

**Comhairle Contae Fine Gall
Fingal County Council**

Minutes of Climate Action, Biodiversity, Environment Strategic Policy Committee

Tuesday, 25th October, 2022

PRESENT

Attending Remotely:

Councillor David Healy, Councillor Joe Newman, Councillor Paul Mulville, Councillor Pamela Conroy, Councillor Mary McCamley, Councillor Aoibhinn Tormey, Seamus McGrath

Kevin Swift, Mayo County Council

Officials:

David Storey, Director of Services; John Daly, Senior Engineer; Ronan O'Reilly, Senior Executive Engineer, Orla Harte, Chief Technician, Aileen O'Connor, Senior Executive Parks Superintendent; Hans Visser, Executive Parks Superintendent; Paul Smyth, Senior Executive Officer; Mary T Daly, Director of Services; Sinead Fox, Environmental Educational Officer; Sinead Proctor, Senior Staff Officer; Vanessa Carey, Senior Executive Officer; Deirdre O'Farrell, Parks Superintendent; Maria Hand, Senior Staff Officer

The Area Chairperson, Councillor David Healy, presided.

OFFICIALS PRESENT

CABE/14/22 (Agenda Item No 1)

**Confirmation and Re-Affirmation of Minutes of Climate Action,
Biodiversity, Environment SPC meeting held on Monday 27th June 2022**

The minutes of the meetings of the 27th June 2022, were **AGREED**. The minutes were proposed by Cllr Mulville and seconded by Cllr Conroy.

CABE/15/22 (Agenda Item No 2)

National Waste Management Plan

Presentation was given by Mr Kevin Swift, Mayo County Council. Questions asked by various members were answered by Mr Swift.

CABE/16/22 (Agenda Item No 3)

Coolmine and Estuary Recycling Centres - A Review of Pricing and the Provision of a Free Bulky Waste Service

Presentation was given by Ms Daly. Questions asked by various members were answered by Ms Daly and Mr Smyth.

CABE/17/22 (Agenda Item No 4)

Litter Management Plan

Presentation was given by Mr Daly. It was proposed that a workshop should be organised with the Members in the near future.

CABE/18/22 (Agenda Item No 5)

Councillor P. Mulville - Data Centres

"That this Committee in light of the recent concerns in relation to energy prices recognises the unique strain that Data Centres put on our grid with Eirgrid, estimating 30% electricity consumption from these Centres by 2030, therefore calls for a moratorium on new Data Centres in this Council's administrative area until a national policy is in place that can ensure our energy security is protected and that this Motion, if agreed, will be included on the agenda of the next Council Meeting as part of the Strategic Policy Committee report, for adoption by the Full Council."

Response:

At both national and regional level, policy and objectives set out in both the NPF and RSES promote and support communications networks and digital infrastructure at appropriate locations. Specifically, National Strategic Outcome 5.

'Strong Economy

Supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills' of the National Planning Framework (NPF) aims to create places that can foster enterprise and innovation and attract investment and talent. Delivering this outcome will require the coordination of growth and place making with investment in world class infrastructure, including digital connectivity. NSO 5 sets out the importance of digital and data innovation and indicates a number of objectives to achieve this

including: *'Promotion of Ireland as a sustainable international destination for ICT infrastructures such as data centres and associated economic activities.'*

The RSES indicates

that the increasing use of digital technologies is impacting on every aspect of our lives and due to a fast moving and evolving infrastructure, the region will need to be able to respond and adapt to future communications networks and technology along with changing work practices and emerging economic models. RPO 8.25 on Communications Networks and Digital Infrastructure states: *'Support the national objective to promote Ireland as a sustainable international destination for ICT infrastructures such as data centres and associated economic activities at appropriate locations.'*

Due to continued support for Data Centres within Government policy, a moratorium on new data centres runs contrary to government policy at this time. Furthermore, recent comments from the IDA outline that data centres are an *"integral part of the technology ecosystem", and "the inability of technology companies to expand their data centre footprint is problematic in terms of continuing to attract investment and to continue to maintain the investment we have here."*

FCC must align with national policy and must be consistent with the requirements of the NPF. As such, any decision in relation to a potential moratorium on data centres is one for central government.

As indicated above, national policy dictates how individual local authorities deal with such matters. It should however be noted that the overprovision of any one land use in a particular area is not appropriate and this will be managed through the development management process and any applications for a certain facilities/land use have regard to the number of such facilities already in operation in a particular area.

In relation to grid capacity, this is an issue for the operator of any such facility, which would need to go through a grid connection application process.

The motion was proposed by Cllr Mulville and seconded by Cllr Newman.

Report **ACCEPTED.**

CABE/19/22 (Agenda Item No 6)

Councillor M. McCamley - Micro Generation Scheme

"That the Chief Executive provides and update on the Micro Generation Scheme for solar panels on domestic homes and details of the N6 application form."

Response

The Micro Generation Support Scheme (MSS) is administered by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). The key features of the scheme applying to domestic Solar PV are as follows:

Domestic applicants can apply to the SEAI for a grant towards the cost of installing Solar PV equipment. In 2022, capital grants are available up to a maximum of €2,400. Homes built pre-2021 are eligible. Buildings do not have to meet a minimum BER (Building Energy Rating) standard. MSS is targeting support for 380MW of installed micro-generation capacity, to contribute to the target of up to 2.5GW of solar renewables under the Climate Action Plan. Depending on panel size, that equates to over 1 million solar panels, on approximately 70,000 buildings.

A substantial body of supporting policies and infrastructure is / has been put in place to enable MSS and this has been led by a Micro Generation Working Group under action 105 of the CAP 2021. Stakeholders include DECC, The Commission of Regulation of Utilities (CRU), ESB Networks (ESBN), and SEAI. Details of the initiative can be found at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b1fbc-micro-generation/>

Homeowners will need to have a smart meter and a suitable ESBN export grid connection. Both can be applied for from ESBN by submitting NC6 and NC7 forms. Once form NC6 is submitted, ESBN will prioritise that property for a meter upgrade if an upgrade is required. Timelines will be dependent on whether the property is based in a 'current (smart meter) deployment planning area'. NC6 form should be completed by the technician at the time solar pv panels are installed. (If an NC6 form has not been submitted, contact the installation company to complete one and return it to ESBN).

The export tariff which is called the Clean Export Guarantee is expected to be available before the end of 2022, once legal work is completed.

A tax-free allowance of €200 was introduced in Budget 2021 in respect of personal income received by households who sell residual renewable electricity, which they generate, back to the grid. This is to allow domestic users have the small amount of revenue that they will earn from micro-generation exempted from tax.

The scheme is open for business. As this is not a local authority scheme, no details are available on take up, numbers of applicants, or numbers processed / enabled, at the time of this request. The Council supports SEAI Sustainable Energy Community Scheme, and these communities are supported through an SEAI mentor.

For information on smart meters and grid connections, contact [ESB Networks](#)

For information on grants, contact the [Sustainable Energy Authority Of Ireland](#)

For information on Clean Export Guarantee contact CRU.

The motion was proposed by Cllr McCamley and seconded by Cllr Newman. The report was read by Mr O'Reilly and following discussion the report was **Accepted**.

Councillor J. Newman - Analysis of heat pump and energy upgrades

Councillor J. Newman – Analysis of heat pump and energy updates

“That the Chief Executive will provide an update, report and analysis of the energy upgrades carried out in Council’s owned properties within Fingal in the last couple of years since 2019 and that this report includes details on heat pumps and any issues that have been identified with regard to energy savings or otherwise.”

Response:

Architects

Our Energy Efficiency programme commenced in 2021. As part of that first pilot phase, we successfully managed to retrofit the 65 council properties we had been allocated funding for, moving their BER rating to a B2 or higher level making them much warmer and healthier for residents, but also helping to reduce their energy usage and costs.

The Retrofit Programme is a ten-year programme that will see us upgrade some 25% of our housing stock to a B2 BER standard. As part of that we're carrying out a variety of works to each home in order to achieve that higher rating. These works vary depending on the type, size and age of the property but may include new triple-glazed windows, LED lighting, rewiring, fitting of new external doors, placement of PV panels on roofs, installation of heat pumps, an upgrade of external wall and attic insulation and the upgrade of heating controls. Importantly, this work is all carried out done with residents still living in their homes.

Whilst our 2022 allocation for funding for retrofitting was 81 homes, we are targeted to complete in the region of 100 properties. Subject to the availability of additional funding to progress the rollout further in 2023, we hope to be in a position to carry out energy upgrade works to some 200 homes across the County. We have had a strong positive response to the upgrades to date.

Building Facilities

Fingal County Council’s first Energy Performance Contract is finishing the implementation stage. The contract was signed in December 2021. This contract is for the energy efficiency upgrades for Blanchardstown Civic Offices and County Hall, Swords. The primary measures included for both buildings are a complete LED lighting upgrade, solar photovoltaic (PV) system, high efficiency boiler systems and heat pump air handling unit upgrades. Both facilities will operate on a state of the art building management system controls upgrade - The total implementation cost of these measures is €1,053,607 of which FCC will pay a fixed maximum of €500,000. The balance of the investment is provided by the contractor (Lawler Sustainability), who, under the contract conditions, also take the entire risk of any cost increase. Under the Energy Performance Contract (EPC) terms, the contractor, Lawler Sustainability, is responsible for the design, installation and maintenance of the energy efficiency measures. The total energy savings from these works is designed to deliver 37% reductions in energy usage per year. The savings will give FCC a guaranteed return with the remainder paid to the contractor Lawler Sustainability; this allows the contractor to recoup some of their upfront investment and allows them to cover the cost of maintenance (both new and existing equipment) along with any

remainder as profit. Payments are made to the contractor on a monthly basis and are based on verified energy savings calculated according to the contract clauses – payments are reduced accordingly if savings targets underperform. Once the first phase of the Energy Performance Contract is complete and has delivered the targeted results, Fingal County Council will look to roll out the model on a number of further projects across a number of buildings. A successful EPC contract model is the preferred vehicle for incorporating Fingal maintenance and services contracts with the delivery of energy efficiency and technical improvements in FCC buildings. The energy efficiency improvements will put Fingal on the trajectory for meeting our 2030 Energy and CO2 targets. The EPC model means that the contractor is fully incentivized to ensure that the measures are correctly designed, installed, and maintained, for the duration of the nine-year contract, while ensuring the entire technical and performance risks remain with the contractor.

The motion was proposed by Cllr Newman and seconded by Cllr Mulville. Questions were answered by Ms Harte and Ms Proctor and reported was **Accepted**.

The Meeting concluded at 18:21

AREA CHAIRPERSON

DATED