

Minutes of Meeting of Environment & Water Services Strategic Policy Committee held on 6th July 2016

I Láthair:

Baill: Cllr. Tomás Ó Curráoin, Acting Cathaoirleach
Cllr. Ivan Canning
Cllr. Gabriel Cronnelly
Cllr. Tim Broderick
Mr. Mark Green
Mr. David Courtney
Mr. Bertie Roche

Oifigigh: Mr. Jim Cullen, DOS
Ms. Ann Dolan, E.S.
Ms Sinead Ni Mhainnin, E.E.O
Mr. Paraic Carroll, A.O.

Apologies: Cllr. Gerry Finnerty, Cllr. Niamh Byrne, Cllr. Peter Keaveney, Cllr. Noel Thomas.

1. Minutes of Meeting of the 9th May, 2016

The minutes of the meeting of the 9th May 2016 were proposed by Cllr Broderick, seconded by Cllr. Canning and agreed.

Matters Arising From Minutes.

Cllr. Broderick expressed disappointment with regard to the shelving of the pay by weight system, that a lot of time and resources had gone into preparing for its implementation. He referred to the boil notice at Kilconnell and the fact that no communication had been received from Irish Water that a boil notice was in place. Cllr. Cronnelly stated that he had got onto Irish Water regarding poor water pressure at Gurteen and Ballydavid North but he never received a response. Mr Cullen stated that the lack of communication from Irish Water was very unsatisfactory but that while it was beyond the Council's control he would take comments back to Irish Water. With regard to poor water pressure this should be logged with Irish Water who will then revert to the Council. He confirmed to Mr. Green that a submission had been made by the Council to Irish Water on the National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan on 17th May 2016.

Mr Green queried the position with regard to litter fines which had been discussed at the previous meeting. Mr Carroll stated that of 355 litter fines issued in 2015, 49 were

untraceable, 47 were multiple fines, 51 were appealed successfully while 37 were pending. Untraceable were fines issued but returned as owner had gone away with no forwarding address. Multiple fines were where a number of notices were issued for a single offence eg name variations or several occupiers for single address and paid in respect of one address/name. Appeals generally related to medical and hardship cases or where a person had evidence to the contrary.

2. Criteria for the identification of new bathing waters

Ms. Dolan gave a presentation on a framework document issued by the EPA to assist local authorities in the assessment of submissions for the identification of new bathing waters. She stated that the objective of this guidance is to provide nationally criteria to carry out such assessments. Nationally 140 bathing waters have been identified to date while there are also a large number of monitored waters where bathing takes place which are not designated. Galway County Council currently monitor 13 designated bathing waters and 11 non designated areas. The position of both DECLG and EPA is that where a local authority monitors a bathing water the local authority should formally designate this bathing area. Galway County Council will review the situation with the non-designated bathing areas to see whether the council has the capacity and resources to formally designate them. In assessing each of the categories of information provided the following factors should be taken into consideration- location, beach users / bather numbers, car parking and facilities, commercial impacts, local community support, water quality, safety, planned infrastructure / WWTP and costs. Local authorities may apply other criteria however these should be fully justified in the event of the rejection of any submission.

Cllr. Broderick asked if there was a budget for the identification of bathing waters and added that this only catered for usage for a number of summer weeks. He stated that every group will feel that they can fit the criteria and the Department should have set out a more realistic document. Ms Dolan stated that the Council are required to invite submissions and will initially only examine bathing waters that are been monitored at present. Mr Cullen said that the Council will not be actively pursuing the designation of new bathing areas and will continue and try to retain the bathing waters we have without stretching our limited funds.

3. Update on Pay by Weight.

Mr Cullen informed the Committee that no formal directions had been received by the Council as to enforcement of the Pay by Weight system and the Council was awaiting clarity and guidance from the Department. Cllr. Cronnelly stated that the old system should continue until direction is received. Cllr Canning stated that no information had

been received on pricing structure. Cllr Broderick said that it was not the people who bought bags that were responsible for dumping and that offenders were taking advantage of the present confusion. Ms Ni Mhainnin stated that the intention of moving away bag purchasing from shops to waste collectors was to create a database of users, however, clarification was awaited from the Department on this.

4. AOB

In response to a query from Mr. Green, Mr. Cullen confirmed that at the final meeting of the year a draft programme of topics for the following year would be included in the agenda for that meeting.

It was agreed to hold the next meeting on 5th October 2016 at 3 pm

The meeting then concluded.