proposed that invitations be extended to all SPC members where speakers are invited to attend the Climate Change Monitoring Group meeting. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. D. Lyons and agreed by the members.

Item No. 6 Bio-diversity/Healthy Green Spaces/Pollinator Plan

Mr. S. Walsh, Senior Executive Parks Superintendent delivered a presentation on Biodiversity/All Ireland Pollinator Plan (copy of presentation circulated via email).

The members comments included: annual tree planting festival, issues in relation to anti-social behaviour, the need for habitat mapping before the planting of trees, identify species that already exist, the issues relating to flailing of trees in estates, update sought in relation to Healthy Green Spaces initiative, trimming back of trees that are blocking sunlight to houses, there is an increase in awareness education, issue with overgrown hedging onto roads.

Mr. S. Walsh and Ms. C. Kilcoyne provided responses including: Tree week is in March and there will be tree planting initiatives with schools and forests. The role of the Tree Officer is to deal with tree maintenance. A database of trees is being compiled. Overgrown hedging onto roads comes under Roads Act and should be reported to the Roads Department.

Item No. 7 AOB

It was agreed to reschedule the next SPC Meeting to the 5th May 2020. The following items were requested as an agenda item at future SPC meetings: Woodquay Park, Derelict Sites.

Ms. E. Hough sought clarification on the event licence issued for the Galway 2020 official opening and the blocking of the pedestrian walkway at Nimmo's Pier. Ms. C. Kilcoyne advised that Galway 2020 event licence was issued by the Planning Department and that the documents were available for viewing in the Planning Department for public consultation.

The Meeting concluded.