

Minutes of Leitrim County Council Special Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae, Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim on Monday, 19 February 2024

Members Present: Councillor Mary Bohan
Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire
Councillor Enda McGloin
Councillor Sean McGowan
Councillor Brendan Barry
Councillor Frank Dolan
Councillor Caillian Ellis
Councillor Pádraig Fallon
Councillor Des Guckian
Councillor Felim Gurn
Councillor Sean McDermott
Councillor Paddy O'Rourke
Councillor Ita Reynolds Flynn (via Online)
Councillor Enda Stenson

Councillor Justin Warnock (Cathaoirleach) presiding

Apologies: Councillor Gerry Dolan
Councillor Paddy Farrell
Councillor Thomas Mulligan

Officials Present: Joseph Gilhooly, Chief Executive
Mary Quinn, Director of Services, Housing, Corporate Services, Community and Cultural Services
Justin Fannon, A/Director of Services, Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructural Services
James Madden, Veterinary Inspector
Pio Byrne, Senior Executive Planner
Marie Mulligan, Senior Executive Engineer
Laura McEnroe, Climate Action Officer
Mr Fintan Coyle, Climate Action Co-Ordinator Officer
Mark Corrigan, Community Climate Action Officer
Kieran Brett, Meetings Administrator
Kathleen Ellis, Assistant Staff Officer

Richard Deeney - Feehily Timoney Environment Consultants (Via Online)

MM.25.24 **Pursuant to the provisions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 as it amends the principle Act of 2015, to approve the Leitrim County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 following the consideration of the Draft Climate Action Plan, the contents of the Report on submissions received during the period of consultation**

and the SEA and AA Reports and determinations, carried out in accordance with the requirements and regulatory provisions of the SEA Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC) and Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Justin Warnock welcomed Mr Fintan Coyle, Climate Action Co-Ordinator Officer to the meeting and invited him to give a presentation on the draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 for County Leitrim. Mr Coyle gave a presentation on the draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, the contents of the report on submissions received during the period of consultation and the SEA and AA reports and determinations carried out.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Justin Warnock and the members thanked Mr Coyle and the Climate Action Team for the presentation and acknowledged the significant amount of time and effort that had been put into the preparation of the Plan.

Councillor Des Guckian made points on the following:

- This is an important and far reaching plan and will be the basis of decision making and future plans for in future years.
- The plan is aspirational and not convincing.
- Major polluters not mentioned.
- Aircraft are significant polluters with their emissions falling as rain.
- Agriculture not adequately addressed.
- The plan made reference to 430 vacant dwellings within Carrick-on-Shannon and he queried if the figures are correct in this regard

Councillor Mary Bohan acknowledged the plan is aspirational but is a start in dealing with the issue of Climate Change. Councillor Bohan queried how often will the plan be reviewed.

Councillor O'Rourke said Climate Change policy is going to be driven by independent and private companies. Councillor O'Rourke said if a farmer seeks financial assistance from a bank, a Carbon Plan is requested as part of the documentation required in the loan application.

Councillor Brendan Barry expressed surprise that 44% of the emissions in Leitrim are attributable to farming, with that 19% of the overall emissions being attributable to cattle, yet only 14% is attributable to cars. Councillor Barry acknowledged that the plan is not going to have any legal obligations on the agriculture sector in Leitrim and that the plan before the members is only relevant to Leitrim County Council.

Councillor Felim Gurn raised quality of water as an issue that needs to be addressed and he highlighted that between 4 and 5 hundred million euros will have to be spent to bring our water network up to date. Cllr Felim highlighted that almost 60% of water is lost due to leakage and he questioned how this will be solved.

Councillor Enda Stenson welcomed the plan and sought clarification if all cattle registered to Leitrim herd numbers, but being raised on land in other counties, are included in the

agriculture figures presented for Leitrim. Councillor Enda Stenson expressed concern that if this is the case it is inflating the figures for Leitrim and this fact should be reflected in the contextual data in the plan. Councillor Stenson also acknowledged the plan is aspirational and he noted that the Local Authority will be the lead in implementing the plan.

Councillor Padraig Fallon was surprised that agriculture created more emissions than traffic in the county. Councillor Fallon said when the scoring was been carried out for the ACRES Scheme, planners were pleasantly surprised with the biodiversity that exists in the county and he proposed that data of this nature be added to the plan future. Councillor Fallon said farmers in County Leitrim are not being credited for the biodiversity and climate action measures they are currently implementing within the agriculture sector.

Mr Joseph Gilhooly advised members this is a Local Plan set in accordance Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 and the National Climate Action Plan 2023 to deliver the targets for reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 51% by 2030.

Mr Gilhooly said the plan is being developed in consultation and collaboration with all stakeholders in the County, all actions will primarily be managed and dealt with locally and recommended its adoption.

Mr Fintan Coyle responded as follows to queries raised by members.

- This is a static Plan to cover a 5 year period.
- There is a mechanism to review the plan.
- Implementation of the plan over its term, will be cognisant of the operational and legislative landscape that will exist
- Acknowledged the challenges and changes in the agriculture sector. This will be considered further in future when calculating carbon emissions
- The plan aims to promote sustainability
- Climate Change is a global issue, yet it is important to take action at community level and the plan is an opportunity for Leitrim County Council to set out actions for implementation.
- Engagement with all sectors and communities and support from Elected members is important.

Councillor Mary Bohan proposed that the plan be reviewed in 2 years.

Mr Joseph Gilhooly advised that while there is a mechanism for a formal review within legislation, the intention is that the plan would be static over the 5 year period and any review necessary would be in line with changing legislation or guidance from Department of the Environment & Climate Change (DECC) or the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO). As with all plans, this plan lends itself to review through reporting to the relevant Strategic Policy Committee and the appropriateness of the actions contained within the plan can be reviewed accordingly. A review of the effectiveness of implementation of the plan after a period of two years is reasonable.

A full review however would require public consultation, including Strategic Environment

Assessment & Appropriate Assessment reporting.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke referred to the baseline figure of 44% of emissions being attributable to the agriculture sector in the county and he highlighted that a lot of livestock registered to herd numbers in Leitrim are maintained in other counties and he insisted that the figures are incorrect and should be amended or removed. Councillor O'Rourke said groups will see this as giving a validity to reducing livestock numbers or restricting meat production in the county.

Mr James Madden, Veterinary Inspector advised that the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine operates an AIMS database which records all bovine movements from county to county.

Councillor Paddy O'Rourke said a lot of animals are not maintained on land in Leitrim and there is no obligation on farmers to notify the AIMS system if they want to move their animals to another county in which they own or rent land. Councillor Caillian Ellis supported the views of Cllr O'Rourke stating that many farmers put their cattle into sheds located outside of Leitrim, with up to 70% of livestock registered in Leitrim located outside of the county.

Mr Gilhooly asked if figures in relation to the number of cattle registered in Leitrim but located outside of the County could be clarified with Feehily Timoney Consultants.

Mr Richard Deeney, Feehily Timoney Consultants advised the figures in relation to agriculture emissions, and vacant dwellings in Carrick-on-Shannon, can be removed from the plan, as they are provided for contextual information only and their removal does not constitute a material contravention of the plan.

Mr Fintan Coyle said he would revert to the Councillor Guckian to clarify the source of the figures of vacant dwellings in Carrick-on-Shannon and this figure would also be removed from the plan.

Mr Fintan Coyle said he would clarify the calculation method for elected members and remove reference of the percentage contribution of the agriculture sector to the baseline of emissions (44%) within the County and he acknowledged that Leitrim is a very rural county.

Mr James Madden, Veterinary Inspector advised that the Regional District Veterinary office in Drumshanbo will be contacted to seek figures, as to the percentage of herds registered in Leitrim but located on lands in other counties.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Sean McGowan
SECONDED by Councillor Sean McDermott

It was agreed pursuant to the provisions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 as it amends the principle Act of 2015, to adopt the Leitrim County

Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, the Report on submissions received during the period of consultation and the SEA and AA Reports and determinations, carried out in accordance with the requirements and regulatory provisions of the SEA Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC) and Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC

with the following amendments –

- Remove reference of the percentage contribution of the agriculture sector to the baseline of emissions (44%) within the County.
- Remove reference to 430 vacant dwellings within the Carrick-on-Shannon Decarbonising Zone from the Climate Action Plan.
- A review of the effectiveness of implementing the Climate Action Plan will be presented to elected members every 2 years.

MM.26.24 Approve appointment of PPN representatives to Leitrim LCDC

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Enda McGloin
SECONDED by Councillor Sean McGowan

That the following be appointed as PPN representatives to Leitrim LCDC

- Aedín McLoughlin, Environmental Pillar
- Sean Gilligan, Social Inclusion Pillar
- Brigid McGourty, Social Inclusion Pillar
- Ita Gray, Community & Voluntary

MM.27.24 Receive Presentation from Waterways Ireland

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Justin Warnock welcomed Brian Tracey, Western Regional Manager, Waterways Ireland and Patrick Harkin, Inspector of Navigation, Waterways Ireland to the meeting and invited them to deliver a presentation.

Brian Tracey, Western Regional Manager gave a presentation on the following:

- **Shannon Erne Waterway**
 - Amenity upgrades
 - Service blocks
 - Mooring capacity
- **North Shannon**
 - Blueway Trail Development and Management
 - Harbour Upgrades

- Navigation Facilities
- Amenity upgrades

- **Shannon Tourism Masterplan**

- Shannon and new Discovery points

Patrick Harkin, Inspector of Navigation gave a presentation on the revision of the bye laws for Canals and the Shannon Navigation system as follows:

- Byelaw process
- Public Consultation
- Information consultations/briefing held to date
- The need to revise the Byelaws

Shannon Navigation

- Byelaw process
- Key Bye Laws revisions
- Revised Mooring Periods
- Retain Winter Mooring
- Abolish Lock passage fee
- Fixed Payment Notice
- Annual Registration
- Insurance
- Information consultations/briefing held to date
- The need to revise the Bye laws
- Registration, Insurance & Safety

Canals

- Canal bye laws
- Canal Houseboat permit pricing proposal
- Canal zones
- Priority Areas themes

Mr Harkin said the public consultation closes on the 26th February 2024, after which the feedback and submissions received from the public consultation will be reviewed.

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Justin Warnock thanked Mr Brian Tracey and Mr Patrick Harkin for their presentation and invited comments/questions from members.

The members welcomed the following:

- The works carried out at Spencer Harbour

- The discovery points at Jamestown, Battlebrige, Corry Strand and Ballinamore
- Works at Dromod Service block
- Additional mooring facilities in Dromod and enhancements at Rooskey
- €200 charge for Cruisers
- Shannon Discovery points
- Fixed Penalty Notice for Speeding fines and it was hoped that this will be policed. Will Waterways Ireland staff receive specific training in this regard?
- Blueway development and the positive outcomes
- Winter mooring
- Abolition of the lock passage fee
- Requirement for sewerage holding tanks on cruisers and boats.
- Speed limit for boats on the Shannon.
- Waterways Ireland are interfering with landowners riparian rights

The Members raised the following:

- The potential for further development at Spencer Harbour
- The provision of a Service Block in Drumsna is important.
- A winter mooring charge of €300 up from €63.50 is excessive; this charge could be considered for reducing. Double the original charge would be reasonable.
- Concern regarding visitors travelling from Northern Ireland having to pay charges or fees. No charge should be in place as we have a seamless border.
- Under what grounds can Waterways Ireland board a boat to carry out a search. What reason would a boat be boarded for?
- With the housing crisis, some people are living on boats. What are the exact rules currently in this regard.
- More plans needed for Lough McNea near Glenfarne.
- Waterways Ireland office should be relocated in a more prominent location in Carrick-on-Shannon, possibly near the water in Carrick-on-Shannon and should showcase the historical importance of navigation and trade on the river for towns like Carrick-on-Shannon.
- Additional mooring facilities should be provided in Carrick on Shannon to facilitate rowing
- The Service block adjacent to the new bus shelter on the N4 will be used extensively by people using the bus shelter and it is important that the Service block is kept very well and tidy.
- Works need to be carried out to relive the blockage under Drumsna Bridge
- The Shannon being used as a passageway for drugs.
- Are there any plans for development of the Dowra River for navigation as this would have good potential for the village.
- The volume of boat traffic is disappointing on the Lough Allen Canal

Mr Patrick Harkin responded as follows:

- The fee of €300 for 5 months winter mooring is reasonable. Private Marinas charge in the region of €1,000

- One permit gives access to all waterways.
- No changes in boarding of a boat. The Heritage Act sets out specific guidance in this regard but excludes living quarters. A boat could be boarded to ascertain if it was flushing foul water into the waterway or river.
- €150.00 fine for speeding on the water, enforceable by Waterways Ireland. Waterways Ireland had no power in this regard previously. Staff issuing these fines will have specific training.
- Waterways Ireland keep in contact with An Garda Síochána and they organise joint patrols for drugs on the Shannon.

Mr Brian Tracey responded as follows:

- Acknowledged that a service block in Drumsna is needed and he confirmed this would be considered.
- Waterways Ireland not aware of any issues with riparian rights of landowners.
- Waterways Ireland are exploring the potential for the development of extra jettys in Carrick-on-Shannon
- A Plan for Dowra is being considered. An Environmental Impact Assessment is being carried out.
- Plans for Lough McNea will be considered.
- Waterways Ireland are aware of low boat traffic on Lough Allen Canal. It is hoped that the development at Spencer Harbour and possible future development of the Dowra river will increase the boat traffic in this area of the Shannon waterway.

Mr Joseph Gilhooly advised that a close working relationship exists between Waterways Ireland and Leitrim County Council, both organisations work in partnership, which is important for the development of our towns and villages and for our tourism product e.g., Blueway, Board walk etc.

Councillor Enda McGloin complimented Waterways Ireland who respond expeditiously to resolutions passed by Leitrim County Council in regard to the waterway issues.

MM.28.24 Vote of Congratulations

The members extended a vote of congratulations to Ms. Jacqueline Jackson Beirne on being chosen as the recipient of the James J. Dinnan Distinguished Service Award by the Committee of the New Haven St. Patrick's Day Parade, Connecticut.

This concluded the business of the meeting at 1.25 pm

Signed:

Councillor Justin Warnock
Cathaoirleach

Kieran Brett
Meetings Administrator

Dated: Monday, 4 March 2024

